VALLEY'S ALL-STARS
Local kids get College Crusade designation

BY JON BAKER

WOONSOCKET — Alicia Mello well remembers, as a fifth-grader at Citizens Memorial School, receiving the prestigious Mary Ann Jolicoeur Award for being the most outstanding student in her class.

"What made it so special was that my classmates and I were nominiated," reminisced Mello, now an eighth-grader, while sitting in an empty Woonsocket Middle School classroom less than a month after the final bell had rung. "I went up on the stage and saw the plaque with my name engraved on it. I felt so proud. I remember looking at my dad, and he had tears in his eyes.

When Mello, 13, discovered in November she had been selected one of only seven middle and high school students statewide to earn College Crusade of Rhode Island "All-Star" status, she admitted to "mixed feelings. I couldn't believe it when I heard the news," Mello gushed. "I was so happy. When I got home and my parents saw my smile, they said, 'Oh, we're so proud! We're so happy at school today, didn't I?' I told them, and they said, 'You know, nothing you ever do ever surprises us.' They were thrilled.

Fact is, two other local athletes gained the same honor, and reactions rivaled those of Mello. Ribisi said, "I love his enthusiasm. He's a very bright kid. He's not known by very many people. He's very into this program.

For that matter, so is Carter, who collects A's and B's in her courses at Central Falls. They include Rackley, a Woonsocket High freshman, and Qiana Carter, 13, and an eighth-grader at Calcutt Middle School in Central Falls.

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