

While watching a new reality television show on TLC a local teen began to think about a new challenge. "Kim of Queens" on Lifetime network is the reality television show featuring a former Miss Georgia and her desire to be a pageant coach for young women with the vision of following in her footsteps. The reality show features her successful business venture of "A Pageant Place" and her steps to make everyday girls into pageant queens. "Mom, I want to do that. I want to do a pageant," Meadow Ryann, a 14 year old rising star musician from Charlestown told her mother, Jeannine Drollinger, while watching just the third episode of the new reality show.

"I just looked at her and said, no, no way," Jeannine stated.

Meadow wouldn't take no for an answer and still was asking her mom when Jeannine's cell phone went off. She had received an e-mail asking Meadow to participate in the upcoming 2014 Miss America's South Collegiate Outstanding Teen Pageant in Floyd County.

"The timing was surreal," Jeannine explained. "Meadow asked me what was wrong when I was reading the e-mail. I just looked at her and told her she wouldn't believe me if I told her. The e-mail I was reading was from Diane Lohr-Dohogne, the co-director of the local 2014 Miss America's Miss Collegiate South's Outstanding Teen pageant."

Drollinger said she spoke with Lohr-Dohogne over the phone and asked several questions regarding the pageant since Meadow had never participated in anything like that before. Even after speaking with Diane, Jeannine was still skeptical about allowing Meadow to participate.

"I just kept telling Meadow no, you don't have the time. I told her she wasn't a pageant girl and didn't even own a pair of heels," Drollinger explained.

A couple of weeks passed and while Meadow never gave up on the idea of participating, Jeannine still was not sold on the idea. Another phone call from Lohr-Dohogne and a meeting with her daughter, Clarissa, helped make Jeannine and Meadow more certain of the pageant.

"I met with Meadow and Jeannine at Wick's in New Albany. I knew after that Meadow was in. I called my mom and told her Meadow was in right after I left Wick's," Clarissa stated.

After the decision was made, then it was crunch time. Most girls who participate in pageants spend months upon months preparing for their big day. Meadow had about three weeks to prepare for the open pageant.

Meadow had to prepare her platform statement and resume to be presented to the judges prior to pageant day for insight for the judges' personal interview. She also had to find an outfit for the fitness, talent and evening gown competition and coordinating jewelry and shoes. The one thing she knew for sure, her talent she would sing an original song. Therefore, her platform, "Music With A Meaning" came to life.

Just days left before the pageant, Meadow borrowed a stunning red gown from a friend and

turned to another friend for some pageant guidance.

“Marie Fulkerson is amazing. She is my pageant coach. She worked with me right before the pageant and helped me prepare,” Meadow stated. “I had no idea what to expect or really how to prepare. She led me through everything I needed to know. She told me what to prepare for and she was right on!”

Meadow spent the two and a half days before pageant day, February 9, walking in heels since she had never walked in heels before. Meadow even had a performance scheduled the night before the pageant. Her fans were able to see Meadow perform, sing and play her guitar, in heels, as she was told not to take the heels off for any reason. She did what she was told and was able to walk in heels by pageant time.

Meadow awoke early on pageant Sunday to prepare for the big day.

“I got up early. I did my hair and make up then went to Newlin Hall to begin practice for the pageant,” Meadow said. “We started with practicing the opening dance. We did the opening number like 600 times and then learned the fitness routine and went through the talent. Every girl did really well. We all wanted to help each other. You have no idea how fast things go. You get on stage, do your thing and then you rush off stage rip off your shoes and take off running to the dressing room to get ready. Even though I just met the girls, it was like we were immediately a family. We all wanted to help each other get ready. It was really great! You had to change your clothes, change your jewelry, touch up your hair and touch up your make up. It was a lot to do each time.”

Meadow explained in great detail the entire day and each portion of the pageant. Her favorite part of the pageant was the interview with the judges.

“I was so nervous. I had heard horror stories about that part. The judges were really great. The judges were really nice. The interview is only six minutes. I thought they would ask me like six or eight questions. No, they just kept asking questions. They asked and you quickly answered each question so they could get to know you very well. I couldn't believe how many questions you can ask in six minutes. They asked me about my dog since he is a hairless dog and they asked me what made me nervous. I laughed and said ‘interviews!’,” Meadow recalled. “They also asked me what makes me laugh and what a perfect day would be. I told them a perfect day would be for me to perform and then go to a hard rock concert!”

There were six judges for the pageant, four Miss Indiana certified judges and two novice judges selected by the co-directors of the local pageant.

