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## Four DQ staffers are top 10 grads

*BY KRISTINA SMITH HORN*  
*Watchdog/enterprise reporter*

FREMONT -- When Erica Meek and Jessica Clinebell needed help with their calculus homework, they could count on one of their fellow Dairy Queen workers.

In between making Blizzards and french fries, Tessa Woodruff explained the math to Meek and Clinebell.

And when fellow DQ worker Lauren Cool had lots of homework, she motivated all three to be quick as well as efficient and thorough in cleaning at closing time so she could get to her schoolwork.

The hard work and team effort paid off when the four recently graduated among the top 10 academic students in their classes. Meek, Clinebell and Woodruff attended Fremont Ross High School, and Cool graduated from St. Joseph Central Catholic High School.

"We're like a family here," said Woodruff, who will study chemistry at Miami University (Ohio).

For years, they have balanced school, work and sports.

"It teaches you responsibility and time management," said Clinebell, who will study biology at Ohio State University.

Woodruff has worked there for four years, and Cool has been there for three. Each worked about 25 hours a week during school.

Clinebell and Meek have worked there for two years at about 15 hours a week.

"We've been together forever," said Meek, who will study pharmacy at Ohio Northern University. "That's how I got this job."

Cool, who will study sports management and communication at Otterbein College, said she'll miss working at Dairy Queen. She enjoys seeing so many people she knows come into the restaurant and working with Meek, Clinebell and Woodruff.

Dairy Queen owner Joanne Darr-Wagner will miss the foursome, too, when they leave in the fall.

"I'm really proud of them," she said.

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Jessica Clinebell, Erica Meek, Lauren Cool and Tessa Woodruff pose for a photo under the Dairy Queen sign on Oak Harbor Road. All four employees graduated this year with top honors. (Jonathon Bird | News-Messenger)