



Young Lady with Down Syndrome in Miss Teen Austin Beauty Pageant

Susan Prior, TxP2P Staff

Who would have thought that a 17-year-old girl with Down syndrome who loves fashion, clothes and modeling would be invited to participate in a beauty pageant? Well, some dreams do come true after all. It happened to our daughter Brenna. It was actually quite an unusual set of circumstances that led Brenna to be in the Miss Teen Austin Beauty Pageant on March 1st in Austin. The Executive Director of TxP2P, Laura Warren, had received a letter addressed to her mother (deceased) from the National Miss Teen Austin inviting her daughter to try out for the pageant. Laura, not being a teenager, offered the invitation to Brenna.

We called the National office to see if we could use Laura's invitation and they said yes. Brenna had to attend a training session where she filled out an application and had to go into a room with judges and answer one question. The pageant coordinator would then decide if she could participate in the pageant.

Brenna was one of 900 girls that attended the training. We thought she didn't have a chance at all. But within 2 days, we received a call from the National office stating that Brenna had been accepted to be in the Miss Teen Austin Pageant. She was so excited. Our wonderful friends and family helped us to raise the entry fee monies we needed to participate.

This pageant was based on interviewing skills and modeling casual and formal wear. Brenna attended the training class and rehearsal and was so confident it brought tears to our eyes. She practiced the "walk" every day in preparation for the pageant. The day before the pageant was the personal interview with the judges. She had to go into a room by herself and answer questions. We had also practiced possible questions they could ask her. She was pretty nervous but when she left the room she shouted, "I did it." She was so happy!

The day of the pageant she was so confident, excited and nervous. I think her mom and dad were more nervous for her though. She modeled her casual and formal wear as practiced and even answered her question on stage with the other 45 girls in her age group. We were so proud of her!

Brenna did not place in the finals nor did she win a prize at the National level. She did meet many nice young ladies and was included in every aspect of the pageant. We think she won the biggest prize of all - she built her self-esteem and proved that she could do something she had only dreamed of by having the confidence and determination to just try. She was thrilled with being a part of it all and will remember it for the rest of her life. As will her mom and dad.

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