

Courtney Little Crowned Miss Teen NC United States

Courtney Little, the daughter of Gail and Buddy Little of the Bethlehem Community, was crowned the 2017 Miss Teen North Carolina United States at the Pageant held January 27-28 in Charlotte. The Miss United States National Pageant is based on a solid commitment to uphold the standards of fairness and integrity. Miss United States prides itself in providing an avenue for each young woman to give a voice to those needing to be heard, to lend a hand to those less fortunate, and to be a compass for those daring to dream. At the local, state, and national level, the Miss United States National Pageant gives women the opportunity to promote a

platform of community service. The pageant system allows young women all over the country to interact and discuss their achievements in service and volunteerism. It promotes the intellect, moral character and personal engagement of its outstanding participants as they pursue success in achievement.

A senior at Alexander Central High School, Courtney plans to attend the University of North Carolina in Charlotte to pursue a degree in nursing. Courtney's sister Laura was crowned the 2015 Miss North Carolina United States two years ago.

★ LITTLE: Bethlehem resident is member of Honeybees

• See LITTLE Page 5

she was second runner up. Laura was selected from 3,000 girls to be the next Jovani Ambassador where she will continue to model, travel, and promote the Jovani Line. Last month, Laura's young sister, Courtney, followed in her sister's footsteps when she was crowned the 2017 Miss Teen North Carolina United States.

An intern at Seacrest Studios at Levine Children's Hospital where she hosts her own weekly radio show for all the patients, Laura's platform is to raise money and awareness for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. She has hosted many fundraisers and raised a great deal of money for LLS.

She lives by the quote, "Go confidently in the direction of your dreams, live the life you have imagined."

Laura recently took some time out of her busy schedule as a full-time student and HoneyBee to answer a few questions posed by The Taylorsville Times.

TIMES: How did you get involved with the Honey Bees and cheering on the professional level?

LITTLE: I grew up as a competitive dancer at Krista Whitener Academy of Dance in Conover, NC. Krista was always my role model and encouraged me to pursue my dream of becoming a professional cheerleader after high school. Because of my age, I tried out for the Charlotte CheckMates of the AHL (American Hockey League), where I cheered for two years. The CheckMates are a sister team to the HoneyBees and even get to ice skate during games. This experience helped guide me to success when I auditioned for my dream job this summer, HoneyBees.

TIMES: How much time goes into the job during the season and out of the season?

LITTLE: Being a professional dancer is one of the most rewarding and fulfilling positions I have ever been in, but it also one of the most time consuming. As a full time college student, an intern at Seacrest Studios and a model, I have

now mastered the craft of time management. We have practices 2-3 times a week and oftentimes the same number of games in a week. Though the hours vary from week to week, as a professional, it is still crucial to practice and workout outside of the arena. I try to be on top of my game physically and mentally at all times.

TIMES: Can you describe the tryout process and the competition level?

LITTLE: The tryout process for HoneyBees is intense and fun at the same time! The first night of auditions, there is typically a free style choreography round. After both, they make two cuts. If you are lucky enough to make it past both of these rounds, you are selected as a Bee camp finalist and spend the rest of the week in boot camp. During Bee camp you are able to showcase your talents, learn real HoneyBee dances, and compete in swimsuit and evening gown competitions. Interviews are conducted throughout the week as well and are taken very seriously. On finals night after performing, they announce the team. Every year, they seem to do the big reveal differently, but this year, the HoneyBee photos were featured on the brand new jumbotron. Seeing my picture appear on the screen was a feeling that I will never forget. A dream come true.

TIMES: What are your future plans with the Hornets/Honey Bees or pro sports in general?

LITTLE: I hope to stay on HoneyBees for a few years and then make the decision on my next move. I truly enjoy the team, and it has been a dream of mine for so long, so I am still soaking it all in! This is my third year cheering for my coach, and I have so much respect for her and her style of dance that I would love to stay with her as long as I can.

TIMES: To date, what has been your most exciting moment as a Honey Bee...during a game or away from the court?

