

Teen wins Aéropostale contest

BY JESSIE GABLE
STAFF WRITER

CLEVELAND, Tenn. — As Rebekah Romano bounces out of her Lee University dorm, she can't wait to talk about her mission trips to Peru and Guatemala, her new best friend and how she survived her first few days in college.

What she fails to mention is that her photo soon will be on walls and advertisements as part of an international modeling campaign for the teen clothing store Aéropostale.

The 17-year-old from Blue Ridge, Ga., was chosen from more than 6,000 applicants from the United States and Canada to receive a \$5,000 scholarship and modeling opportunity for the "Real Teen 2010" campaign by Aéropostale.

The contest was a way for the store to showcase eight teens for their "outstanding achievements" in volunteer work, said Chrissie Wilson, spokeswoman for the store. It was Romano's stories and photos about

her time in Peru and Guatemala that won the hearts of the voters.

But for Romano, the scholarship money is the real prize.

"I got government aid for the first semester, and I didn't know how I was going to pay for another semester," Romano said.

To enter the competition, Romano turned her mission trip experiences into an essay and video to be judged by her peers and a celebrity panel, Wilson said.

What makes Aéropostale so special to Romano? The modesty and quality of their clothes, she said.

"Other places in the mall like Hollister are twice as expensive, dark and loud," Romano said. "Clothes from Aéropostale last forever, and you can actually see in the store."

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Online: See Romano's video and profile at www.realteens2010.com.



Rebekah Romano is among eight teens chosen to win a \$5,000 scholarship and opportunity to model for teen clothing store Aéro-postale.