

KLIFE

Keizer woman vies for Miss Petite 2020

By **BROOKLYN FLINT**
Of the Keizertimes

Kira Johnson, who was previously crowned Miss Oregon Petite 2020, is now after the title of 2021 USA Petite Ambassador.

From the very beginning, Johnson decided to use her platform to educate about the harms of drug abuse in hope of putting a stop to the current opioid crisis.

Before the 2020 pageant, Johnson did community service by picking up trash on walks and alongside roads. Throughout middle school and high school, she took part in student government and ASB.

After a while, Johnson felt like there was more she could be doing for her community, she said.

“So I challenged myself to do something new, and I think a few days later is when I saw the ad for the pageant and decided I needed to apply to get out of my comfort zone, try something new and jump at the chance to grow as an individual,” Johnson said.

Doing so made Johnson feel more confident and she felt like she was able to find herself again.

“Those feelings are what drives me everyday to be a better version of myself to not only benefit the people who are around my but my community, and most importantly myself,” she said.

Johnson knew that she wanted to use

Feel-Good STORY

Saluting the people that make us proud of our community

presented by



her platform to help people, but because of COVID-19, she wasn't sure how to. She came up with the idea of making care packages for homeless people and delivered five different donation packages. Johnson continued to volunteer and opened up a donation center in order to help those in need.

However, the biggest influence for Johnson to start pageants was the loss of her brother from an accidental fentanyl overdose. “He was everyone's favorite, so when he passed I really don't think anyone expected it. It was a city heartbreak,”



Kira Johnson, of Keizer, is running for the title of Miss Petite 2020. Submitted photo

she said.

The loss has led to some of Johnson's other family members to start using drugs, including her father. “Awareness of the opioid crisis may not save my brother but it may save my father, and it may save so many other beautiful and wonderful kids who have so much more life to live and so much more to give to the world,” she said.

Johnson feels the opioid crisis will continue to worsen unless changes are made for fix it. She sees a system that imprisons addicts as a particularly misguided approach. The withdrawal addicts face while locked up can damage their physical and mental health, she said.

She encourages everyone to learn more about the crisis and to donate to organizations such as The Opioid Spoon Project in North Carolina.

“Together we can work on educating our children and young adults of this community and world. We can bring awareness and talk about these things, they're hard conversations but you could quite literally save yours or someone's life,” Johnson said.

If Johnson wins the pageant for 2021 USA Petite Ambassador, \$200 will be donated to The Opioid Spoon Project foundation. Johnson said she will continue to use her platform to spread awareness on the drug crisis and do what she can to help others.

There is more information about the pageant and how to vote on the USA Petite website: www.usapetite.com/peoples-choice.

City seeking helping hands

The City of Keizer is soliciting applications for volunteers to be considered to serve in roles on regional and city work groups.

Openings are available on the Willamette Water Trail Partnership, the Mid-Willamette Valley Community Development Partnership, the Keizer Public Art Commission and as youth committee liaisons.

Anyone interested in applying for a position can pick up an application at Keizer City Hall at 930 Chemawa Road N.E., download a copy at www.keizer.org, or call/email Deputy City Recorder Debbie Lockhart at 503-856-3418 or lockhartd@keizer.org. Applications received by Wednesday, March 31, will be considered at the Thursday, April 8, volunteer coordinating committee meeting.

brainfood ANSWERS

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sudoku

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crossword