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Lakewood Resident Wins First "Be the Plus" Contest
Northeast Ohio enthusiast wins grand prize for sharing her favorite "pluses"

CLEVELAND, Oct. 13, 2008 — The Cleveland Plus Marketing Alliance announced **Mikki Kast** of Lakewood, Ohio, as the winner of its first "Be the Plus" contest. Kast, 39, whose submission included a photo of herself kayaking on the Cuyahoga River, was awarded two Continental Airlines tickets. Her entry depicted what she likes best about Northeast Ohio and is posted at www.clevelandplus.com.

Kast appreciates the region's many museums, theaters and park systems, and she is particularly fond of her everyday surroundings.

"I grew up here and I love the people," said Kast, originally from North Olmsted. "Just going to the West Side Market on the weekend, you see the diversity of Northeast Ohio."

The online contest, launched Aug. 24, 2008, allowed residents to showcase their favorite ways to live, work, learn and play in the Cleveland Plus region. Participants could request, download or create a "+" sign, and were required to capture themselves or friends on camera with the "+" as they enjoyed a favorite event, happening or place in Northeast Ohio.

Submitted photos and videos were judged on creativity and originality, prominence of the "+" sign and quality of the personal "Be the Plus" stories.

"This contest allowed residents to show off what they think makes our region exciting," said Rick Batyko, vice president regional marketing, Cleveland Plus Marketing Alliance. "The winning entry perfectly depicted that there is so much going on right in our backyard."

ABOUT CLEVELAND PLUS

Cleveland Plus is a campaign that brings all of Northeast Ohio together as one united region leveraging all of our strengths to compete for new businesses, leisure travelers, conventions and meetings. For additional information on Cleveland Plus, please visit www.clevelandplus.com.

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To view all contest entries, visit www.clevelandplus.com/contestdisplaynew.asp

KAST'S WINNING ENTRY:



**Mikki Kast
Lakewood**

"Kayaking in Cleveland on Labor Day weekend with my brother...in Lake Erie watching the tugs bring in the big boats, in Cuyahoga River enjoying the herons and beauty of it all, Waving to people at the Taste of Cleveland, running into neighbors on Whiskey Island listening to Reggae as the Blue Angels flew around...What a wonderful place to live and play. Get out and enjoy it any way that you can."

An advocate for Northeast Ohio, Kast has many recommendations for visitors and residents alike.

Her top five activity suggestions are:

1. Visit Lake Erie for sure. Possibly go to Whiskey Island and Wendy Park
2. Get to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum and then check out some local bands
3. Visit the Pro Football Hall of Fame and get Heggy's candy down in Canton
4. Take a bike ride down the Towpath Trail
5. Visit the Cleveland Museum of Art and check out Little Italy