



Bristol was well-represented at the Miss Connecticut and Miss Connecticut's Outstanding Teen scholarship pageants in New London's Garde Arts Center. From the top left, clockwise, Miss Litchfield County Brittany Decker of Bristol is selected as a semi-finalist on Saturday; Miss Bristol Nicole Paquette competes in the lifestyle/ fitness event on Saturday as a semi-finalist. Dana Brooks of Bristol, Miss Greater Waterbury, tap dances during the talent competition on Thursday night; Marissa Barnard of Bristol, Miss Hartford County's Outstanding Teen, competes in lifestyle/ fitness on Friday; Miss Rocky Hill's Outstanding Teen Allison Boilard of Bristol introduces herself at the opening of Friday's preliminary competition; Sarah Boilard, Miss Bristol's Outstanding Teen, sings in Thursday's talent preliminary competition.

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Two Bristol women reach top 10 at Miss Connecticut

By MIKE CHAIKEN
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NEW LONDON— Two young women with ties to Bristol reached the top ten of the Miss Connecticut Scholarship Pageant this weekend.

The pageant was held Thursday through Saturday at the Garde Arts Center in New London. The first two nights of the pageant were dedicated to preliminary competitions. On Saturday, the top ten contestants in the Miss Connecticut and Miss Connecticut's Outstanding Teen pageant competed for the respective crowns.

Brittany Decker of

Bristol, competing as Miss Litchfield County, and Nicole Paquette of Wolcott, competing as Miss Bristol, both earned the honor of competing in the semi-finals on Saturday. However, Decker and Paquette did not reach the finals of the competition and the crown of Miss Connecticut went to Sharalynn Kuziak of Southington.

Dana Brooks of Bristol, who competed as Miss Greater Waterbury, also represented Bristol at the event.

Three young women from Bristol also competed in the Outstanding Teen competition. Allison

Boilard, who was competing as Miss Rocky Hill's Outstanding Teen, Sarah Boilard (Allison's sister), who was competing as Miss Bristol's Outstanding Teen, and Marisa Barnard, who was competing as Miss Hartford County's Outstanding Teen, represented the city. They competed in preliminary events on Thursday and Friday, but were not selected for the top ten semi-finalists. The crown went to Acacia Courtney of Hamden.

All the young women were interviewed on stage as part of the preliminary competition.

Brittany spoke about

how she first became interested in her platform of "Believing in Abilities" when she attended an international conference for the group Best Buddies. While there, she met a girl her own age, 17. The young girl had memorized 10,000 songs on the piano. However, Brittany said, the girl accomplished this even though she was blind. But the young woman's blindness didn't hold her back and that's why, Brittany said, it's important to focus more on abilities rather than disabilities.

Nicole Paquette, Miss Bristol, spoke about whether or not zero toler-

ance against bullies works. Although the policy has its benefits, Nicole said children also should be able to stand up for themselves in the face of bullies, at least verbally. The bullied child should be able to say, "You may not like me, but you should still respect me."

Dana Brooks of Bristol, Miss Greater Waterbury, was asked if there had been progress made in improving the quality of life of people with spinal injuries, which is her issue of concern. She said there are new therapies being developed to help out, so she said a solution is "extremely close."

Miss Rocky Hill's

Outstanding Teen Allison Boilard spoke about her platform of volunteering during her on-stage interview. "I love volunteering... I grew up with it."

Miss Hartford County's Outstanding Teen Marisa Barnard touted her platform promoting "America's Promise Alliance. "It's dedicated to the well-being of children and youth."

Sarah Boilard, Miss Bristol's Outstanding Teen spoke about how she would get more of her peers to volunteer. "I would tell them how it important to volunteer... and I would invite them to the events I go to (as a volunteer)."