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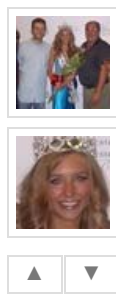
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Pageant Crowns Miss Teen Westchester

by Dan Curtis 09/05/11

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Jackie Groccia stands alongside her family moments after being crowned Miss Teen Westchester

Photo Credit: Dan Curtis

WHITE PLAINS, N.Y.- Jackie Groccia of Eastchester was excited to be given a crown for winning the Miss Teen Westchester People's Choice award Sunday night at the White Plains Performing Arts Center. Little did she know she'd be presented with a much bigger and more meaningful crown just moments later when she was named Miss Teen Westchester 2012.

"I'm so mind-blown right now, I can't even speak and I was crying for about ten minutes straight," the 14-year-old said. "It's the most incredible thing that's ever happened to me and I'm so happy, so proud of myself."

Groccia will go on to compete in January for the title Miss Teen New York and she said she's already excited to get back on stage.

Her father Albert Groccia appeared overwhelmed after the pageant.

"I'm so proud of her," Albert Groccia said. "As a father, I'm just so proud of my daughter."

Last year's winner, Samantha Gold of North Castle, was crying tears of joy as she handed her crown off to Groccia and she had some advice to give on what the title Miss Teen Westchester is all about.

"My biggest piece of advice is for her to just remember our tag-line, 'smart, beautiful, you,'" Gold said. "You have to keep smiling and keep being yourself because that's obviously what got you here."

Lisa Lopane of Katonah was named first runner-up and Holly Roth of North Castle was named second runner-up. Roth says she'll definitely be back for

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her second Miss Teen Westchester pageant next year and Lopane is unsure of her plans, but said she loved being on stage talking about what she believes in and stands for.

"I love being up there and having everyone's eyes on me, but most importantly I love getting my words across and having it touch people in the audience," Lopane said. "I don't know if I'll be back next year, we'll have to see what God brings."

Pageant Executive Director Laura Giannone said she loves being a part of the pageant because of the way the girls become young women throughout the competition.

"It's a way for women to grow, articulate and learn," Giannone said. "These are role models and you can't get better role models than these young ladies."

Giannone also knows that this year's Miss Teen Westchester is the perfect fit for the crown.

"Jackie Groccia is such a wonderful young lady," Giannone said. "She is absolutely everything you would encompass in Miss Westchester."

Jordan Decker of Pleasantville took home both the Miss Congeniality award and the Style award. Joann DiBuono of Larchmont won the service award.

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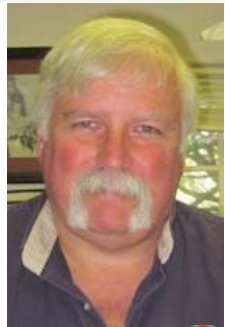
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