

TOLEDO TV LOOKS YOUNGER

UT freshman Austin-Nichole Zachrich is host of 2 youth-oriented programs

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By RYAN E. SMITH
BLADE STAFF WRITER

As a white stretch limousine pulled up to the curb at the University of Toledo's Rocket Hall, Qualin Harris squealed with excitement.

"Oh my gosh! Ohmygosh! Is it them?"

The chauffeur opened the door and five Hollywood-looking young women got out.

"I love you guys!" Mr. Harris continued in a high-pitched voice. "Oh my gosh, it's Austin-Nichole! ... Sign my chest!"

Maybe that last part was a little over the top, but Mr. Harris, a UT junior (whose voice usually is much deeper), was doing his best impression of a teenage groupie.

He's actually a cameraman who helped film the premiere episode of *Over The Edge*, a half-hour talk show geared toward high school and college students led by UT freshman Austin-Nichole Zachrich.

The limo scene filmed earlier this month featuring the show's five cast members (all college or high school students) will serve as the beginning to each installment of the show.

The program is one of two spearheaded by Ms Zachrich that will be available to local viewers this year. Her other half-hour show, *Garage TV*, is more of a variety show targeting middle-school students.

Both programs eventually will be aired on UT's television station and Channel 69 of Buckeye CableSystem. Times and dates have not been set. They also will be on the video Web site YouTube.com.

MULTIMEDIA

[UT freshman Austin-Nichole Zachrich talks about her TV show.](#)



Austin-Nichole Zachrich, center, with, from left, Kristine Sheltrown, Krista Hamlin, and Tara Holbein on the set of *Over The Edge*, a talk show geared toward high school and college students. (THE BLADE/ALLAN DETRICH)

Ms. Zachrich, 18, is no stranger to the spotlight.

"I was kind of known as the theater girl in my hometown, always on stage singing and dancing," she said.

She started her original TV show, which became known as *Austin-Nichole & Co.*, the summer after her eighth-grade year in Defiance when she met a woman from a local station who wanted kids to get involved there. Other local students helped her produce interviews, skits, and other segments that were fun and educational.

It led to Ms. Zachrich being named one of Ohio's top two youth volunteers by the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, and the show got picked up by stations in Alabama, California, and Minnesota, she said.

Perhaps the coolest parts have been her celebrity segments. They really got rolling a few years ago when a company called Backstage Creations invited her to cover the Teen Choice Awards.

"That's kind of where I got the chance to interview some people who were really popular with teens - Blink 182, Paris Hilton, Xzibit," she said. "After that I was able to say all these celebrities had been on the show. After that it was fairly easy."

More recently, she has spent time this summer on the Vans Warped Tour getting material from bands like Senses Fail and Motion City Soundtrack for her new shows.

Despite the amount of work it requires - an hour of programming can take 20 or 30 hours of time for her to edit - she didn't want to give it up when she went to college.

"I feel like kids have been watching me since I was a little kid," she said.

So Ms. Zachrich, who now lives in Holland, split the hour-long show into two. Garage TV is filmed out of her home and Over The Edge is done in a UT studio. She gets credit for the project as an independent study.

Don Reiber, director of media services in the department of communication at UT, saw some of her work before she enrolled at UT and said it was "pretty ambitious."

"I was somewhat impressed that she was able to make the contacts she did and assemble something ... on a regular basis."

John Andosca, a 22-year-old UT senior from Norwalk, Ohio, who is president of UTTV, the student TV broadcasting organization, has had fun working on Garage TV.

He said both sides benefit from Ms. Zachrich's shows. The programs offer a format that most other student shows haven't tackled and Ms. Zachrich and company get to harness UT facilities.

"They're not only getting the studio, but they're getting the expertise of people who work over there," he said.

Ms. Zachrich, who hopes to get into a career in broadcasting, said she thinks it's important to put something out there that is a positive influence.

It helps that she and the cast just have a great time - whether it's chatting about the merits of Web sites like MySpace.com or pretending to be a Southern chef while demonstrating a recipe.

"It's fun. It just gives us something to do," she said. "We're giving kids something that's fun, and it's fun for us to do."

Contact Ryan E. Smith at: ryansmith@theblade.com or 419-724-6103.



Barbara Zachrich touches up the makeup of her daughter, Austin-Nichole, on the set of Over the Edge. (THE BLADE/ALLAN DETRICH)

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