

Stephanie *Schill*

Rising architect
and award winner



Most passersby are attracted to the grandiosity and landscaping of many area homes, especially those along Lake Erie. But for recent Westlake High School graduate Stephanie Schill, every part of their design is captivating. "I'm definitely detail-oriented," says Schill, the best of show and first-place winner in the construction and architecture category at the 2008 Ohio Technology Education Association conference in March 2008. "Whenever I drive by a house, there is always something that looks cool to me."

As one of the major assignments for her technical drawing class, Schill was required to submit a design for the 2008 National City Home and Garden Show in January 2008. Following the theme *Bella Italia*, Schill designed a green Italian-style home for a fictional family of four.

She spent the four months leading up to the show examining floor plans, researching eco-friendly architecture and sketching. Using a three-dimensional design and drafting software application called AutoCAD, she developed the lifelike floor plan.

"I was able to make it look pretty realistic," Schill recalls. "I've paid a lot of attention to Italian architecture so I could make it look Italian but contemporary American, too."

Because the house was on a lakeside cliff, she was able to incorporate a walk-out basement and many balconies facing the waterfront. To incorporate green-friendly living, she added an overhanging roof to keep the house cooler in the summer and gutters designed to catch rainwater to reuse for nonconsumption purposes. If she had had a few extra weeks, she admits she would have learned to use the appropriate software to include a computer-generated walk-through of the inside of the home.

But the project was still so impressive, her technical drawing teacher suggested she submit it to the OTEA conference, where 655 projects from 18 Ohio schools were on display.

"[The OTEA conference] is pretty elite," says William Peters, OTEA school exhibits manager. "The competi-



tion brings out the best of the best. We've had projects that surpass college projects I've seen."

To prepare for such an intense competition, Schill pulled many all-nighters. "It may sound bad, but I'm a perfectionist. Once I start something, it's hard for me to stop until it's as close to perfect as I can get. I guess it's my personality."

Drawing mock floor plans as a little girl, she knew she wanted to be an architect.

"I've just always liked art and math, and architecture is a good balance between the two," says Schill, who was president of the technical drawing and design club *Tech-Mates* at Westlake High.

In the fall of 2008, Schill began studying architecture at Miami University in Ohio. "[The campus] kind of reminds me of Westlake," she says, unable to resist commenting on the Georgian-style buildings.

Studying art and architecture gives her "a greater appreciation for the beauty of buildings that most people just glance at. I know the hard work behind a design, and you know you're not just making a building but helping improve people's lives." —Katie Kuehn