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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

Edinboro Native Prepares To Kayak Across Lake Erie

ERIE, PA (June, 2005) --- Local woman, Katie Christ, 29, is preparing to kayak solo nearly 30 miles across Lake Erie on Saturday, August 27th, 2005 in an effort to raise community awareness and support for The Ophelia Project. She will be leaving from Long Point, Ontario before dawn and is anticipated to arrive in the bay at East Dobbins Landing in Erie, Pa. some time after 12 noon to a congratulatory reception at the Bayfront Center for Maritime Studies.

“To the best of our knowledge, this feat has never been attempted,” said Erika Dauber, Communications Director for The Ophelia Project, “which makes this whole event even more exciting, not only for us, but for the entire Erie community.”

Christ is volunteering her time expressly because of her emotional connection to The Ophelia Project’s work. She is also passionate about encouraging youth in the Erie region to participate in outdoor recreation and to take advantage of the natural resources available in their own backyard.

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“Kayaking sustains me,” said Chriest. “When I am kayaking, I am home. I want kids to be able to find whatever it is that they can’t part with. For me, it’s kayaking. For someone else, it might be something different. The most important thing is to do whatever you have to do to find what you’re passionate about and go for it.”

Several pre-event promotions for Project Paddle will take place throughout the city during the months of July and August; including appearances by Chriest and The Ophelia Project volunteers at an Erie SeaWolves game, Celebrate Erie!, and Discover Presque Isle Days.

Current partners for Project Paddle include the Bayfront Center for Maritime Studies, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Presque Isle Partnership, the Plymouth Tavern, the Erie SeaWolves, and Print Communications; major sponsors are WSEE and WICU 12 television stations, the Healthy Youth Development Advisory Board, Bud Light, and *Canoe & Kayak* magazine.

The Ophelia Project is a national, nonprofit organization headquartered in Erie, Pa. Founded in 1997 as a catalyst for positive change within 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.

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