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Crowning glory: Kayla Roush to represent Oregon in National Miss High School America contest

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By Mary Owen Kayla Roush, a sophomore at Regis High School in Stayton, will travel to Missouri next month to compete in the National Miss High School America Pageant.

Kayla Roush loves horseback riding, cheerleading, playing basketball, going to movies and hanging out with friends when she isn't volunteering or studying for school.

This last month, the 16-year-old Regis High School sophomore took on a new venture: representing Oregon at the National Miss High School America Pageant.

Taking place March 4-6 in Branson, Mo., the pageant stresses "intelligence, high moral character, genuine charm, confidence, strong speaking and communication skills, community service, poise and spirit," said Roush. The winner of the national pageant walks away with a \$10,000 college scholarship.

"I'm super proud to represent my school and the state of Oregon in Branson, and I'm proud to be a role model for all the young girls out there," said Roush, who lives in Scio with mom, Karen, and dad, Brent. She also has a brother, Justin, 25.

Volunteering makes Roush feel good about herself, she said, and is a major asset for participating in the pageant.

"Donating my time to others in need always puts a smile on my face – and helps build my faith because I'm helping others who truly appreciate it," she said.

For the past few months, Roush has helped her friend deal with her mother's battle with cancer.

"With the loss of my great-grandmother and grandfather to cancer, I understand her pain," said Roush, adding she may make a career as a grief or youth counselor after college. "I will always be there whenever she needs me."

Roush recently collected and donated three large boxes filled with new athletic shoes to the local Boys and Girls Club. She also puts her love of animals to the test by cleaning up stalls and carrying out other duties on Saturdays at Light-house Animal Sanctuary. Of course, playing with them is a highlight of her day, she said.

"I love working with the animals," she said. "It's a great bonding experience."

Roush has put a few of her volunteer activities on hold to raise pageant funds for air fare for two to Branson and a pageant wardrobe that includes four outfits, shoes and accessories. She seeks sponsors from local businesses and individuals, who will receive community recognition for their tax-deductible donations.

"In today's economy, I know things are tight," Roush said. "I'm grateful for your contribution. Thank you for your support and for believing in me."

Contributions may be sent to: Kayla Roush, 39454 Shelburn Drive, Scio, OR 97374. For more information, call Karen Roush at 503-931-5631.



Information on the pageant is at www.americashighschoolpageant.com.