

GATEWAY TO THE REST

• *meet Miss Missouri 2015 + Miss Gateway St. Louis, Kensie Garber*



VOLUME ONE

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heyo from miss gateway st. louis

Welcome to my newest project, one that is so special to me and the legacy that each candidate in the Miss America Organization, near and far, has made on my life and trajectory thus far. Each year, I have people tell me that they could never see themselves as a candidate for Miss Missouri or that they don't know where to get started. **I didn't either, and I still don't - we're in this together.** Competing for Miss Missouri has been one of the most interesting and rewarding ventures of my life, and I'm excited to share the stories of some of the women who have benefitted from participation in this program. Join me as we unlock the people + the "real" behind the crown.

Holly Enowski

MISS GATEWAY ST. LOUIS 2020

GATEWAY TO THE *BEST***Local title:** Miss Gateway St. Louis**Talent:** Jazz en Pointe**Platform:** CharacterPlus: Inspiring Lives of
Integrity Through Education**Scholarship dollars earned:** \$15,000
+ full-ride scholarship to Troy University

2015

meet mckensie garber-saunders

Written by *Holly Enowski*

McKensie Garber-Saunders is *the only Miss Missouri's Outstanding Teen to ever be crowned Miss Missouri*. Originally from Hale, Mo., Kensie is the daughter of educators and has advocated for character education for much of her life. "I spoke about not letting your circumstances define your character or your potential," said Garber-Saunders of a time when she visited Ferguson, Mo. "That day was one of the most rewarding days of my life and I formed a bond with one of the girl students who I am still in contact with."

"I credit all of the joy, wisdom and strength in my life to God," Garber-Saunders said. "Do everything with all your heart, especially loving and laughing."

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- MCKENSIE GARBER, MISS MISSOURI 2015

TIPS + TRICKS

words of wisdom ft. Miss Missouri 2015

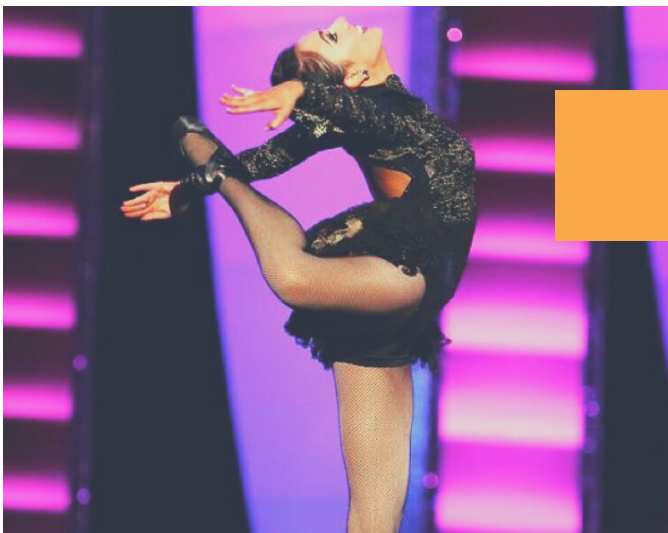


EVENING GOWN

"Enjoy the moment and be present. Pretend you're in that moment in movies when the girl walks down a fancy staircase in a killer gown and everyone thinks she's the most beautiful woman in the world."

BEAUTY

"Don't overdo it! I struggled with this coming from a dance and theatre background. **Remember to be authentic!**"



TALENT

Leave your heart out on the stage. Feel the energy of the crowd and give them all you've got. Show your personality!



FITNESS

Find the healthiest ways for you to eat healthy and exercise. **Everyone's body is different.**

"I was too hard on myself for swimsuit and I regret it. Have fun when you're on stage, show your personality, own the moment, and pretend you're Wonder Woman!"

SOCIAL IMPACT

"Choose something that truly matters to you and your life story. Do acts of service that relate to your platform so you are already making a difference."



INTERVIEW

"Go into it confidently and have fun. **Think of it as a conversation, not a quiz.** Choose five things you really want the judges to know about you and find ways to naturally fit those things into your answers.

MISS MISSOURI'S OUTSTANDING TEEN 2008

"When I started competing In Outstanding Teen (OT), I was most surprised by the caliber of competition - the level of commitment and excellence it took to really do well at state." From not making the Top 10 at state her first year, Kensie rose to place as third runner-up, first runner-up and eventually the winner on her fourth attempt for the crown.



Competing taught Kensie to have perseverance, as she competed all four year she was eligible. "You go through a lot of changes as a teenager of course," Garber-Saunders said. "I had never been faced with so much personal disappointment when I got first runner-up my third year. I felt discouraged and overwhelmed to put my heart and energy into it another year." The state of Missouri is sure glad she did, as she went on to compete at Miss America's Outstanding Teen,

During her year as Miss Missouri's Outstanding Teen, McKensie developed a very special relationship with Children's Miracle Network child **Cassidy-Rae Luebbering** (above) and her parents Nathan and Renee. (Hi, C-Rae!) She crowned Cassidy-Rae her Miracle Princess when she was MMOOT and Miss Missouri. Cassidy-Rae was also a flower girl In Kensie's wedding.



MISS MISSOURI 2015

Her journey to the Mexico Military Academy stage for Miss Missouri was short-lived; Kensie won on her first try as Miss Gateway St. Louis. Some of her favorite moments as a "Gateway Girl" include the sleepover at Lauren's house and "feeling like you're part of a family."

As Miss Missouri, McKensie had the opportunity to meet veteran **Joey Avellone** (above) at a Gateway Grizzlies baseball game on the Fourth of July, where they both threw out first pitches and became friends. She even presented him a special award at the Miss Missouri competition and dedicated her dance performance to him.

"I learned a lot from doing Outstanding Teen and I really credit that to my success my first year competing in Miss," Garber-Saunders said. "Being Miss Missouri is about being able to relate to people from all walks of life."

THEN



+

NOW

Since being named Miss Missouri's Outstanding Teen and Miss Missouri, Kensie has moved to Los Angeles to pursue acting in Los Angeles while working for Missouri-based company VanDOit Adventure Vans. She performs and films projects with sketch comedy group "The Monarchy" and studies improv at the Upright Citizens Brigade Theatre. In addition, Kensie and her husband Laine lead worship for their church's children ministry.



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MCKENSIE GARBER-SAUNDERS:

MY PARTICIPATION
IN MISS MISSOURI +
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FOR LIFE BY REALLY
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