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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**The Ophelia Project Presents:
Project Paddle - Find Yourself In A Kayak**

Edinboro Native Successfully Kayaks Across Lake Erie

ERIE, PA (August, 2005) --- Local woman, Katie Chriest, 29, successfully paddled solo across Lake Erie on Friday, August 26, 2005, and raised unprecedented community awareness for The Ophelia Project. She completed the 30 mile journey in just less than 7 hours, crossing from Long Point, Ontario and arriving at the Bayfront Center for Maritime Studies on Presque Isle Bay in Erie, Pa.

Chriest made the decision to take her trip across the lake earlier than anticipated due to Friday's ideal weather conditions. Her journey began at 6:30 a.m. when she departed from the Erie Yacht Club aboard the Second Obsession, her official escort boat, driven by Erie resident, Fritz Curtze. Chriest placed her kayak in the water at approximately 7:55 a.m. in Long Point and arrived in Erie just before 3:00 p.m. Doug Pohl of Erie's public television station, WQLN, also accompanied Chriest on her journey and filmed hours of footage to be compiled into a documentary of Chriest's feat.

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A reception of 15 friends and family members, including Chriest's parents, grandmother, and several members of the local media, greeted Chriest at the Bayfront Center for Maritime Studies.

"I feel pretty good," Chriest said, "I probably don't have to work out today!"

Erika Dauber, communications director for The Ophelia Project, said that "the goals of this event were greatly exceeded. The awareness that was generated from this event can't be measured, but Katie's exciting journey has inspired our community and brought The Ophelia Project to many people who might not have known us otherwise."

The Ophelia Project plans to make Project Paddle an annual fundraising event, open to any interested paddler or kayaking group. Numerous kayaking enthusiasts from Erie and the surrounding regions have already expressed their desire to be involved.

The Ophelia Project is a national, nonprofit organization headquartered in Erie, Pa. Founded in 1997 as a catalyst for positive change in schools and communities, The Ophelia Project is committed to helping girls form healthy peer relationships while creating a safe social culture for all youth. Today, The Ophelia Project provides educational resources and original programming to raise awareness about relational aggression, and to advocate for healthy youth across the United States and Canada.

A single voice. A single act. A world of difference.

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