LITTLE: There have been so many incredible memories and experiences that I have already had as



a HoneyBee, but if I had to choose, I would say opening night at the Hive! Getting on that court and dancing in front of thousands of fans was one of the most invigorating and fulfilling moments of my life. The energy in Spectrum Center was indescribable and radiated onto the court. As a dancer for most of my life, this was something I had always dreamt of. In that moment, I felt proud, honored, and humbled. The moment I had worked so tirelessly for was happening. I did it!

TIMES: Do you feel this experience will help you gain exposure for other opportunities in the future?

LITTLE: This experience has and will definitely help me gain exposure! I have met so many people and had many opportunities to network and form relationships with people I would have never been able to prior to making the team. The girls on my team are so driven and hardworking and it has been a true pleasure to be surrounded by so many strong women on a daily basis. We support one another, we help one another, and we love one another. Even girls that were a part of the team previously all feel a bond and it is something that I will get to carry with me for the rest of my life, and for that, I am very grateful!

TIMES: Do you have a role model or someone that has helped guide your career and future plans to this point?

LITTLE: As I mentioned before, Krista Whitener from Krista Whitener Academy of dance played a huge role in my success. From teaching me my first ballet dance in kindergarten to helping me prepare for professional auditions, she was there every step of the way for me. She had gone through the experience herself and motivated me to go after my dreams just as she did. Krista was teammates with my current coach on the original HoneyBee team. It really has just been so cool to get to learn and grow under the guidance of them both. My coach has guided me for three years now and has allowed me to grow so much as a dancer. Another guide that played a significant role in my success is Honey, my hair stylist. More than that, she is a friend, mentor, and role model. She started doing my hair when I was just 18 and will probably continue when I start graying...Haha. She helped teach me the ropes of professional dancing and cheerleading as she too was a former LadyCat. She has gone out of her way to make sure that I am feeling my best physically and mentally. I will forever be grateful for all of these ladies and how they have influenced my life.

TIMES: What would you say to any young lady



LAURA LITTLE

in Alexander County or the Unifour area that looks up to you and would like to pursue a spot with the Honey Bees, Top Cats, or the Checkers?

LITTLE: I would say to keep working and always know that your hard work will pay off! HoneyBees and professional dancing and cheerleading in general are all about personality and fitness! So stay active, keep the faith, and continue the hard work because you can do it!

Our Savior Luth. plans chicken pie dinner Feb. 25

Our Savior Lutheran Church's Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) will hold their annual chicken pie dinner on Saturday, February 25, beginning at 5 p.m. The dinner will include chicken pie, rice/gravy, green beans, slaw, drinks, and homemade desserts.

Prices are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children 10 and under. Takeout plates will also be available.

The church is located at 2160 35th Avenue Dr. NE in Hickory off Kool Park Road and opposite Clyde Campbell Elementary School.

Everyone is encouraged to mark your calendars to join them for a delicious meal and great fellowship.

All proceeds from this event will benefit the church's building fund and the LWML mission programs.

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Alexander Senior Center holds events at Mt. Pisgah each week

Alexander County Senior Center has a Bethlehem Branch located in Mt. Pisgah Lutheran Church on Hwy 127.

We are open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. Offered classes are Tai Chi, Needlework, Woodcarving, Yoga, Card Making, and Ukulele Playing. Card players come at 1:00 in the afternoon for Hand & Foot - a variation of Canasta.

The fourth Tuesday afternoon is Wild Game Day for a variety of games. Every third Thursday we have Bingo at 10:30am hosted by local businesses.

Birthday lunches are on the third Tuesday at noon. Come by and pick up a newsletter and calendar. Join us for lots of fun and socializing!

For more information, please contact Kristy at 828-409-3742.

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**Alexander Central HS
Registration Night!
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Please join the ACHS Counseling Center:
Thursday, February 23, 6:00 pm
ACHS Auditorium

Registration Information:
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* Course selection process
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* College Readiness Information