



Miss USA shares story during visit to Senior Star

2015 Miss USA Olivia Jordan now advocates for Alzheimer's awareness

BY LAURA KATAUSKAS
BUGLE STAFF
✉ sweditor@buglenewspapers.com
🐦 [@BolingbrookInfo](https://twitter.com/BolingbrookInfo)

Your voice, no matter if it is a little shaky to start, has power, and that power shouldn't go left unleashed.

A far cry from the teenage girl who couldn't speak in front of the class without getting sick, 2015 Miss USA Olivia Jordan brought her inspirational message to area seniors during a visit to Senior Star Weber Place in Romeoville June 23. Drawing on her experience advocating for Alzheimer's awareness, Jordan also discussed the importance of self-confidence in girls.

Jordan, who recently ended her whirlwind tour as Miss USA 2015, is now touring and speaking in various communities that have supported research for Alzheimer's disease; thanking them for their endeavors.

Growing up in a home environment that encouraged an advocacy and philanthropic mindset, Jordan observed and learned how the power of a voice can positively impact critical issues like the fight against Alzheimer's – a cause where her

family name is widely recognized. Her father, Robert Thomas, is co-founder and co-owner of 14 Senior Star senior living communities in the U.S., many of which provide innovative programs for people with Alzheimer's disease.

"My parents raised us to believe that if you see a problem, you become part of the solution," said Jordan.

Senior Star's Alzheimer's initiative ranked them third nationally in fundraising for the 2015 Walk to End Alzheimer's, raising more than \$500,000 with a little more than 1,200 employees. Locally, Senior Star's Romeoville facility was the top fundraiser in the area.

From an early age, Jordan began pursuing a career in modeling and acting – one that she admits caused a lot of self doubt. She was candid about being a young impressionable girl who was shy about her height, and told her hips were too big and her skin too old. Though chipping away at her self confidence quietly, she took

those words in stride, and it wasn't until she reached the pageantry world that a shift occurred.

"At some point, we all feel or are told we are not smart enough, not tall enough, not thin enough, not kind enough," Jordan said. "I wish I knew then that all of us are human and as humans we are perfectly imperfect."

After being named Miss Beverly Hills, she was asked to speak at an engagement and soon after she saw the "ripple effect," as she calls it.

"I had never done any public speaking, and all of a sudden there was this call to action," Jordan said. "All of a sudden, I had a voice, and I needed to do something positive with it."

She recalled feeling a sense of empowerment by being able to use her voice on the Miss USA circuit to make change, speaking on topics from ovarian cancer to human trafficking.

"People are struggling and suffering and we need to be their

👉 SEE MISS USA | PAGE 5



»MISS USA | FROM PAGE 2

voice and I encourage everyone to find their own," said Jordan.

She believes the most common misconception is that your voice is too small to be heard and that, though it may be cliché, the power of one person is all it takes.

Jordan said that during her tour as Miss USA, she met people along the way from all walks of life. This was what made her feel more connected; their meaningful stories inspired Jordan to speak

on their behalf.

"I do want people to realize that everyone can be a part of change, said Jordan. "It is easy to get overwhelmed and feel the problems are too big to handle but often times you'll see that it is these small groups that get things started. I do believe if you put a voice to a cause, you can change the world."

The public was invited to hear her presentation at the Romeoville location, where also in residence is Miss Illinois 1945

Beverly Feehan. The two pageant winners shared stories, quite similar; the title having provided both with the confidence to create a career.

"Look, I am still being asked to speak about it," quipped the 88-year-old Feehan, who recalls her run at the title as a whirlwind that led to a coveted modeling career. She also continued to speak of the importance of Alzheimer's awareness and her gratefulness for places like Senior Star.