

# Local pageant supports charity

BY CHELSIE YOKUM  
Staff Reporter

Staying caught up with current events, visiting sick children in the hospital, giving demonstrations to educate local residents about installing and using AED machines, escorting guests at NEMO's fall fundraising gala: these aren't activities one usually associates with beauty pageants. But these are all tasks 2012 Miss Northeast Counties titleholder Jenny Zweifel has participated in this past year, thanks to her pageant win.

This year, the search for the next pageant queen will continue with the 2013 Miss Northeast Counties pageant at 7 p.m. Jan. 26 at Kirksville Middle School. The annual pageant is a preliminary to Miss Missouri and Miss America.

The pageant, run by executive director Angela Caraway, accepts young women between ages 17 to 24 in the northeast Missouri area. The application process consists of submitting a résumé, filling out a fact sheet, creating a platform statement and signing a 40-page contract, Zweifel said. Instead of an entry fee, each contestant is required to donate \$100 to the Miss America Organization's national platform — Children's Miracle Network hospitals.

"The money raised for that charitable organization is really one of the big cornerstones of the entire Miss America organization," production director Todd Caraway said.

Todd said some contestants' families donate the money and some organize fundraisers to raise the money. Once selected, contestants compete in five categories: talent, private interview, swimwear, eveningwear and on-stage question, according to [missnortheastcounties.org](http://missnortheastcounties.org).

In addition to fundraising for the CMN, Miss Northeast Counties titleholders travel to a CMN hospital to visit with the children, as well as work with other local organizations in Kirksville, such as Heartland Task Force's Daddy Daughter Dance, Todd said.

Zweifel, now a Truman State admissions counselor, said being a part of the Miss America organization helped her grow immensely in the past year, and the benefits of competing in the pageant were extensive.

"You have to work on everything from being poised under pressure," Zweifel said. "You interact with children, you interact with seniors, you interact with everyone from all different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. You have to learn how to find common ground with them, because they're looking up to you."

In addition, Zweifel said she gained valuable interviewing skills from the 10-minute private interview each candidate completes with the judges prior to the pageant. Zweifel said candidates are asked about anything from their opinion about current events to their personal experiences.

Winners are selected by a panel of five to seven judges, one of whom is a certified Miss America judge and one of whom is a novice judge. The remain-



Submitted photo  
Almuna Jenny Zweifel, the 2012 Miss Northeast Counties title holder, smiles as she receives the title last year. This year's pageant continues to encourage contestants to donate to charity and will occur at 7 p.m. Jan. 26. at Kirksville Middle School.

ing judges are chosen based on their education and talent, Angela said.

In addition to winning the title of Miss Northeast Counties and advancing to the Miss Missouri pageant, titleholders receive a chance to win a \$10,000 scholarship and a trip to the Miss America pageant, an official Miss America Preliminary crown and sash, a \$400 cash scholarship from the Miss Northeast Counties Board, stage and vocal coaching sessions, a discounted competition gown, interview, modeling and talent coaching sessions, and more, according to [missnortheastcounties.org](http://missnortheastcounties.org).

Melody Chambers, Miss Northeast Counties board member, helps organize and run the event. She became involved with Miss Northeast Counties after her daughter, freshman Madison Chambers, won Outstanding Teen through the program during 2010. Chambers said she thinks the benefits help young women hone valuable skills.

"The girls that I've seen go through doing that in part have really developed stronger communication skills and the ability to represent themselves and something that they care about in a way that is very intelligent

and well-educated and with eloquence," Melody said.

Todd said he did not want his daughters to be involved with a beauty pageant at first.

He said his previous misconceptions were proved wrong after his daughters became involved with Miss Northeast Counties about six years ago.

"My first thought was, 'No way. I don't want them to be involved with a beauty pageant,'" Todd said. "I had those stereotypical ideals in my head about what this would be. When you really dig into it, it's not even close to that. Yeah, when these girls go on stage, there's a part of it where they've got to look good. But that's not what these young ladies get out of it. They learn how to be confident. And they're put into situations that challenge them to think and grow."

Although the deadline for applying for the 2013 pageant has passed, Chambers said she encourages anyone interested in participating to apply for next year.

