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Lafayette Local Eden Sussenguth to Compete for Miss California Crown

By Pippa Fisher

How hard can it be to compete in a beauty pageant?

That is what 23-year old Lafayette native and Acalanes High School graduate Eden Sussenguth, thought as she watched the Miss Universe pageant with her family. But, "Little did I know all the work that goes into it!" reflects Sussenguth, as she herself now prepares to compete for the Miss California crown.

Sussenguth will be representing the East Bay in the upcoming State Miss California U.S.A. pageant being held Dec. 2-4, 2016 in Long Beach.

Sussenguth did not grow up competing in beauty pageants the way that many contestants do. Her mother's half-sister had been Miss United States, which, she says, "definitely peaked my interest when I was growing up." But, instead she was more focused on athletics and school. "The closest thing to pageants I've ever done was modeling for Teen Vogue in high school."

She attended California Polytechnic University in San Luis Obispo and graduated with Cum Laude honors in 2015. During college Sussenguth was a member of the Sigma Kappa sorority and



Eden Sussenguth

Photo provided

completed over 1,000 hours of volunteer work with the Alzheimer's Association, Special Olympics and other community organizations.

Currently she works for an East Bay nonprofit organization, STAND For Families Free of Violence, which provides prevention, intervention and recovery for domestic violence victims.

Sussenguth says that this is her first time competing for Miss California U.S.A. "I competed in a preliminary competition, Miss Pacific Coast, this past July to practice before I head to the State competition. I ended up getting First Runner-up and won the Miss Photogenic portion of the competition."

She reflects, "This was a big accomplishment for me considering it was my first pageant and girls have been competing since they were young."

She says her favorite part about pageants is setting a goal for yourself and doing everything in your power to achieve it. "A lot of the preparation is not only physical, like working out everyday and eating very clean, but also becoming mentally strong, confident and re-

ally knowing where you stand on tough political and worldly issues."

She says that she really feels like this process has helped her grow into the best version of herself.

Sussenguth is focused right now on winning the crown and title of Miss California but from there she wants to use the title to get more involved in the community, bringing awareness to the issue of violence against women.

"I'd love to work with young girls in particular and help instill the importance of having confidence, self-worth, and how to make healthy choices for oneself. I love that pageants allow young women the opportunity and platform to share their voice about issues that are important to them."

She says that after the competition she hopes to get more involved in modeling and shares that her ultimate "dream job" would be to have a cooking show.

But for now Sussenguth says, "I'm so thankful for everything in my life right now and I'm looking forward to see what the future has in store for me!"

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