

From Depressed Teen to Pageant Queen

San Diego woman wins statewide pageant for girls and women with disabilities

SAN DIEGO, CA, UNITED STATES, June 2, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Twenty-year-old autistic San Diego native Sydney Cook recently won the title of California Miss Amazing in the Jr. Miss age category. Miss Amazing is a national pageant circuit exclusively for girls and women with disabilities; its purpose is to promote self-esteem and self-advocacy within this population.

A Background of Struggle:

Sydney was not always the active, optimistic, initiative-taking young woman she is today. In fact, just three years ago, she was isolated and suffering from severe mental health issues. This all turned around when, at the age of seventeen, she was diagnosed with autism. An autism diagnosis is usually given before the age of eight; but for many girls and women (specifically those without co-occurring intellectual disability) their autism is not detected until much later in life because they tend to hide and internalize their autism-related struggles. This constant hiding, or “masking,” as it is known in the autistic community, often results in secondary mental health issues such as depression and anxiety disorders. (Milner et al.) This is what happened with Sydney.

New Hope:

Being diagnosed with autism allowed Sydney to unravel the previously enigmatic struggles she had faced for her entire life. She found the autistic self-advocate community, where she learned that autism is not a disease or illness, and that autistic people thrive when they are accepted and supported for who they are, struggles and all. These life changing lessons sparked Sydney's own journey of self-acceptance. Now, she wants to share these lessons with the world and advocate for autistic and other disabled people to be accepted and supported in all areas of life. Entering the California Miss Amazing pageant seemed like the perfect way to do this.

Moving Forward:

Sydney was awarded the title of California Miss Amazing queen in the Jr. Miss age division and will be attending the National Miss Amazing pageant in Nashville this summer. She is now available for appearances in her official capacity as a California Miss Amazing title holder. She can do individual meet-and-greets and/or speak to groups about autism, disability advocacy, acceptance, and inclusion.

About Sydney:

Sydney Cook is a passionate autistic advocate, artist, optimist, and dreamer. She is always

seeking ways to help people and create positive change in the world, no matter how small. She believes that inclusion and acceptance of people with disabilities makes a better world for everyone. <https://linktr.ee/awkwardhipster>

Contact Sydney at sydneycook68@gmail.com to arrange for her to appear at your event, which may include but is not limited to:

- school assemblies or classroom visits
- scout troop or other youth club meetings
- autism sensitivity training for employers
- autism and disability-specific events, conferences, symposiums, etc
- civic engagement clubs and events

Works Cited

Milner, Victoria, et al. "A Qualitative Exploration of the Female Experience of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)." *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, Springer US, June 2019, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6546643/#CR14.

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California Miss Amazing Jr. Miss 2021

Sydney Cook

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