

D211 POST: SCHAUMBURG SENIOR CROWNED NATIONAL AMERICAN MISS ILLINOIS TEEN



Schaumburg High School senior Courtney Larsen has been competing in pageants for nearly a decade. On September 26, she achieved a milestone when she was named the 2020 National American Miss Illinois Teen.

Larsen said she was shocked when announcement had been made.

“There were definitely tears shed,” she said. “I have never won a title before. I was so thrilled that I had finally accomplished my goal. I didn’t know how else to filter my emotions but to just cry.”

Due to COVID-19, this year’s pageant was handled remotely. Competitors submitted a resume, a video introduction, and an essay about a charity of their choice. Competitors then conducted an interview with a judge over Zoom. Larsen said the charity she chose to focus on was Life Goes On.

Each year, National American Miss Illinois Teen chooses a cause they will champion over the course of their reign. Larsen chose organ donation as her cause. She said it is a cause which has a personal connection.

"I'm very passionate about organ donation because my grandfather has been on the wait list for a kidney for the past six years," she said. "Plus, since getting my driver's license, I have heard a lot of strange misconceptions from my friends as they got theirs. Since then, I have become very passionate about teaching people what it means to save a life or eight through organ donation."

She added that one of the biggest misconceptions she has heard was that signing up meant the donor had to give up an organ immediately.

"I think it's important to understand that you will not give up anything until you pass away," she said.

Larsen's reign will run through July 2021, during which she will attend the national competition, perform hours of community service, and attend charity events and parades.



While the title does include a scholarship, Larsen said there are many benefits to the title.

“This will also look great on my college admissions essay,” she said. “But the biggest thing is that I will be able to meet other girls from around the country who are motivated to make a huge impact in their communities and the world. Being around them, I feel, will inspire me to do more as well.”

Larsen said that she would encourage girls and women of any age to participate in pageants.

“No matter your age, pageants will benefit you,” she said. “I believe they develop skills every woman needs to know growing up. I didn’t know I enjoyed public speaking before I did pageants. They also help build confidence that you will always use in future careers.”

Larsen will attend the National American Miss competition in November. Following graduation, she plans to attend Iowa State University where she will major in fashion design.

To learn more about organ donation visit lifegoeson.com.