

Family Living

Final Opportunity for Oregon Teens to Apply for Miss Teen All American National Title

Pageant Officials have set June 11th as the final deadline for entry into the 21st Annual Miss Teen All American Pageant and urge all young women in the State to apply to take part in the excitement and glamour leading to the National Title. According to Marie Sweeney, President, "This is the premiere Pageant for teenagers in America and has the greatest number of former contestants in the modeling and entertainment industries today!" The MISS TEEN ALL AMERICAN Pageant will be staged Thursday, August 5th thru Sunday, August 8th, 1999 at the Miami Airport Hilton & Marina in world-famous Miami, Florida.

There is no talent competition and no experience necessary. Contestants are judged in three categories: Swimwear, Evening Gown and Personal Interview. To qualify, a young woman must be age 13 thru 19 as of August 1st, 1999; never married and a resident of the U.S., its possessions or Canada. To apply, young women

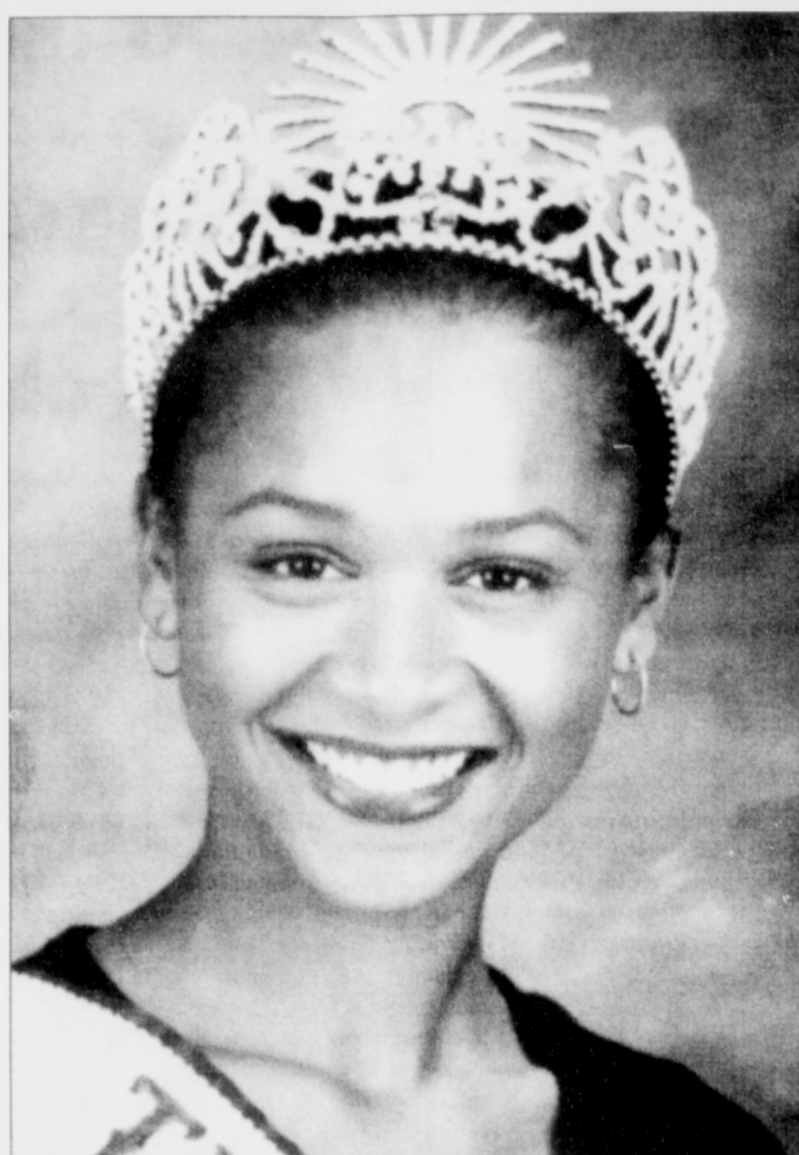
must send a recent photo, name, address, telephone number, date of birth and a short bio by FAX or MAIL to:

DEPT. D - MISS TEEN ALL AMERICAN

603 Schrader Avenue
Wheeling, WV 26003-9619
FAX: 1-304-242-8341 - Phone:
1-304-242-4900 - e-mail:
teenallam@aol.com

MISS TEEN ALL AMERICAN 1999 will receive a fabulous array of prizes including \$5,000 CASH, a Personal Appearance Contract, Jewelry, Luggage, a fur Coat, a \$500 Shoe Wardrobe, Travel Opportunities and much more!

