

Miss Teen of America 2015 National Pageant

16 year old Cornelia Hayes of Le Grand, Iowa, was crowned Miss Teen of America 2015 on March 14, 2015. Cornelia is a junior ranking first in her class at Le Grand High School. She is a two year All-State Speech performer and is also involved in Student Council, Choir, Band and Theatre. Committed to service, Cornelia is an avid volunteer in her school and community. Hosted in Bloomington, Minnesota, The Miss Teen of America 2015 National Pageant was a beautiful nod to the past, celebration of the present and an exciting glimpse of the future.

Throughout the event the candidates competed in six distinct categories of judging, five of which account for 15% of the participant's score: Scholastic Achievement, Service to School and Community, Personal Development, Personality Projection and Poise in formal wear, and a General Awareness Test. The remaining 25% of the participant's score is determined during an Interview, which was conducted by a panel of five judges.

Upon their arrival the State Titleholders were welcomed by the reigning Miss Teen of America, Kiera Kinnaird, where they enjoyed photo opportunities on the Miss Teen of America red carpet and were introduced to a new look and feel of the organization's brand. Friday's orientation included an official introduction to the new partnership between the Miss Teen of America Organization and Special Olympics. Just one week earlier, Miss Teen of America shared in an inaugural event by participating with the Minnesota Cool School Polar Plunge. As established leaders within their schools, current titleholders and participants will join us in the advancement of our developing partnership focused on ensuring social inclusion is the norm.

Following a General Awareness Test, the State Titleholders joined Special Olympic Athletes at Sky Deck Sports Grille and Lanes in Mall of America for bowling, fellowship and fun. Friendships were forged and it is safe to say that everyone involved had a great time. The ladies enjoyed time riding rides and taking in the attractions at the nation's largest indoor family amusement park, Nickelodeon Universe, which is inside the Mall of America. The Titleholders were treated to these wonderful experiences largely due to the generosity of our wonderful sponsor Mall of America.

Saturday morning started off with personal interviews, which was followed by an afternoon of rehearsals. Prior to show time the Titleholders received a surprise visit from the program's very first Miss Teen of America, the lovely Denise Wallace-Heitkamp. Denise was able to share with the ladies some of her experiences and how the Miss Teen of America Pageant helped prepared her for the future. Past to present, the caliber of women involved in this pageant is remarkable.

Emceed by the talented Ali Carr, TV host on EVINE Live, the National Pageant Finals was packed full with touching moments and exciting surprises. Some highlights include: the National Anthem sung by Special Olympic athlete Maggie Erickson and signed by athlete Lauren Thysell, performances by singer/songwriter Bjorn Briel, Special Olympics Athlete escorts, a presentation by Global Messenger Allie Henley and Kiera Kinnaird's farewell, during which she wore a crown for the first time in the history of the Miss Teen of America Organization.

Final Results:

Miss Teen of America 2015: Miss Teen of Iowa, Cornelia Hayes (Le Grand, IA)

1st Runner-Up: Miss Teen of Minnesota, Ashley Becker (Maple Lake, MN)

2nd Runner-Up: Miss Teen of South Dakota, Shelby Kluver (Watertown, SD)

Spirit Award: Miss Teen of Missouri, Natasha Bailey (Urbana, MO)

About the Miss Teen of America Organization:

The Miss Teen of America Scholarship and Recognition Pageant was founded in 1983 by Warren Alexander, a former educator and pageant director, and designed to help young women reach their full potential. The scholastically based pageant recognizes young women ages 13-18 for their outstanding personal achievements, leadership abilities, and artistic, creative or athletic talents.

Today, the Miss Teen of America Organization reigns under a new leadership team with a vast array of pageantry and business experience. Sarah Bazey, Dorothy Benham, Sunny Hill and Becky Thoreson are dedicated to preserving the essence and integrity of the past, however, with a fresh vision for the future. Former titleholders and participants will be honored for helping to build the solid foundation upon which many lives have and will be touched.

Connect with Us:

The Miss Teen of America Organization invites all to engage in our journey. Please follow us on Facebook and Twitter and find us at missteenofamerica.com.

The Miss Teen of America Organization is grateful for the support of each of our wonderful sponsors who join us in celebrating the future of our nation's youth.