Meadow felt like she nailed the interview. The pageant contestants were taken to the judges in groups of four since the interviews were held off site prior to the pageant later in the day.

“You came out and there were other girls there. I was like, ‘yeah’. They were happy for me. All the girls felt like they did well. Everyone I talked to felt the interviews went good,” Meadow added.

The evening gown competition with the on stage interview question was also a favorite part of the day for Meadow Ryann. Participants draw their on stage question and Meadow recalled what her question was "What do you think is the one trait today's youth are lacking?"

"I answered 'Confidence. The most important thing is for you to believe in yourself. If you believe in yourself, others will too.' I answered it really without thinking. It may not be word for word how I answered it on stage, but it is close. I can't remember exactly," Meadow stated with a small smile.

Once the evening gown portion of the pageant was over, the waiting began.

"I was so nervous. I couldn't help it. I knew it was Meadow's first pageant, but I really thought she didn't do too bad. I couldn't stand the wait. It was forever," Jeannine recalled. "Ryan (Jeannine's husband and Meadow's dad) and I both thought one girl probably won. She was just stunning!"

Jeannine continued, "Then they finally came back with the results. They started with fourth runner up. Then third. I just kept thinking, well, she either didn't get anything, or did better than fourth or third. Then it was just Meadow and one other girl standing on stage holding hands. Then they said and the 2014 Miss America's Miss Collegiate South's Outstanding Teen is and he stopped. I was like come on. Just tell us already! I looked at Meadow and she was just smiling. It seemed like forever before he announced her! I couldn't believe it. Meadow just leaned forward and covered her face with her hands. Meadow cried!"

Meadow added, "I did cry. I couldn't believe it."

Meadow will now participate in the state pageant for Miss America's Outstanding Teen in Zionsville June 15- 21.

According to their overview on Miss America's website, "Miss America's Outstanding Teen has been organized to encourage positive achievement by helping to nurture and build the scholastic achievement, creative accomplishment, healthy living and community involvement of our nation's youth. Among its initiatives, Miss America's Outstanding Teen, Inc. hosts a national competition intended to encourage and reward the talent, communication skills, community service and academic achievement of girls between 13 and 17 years of age."

Miss America is a scholarship pageant. According to their website, "In 1945, the Organization began supporting women's education by offering its first scholarship. Today, the Miss America Organization is one of the nation's leading achievement programs and the world's largest provider of scholarship assistance for young women. Each year, the Miss America Organization makes available more than \$45 million in cash and tuition scholarship assistance."

Meadow will continue to prepare for the state pageant while working on her platform locally. She has already put the "Music With A Meaning" platform to good use.

"Myself along with another vocal group, The Asterino Sisters, have decided to come together, inspired by our own experiences, to share our music and message to help other youth believe in themselves. We will soon launch the B1 Indie Artist Tour. Our message is to B1 who believes in yourself, B1 who leads, not follows, B1 who creates their own identity, B1 who stands for something, something good. I believe music is a great way to gain the youth's attention and promote positive feelings and make a difference in their lives," Meadow stated in her platform statement for the pageant.

The first tour stop of the B1 Indie Artist Tour will be at Wick's Pizza in New Albany on Saturday, April 19. This performance will be a fundraiser for Sarah Booth, a 15 year old from Charlestown who has undergone a kidney transplant. All proceeds from ticket sales for the show at Wick's will go directly to Sarah and her family to help with medical costs.

According to Meadow, several acts have already committed to appear at Wick's including two local bands Second Perception and Lefty and the Lunatics and Jackie Dee, Kayla Lynn, The Asterino Sisters and Meadow Ryann.

"There may also be a special surprise guest. You don't want to miss this one! We have some big names. Jackie Dee is from 'My Big Fat American Gypsy Wedding' on TLC, Kayla Lynn is from West Virginia and The Asterino Sisters are from Ohio, they are appearing on America's Got Talent this season airing in June," Jeannine explained.

The B1 Indie Artist Tour will focus on schools and community events in the regional area of Illinois, Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky and West Virginia. Different acts will appear at different venues and locations.

"The B1 Indie Artist Tour will promote a positive message to B1 who believes in themselves and be a leader and go after goals. The concerts will also be a way for the artists to help raise funds to benefit others with medical conditions," Jeannine explained.

The sponsors of the B1 Indie Artist Tour are the New Albany Production House (www.naproductionhouse.com) and John Matthews Photography (www.johns-images.com).

Artists interested in performing as part of the B1 Indie Artist Tour should send an e-mail to b1indieartisttour@gmail.com.

For more information please visit the B1 Indie Artist Tour website B1indieartisttour.com.