Mrs. Sweeney stated, "ALL Contestants at the MISS TEEN ALL AMERICAN Pageant will be interviewed by representatives from the TV/Film industry and Modeling Agency Personnel...people who can help these young women with their careers, whether they win or not!"



Alita Dawson
Miss Teen All American 1998

Grades 7 through 9

A common stereotype holds that teenagers are rebellious, are ruled by peer pressure, and court danger even to the point of self-destructiveness. Although teens do often seem unresponsive to their parents as they struggle to become independent, teens need parental support, involvement, and guidance more than ever.

Young teens can experience extreme and rapid shifts in their bodies, emotional lives, and relationships. Adolescence is often a confusing and stressful time, characterized by mood changes and deep insecurity, as teens struggle to figure out who they are and how to fit in while establishing their own identities. It's not surprising that this is the time when many young people try alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs for the first time.

Parents may not realize that their

young teens feel surrounded by drug use. Nearly nine out of ten teens agree that "it seems like marijuana is everywhere these days." Teens are twice as likely to be using marijuana as parents believe they are, and teens are getting high in the places that parents think are safe havens, such as around school, at home, and at friends' houses.

Although teens may not show they appreciate it, parents profoundly shape the choices their children make about drugs. Take advantage of how much young people care about social image and appearance to point out the immediate, distasteful consequences of tobacco and marijuana use — for example, that smoking causes bad breath and stained teeth and makes clothes and hair smell.

Parents Can Help Reduce Underage Drinking

GUEST OPINION BY GARY WEEKS
DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

In our work at the Department of Human Resources to help Oregonians achieve independence and self-sufficiency, alcohol and other drug abuse is a problem we see every day. Among young people, by far the biggest problem is alcohol abuse.

We estimate that 50 percent of the 18,000 families receiving public assistance from the DHR Adult and Family Services Division have alcohol or drug problems. And in cases where children are removed from their homes because of abuse or neglect, more than 62 percent of the parents in the homes have substance-abuse problems.

DHR caseworkers know their clients' problems don't just appear suddenly in adulthood. They start when people are young, particularly in the teen years.

For example, kids who drink try alcohol for the first time at an average age of about 12. And kids who start drinking before age 15 dramatically increase their risk of becoming alcoholics as adults.

In Oregon, one in four eighth-graders has used alcohol in the past month, and among 11th graders the rate is more than 40 percent. At colleges, binge drinking by students is at epidemic levels — more than 60 percent of male college athletes admit they binge drink.

Binge drinking — having more than five drinks in a sitting — is one of the most dangerous drinking activities because it can easily result in quick death from alcohol poisoning.

Alcohol is the number-one substance-abuse problem among youths. It's cheap and easy to get, and kids drink to have fun, relieve stress and boredom, or to escape from personal problems.

In DHR, we campaign vigorously to prevent kids from using alcohol, and we support programs that provide treatment to kids and adults who need help with dependency problems.

The Office of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs is DHR's lead program on substance problems. Among other things, OADAP contracts with local governments and other entities to provide prevention and treatment services, and distributes grants to local communities and Native American tribes to operate their own programs.

The Adult and Family Services

Division and Office for Services to Children and Families work hard to help families with alcohol problems by referring them to places that provide treatment.

A special task group appointed by Gov. John Kitzhaber recently studied the problem of underage drinking and made several recommendations for solutions. Most of the recommendations rely heavily on local involvement and action.

Government can do only so much, especially in areas such as preventing young people from starting to use alcohol.

Research and experience show that parents are the first line of defense in any effort to change behavior by young people. Par-

ents are in the best position to see signs of problems first, and they have the most influence over their kids, even if sometimes it doesn't seem like they do.

Parents can do several things. First of all, parents should never furnish alcohol to their children. Some parents believe the kids "are going to drink anyway," so it's better to let them drink at home. Furnishing alcohol to kids is not only illegal, but it also sends a dangerously wrong message that drinking is OK.

In addition to not allowing kids to drink at home, parents who use alcohol should be good role models by drinking responsibly, such as with meals, and not drinking excessively.

Talking to kids about drinking while driving and other dangers of alcohol use is very important. It's not always easy to talk to kids, especially teen-agers, but the messages will get through.

Parents should always watch for signs of alcohol use, such as a sudden changing behavior or a tendency to be withdrawn. And know where your kids are going and who their friends are.

Please talk to your kids. The Oregon Prevention Resource Center in Salem has helpful information on how to talk to kids about alcohol. Just call 1-800-822-6772.

Gary Weeks is director of the Oregon Department of Human Resources.

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