"In the end, the organization is about recognizing achievement and encouraging community service and providing scholarship to young women so that they continue their education," Chambers said.

**BROHOOF** - High five

**FACEHOOF** - Facepalm

**EVERYPONY** - Everybody

**WELCOME TO THE HERD**

- Welcome to the bronny community

**PARASPRITE** - Online heckler

**THAT'S 20% COOLER** - That's awesome!

**10 SECONDS FLAT** - Really quickly

according to <http://knowyourmeme.com/memes/brony Speak>



## 'My Little Pony' draws male fans

'Bronies' emerge as a new fanbase for television show

BY EMILY WICHMER  
Staff Reporter

Since it first aired during the mid-1980s, the animated television show "My Little Pony" has seen several changes, and not just in its animation, characters and storylines. The audience demographic has changed as well.

The show has given rise to a new type of viewer — college-aged men. Freshman Zach Wallis said the show originally was aimed at young girls, but has sparked a fandom predominantly composed of 18 to 25 year old males, who watch the show for its entertainment value and good morals. Wallis said members of this group call themselves "Bronies," a name mixing the slang term "bro" with the show's characters, ponies. Wallis said the fandom also includes "Pegasisters," the Bronies' female counterparts.

The Brony community began about two years ago when the new version of the show, "My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic," first aired. While he has met a few Bronies at Truman State, Wallis said the community mainly exists online in the forum "Equestria Daily."

Wallis said the show's creators are aware of the Brony community and they appreciate the community's support.

"There's a mutual relationship between the creators and fans," Wallis said. "If the Brony community likes something, the creators will put it in the show. For example, they've added and developed characters the Bronies liked. That kind of relationship is something you don't see very often."

He said the main characters of the show represent different values and characteristics, such as kindness, charity and a strong work ethic. The setting is idealistic, Wallis said, and the premise of the show is based on love and tolerance. He said he enjoys the show because everyone can take something away from it. Like fairy tales, the show introduces a moral, but does so in a way that is relatable, insightful and funny, Wallis said.

Wallis said the Brony community has taken the messages of love and tolerance to heart. He said the community is a welcoming and open place to be, and the friendly atmosphere has inspired members to express their creativity.

Freshman Brony Devan Baetz said the creative output of Bronies is wide-ranging.

"Bronies have produced origi-

nal writings, artwork, games and music," Baetz said. "The artists are very passionate about the show, and their passion shines through in their work."

Baetz said he enjoys writing, and the Brony community has inspired him to pursue writing a few pieces of Brony-inspired fan fiction.

Although he has had positive experiences with the community, Baetz said individuals outside the Brony community associate negative attributes with the Bronies, such as being "creepy" or "pedophiles."

Freshman Sara Billiard, a Pegasister, said she thinks the media has played a large part in the negative stereotypes.

"When the Brony community was a fairly new idea, the media jumped on the members who were very extreme, cementing this negative stereotype," Billiard said. "Most Bronies aren't like that. It's like calling someone who plays video games an immature slob. Maybe there are some people like that, but that doesn't describe everyone who plays video games. People can't make generalizations like that. It's mean and unfair, but that's exactly what they're doing to the Bronies."

Billiard said Bronies are kind and inclusive in general. She said she will admit not all members are perfect, but no fandom is. She said the characters inspire Bronies to better themselves.

Twilight Sparkle, the unicorn pony Billiard identifies with, is introverted and enjoys studying, she said. She said the character makes her feel like it isn't bad to be introverted.

Billiard also said there is a double standard when it comes to Bronies. Because she is a girl, people have been more accepting of the fact that she is a "My Little Pony" enthusiast.

"If I say I like 'My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic,' people are OK with it," Billiard said. "But a guy can say the same thing, and people think he's nuts. I find it kind of unfair, but I'm glad at least the Pegasisters are more positively changing the way others perceive older people who watch the show."

Wallis said he encourages skeptics to watch the show, because its message supports the Brony community.

"The show's primary point is that it doesn't matter who you are," Wallis said. "You can be very different and still find your place and make friends. The show teaches you to accept people regardless of your differences, which is something we are sadly lacking in our world. People are treated badly or made fun of for silly things, like enjoying children's shows. It's something people think diminish you, but shouldn't."

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