



Villa Grove News

Serving Villa Grove, Camargo and the surrounding areas!

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Stevens: Miss VG is a Woman of Many Interests

By Tony Hooker Staff Writer

Villa Grove junior Samantha Stevens packs a lot into her weeks, but recently, even she might have outdone herself.

On April 25th, Stevens hosted a busy booth at the Douglas County CEO trade show. Then, on April 28th, she her poise and grace, along with her natural beauty, showed through as she was named Miss Villa Grove. Throw in her first appearance as Miss Villa Grove, at the Villa Grove Loyalty Day Parade on May 4th, her vital role in hosting the FFA banquet on May 8 and Prom on May 11, and I'm exhausted just from listing it. Sammi, as she will always be known to me, recently took enough of a break to sit down and discuss her many ventures.

Let's start by discussing the CEO program. What interested you in starting your own business?

I was trying to determine whether I was interested in going into Ag Business, so I thought it would be a good class to take. I wanted to see if I might be able to make a career of it, and I ended up making a body care business called "Little House Creations." It's been a fun class to take.

What exactly is Little House Creations?

I do body care products like body scrubs, hand scrubs lip scrubs and I might expand into an all-natural hair care line, as well.

You make all these products? What's that process like?

Yes. It's a very long process! <smiles> You have to make them and then let them sit for a week. Then you have to package them and put labels on them and make them all cute.

How did you come up with this product idea?

I've been making scrubs for a year, kind of on my own, messing around on Pinterest. I knew I wanted to

make a product for CEO, so I decided to continue it. I do about twenty different types of scrubs, and it's been fun.

I hear that there isn't a student from Villa Grove who is interested in the CEO class next year. What would you say to encourage someone to give it a try?

It's a different class, and you might be scared at first by the whole 7:15 am start but you're never going to get this learning experience in another class, because it's a lot more about life skills than classroom learning. It's very hands on.

You were named Miss Villa Grove on Sunday. What was the process of getting you to put yourself out there like that?

At first, I wasn't even sure I was going to do the pageant. I wasn't sure it was for me. I didn't think I had much time, and I wasn't sure it would be my thing. I talked to Morgan Smith and Courtney Howard and they and Madison Smith really encouraged me to do it, so I thought "Why not?" It was a very interesting process, a lot of fun. There were a lot of practices, learning how to memorize a speech. I had to learn how to walk and hold myself and how to do an interview with the judges. It was scary at first, but it ended up being a lot of fun.

Do you think your experiences with CEO helped you in that process?

I definitely do. CEO, along with my FFA experience, really gave me the communication skills I needed.

It's a big commitment you've taken on, representing Villa Grove. Are you ready for that?

I'm excited about it! <smiles> We have our first parade on Saturday. (Loyalty Day parade on 5/4)

You've mentioned Ag Business. How did you come to decide on that?

I've actually decided that I don't want to go into Ag Business! <laughs> Not be-

cause of CEO or anything, but I'm thinking more Ag education, with a double major in K-6 education, because I really enjoy kids, and it just feels like a better fit for me.

Are there opportunities in AG ED?

Definitely. There are lots! What would that look like? Would that be something like Ms. Parr? I have no idea. What does she teach?

She teaches Environmental Science. She teaches a Forestry part. We do horticulture and green house management. She teaches Intro to Ag, which is the first course that you would take to give you a glimpse of all the classes. I'm currently in Ag Mechanics. She teaches Animal Science and she does an Intro to Science class.

What's your next step? Will you be in CEO next year, or is it a one-year thing?

It's a one-year thing. I plan on taking my senior year a little easier, focusing on my business and on being Miss Villa Grove.

Do you envision a time when those two worlds collide, and you'll be setting up your booth for your business and then having to go and put on your crown and sash for the parade at some festival or fair and then rush back to your booth?

Are you in FFA? I'm DEFINITELY in FFA! <laughs> I've been in for 3 years.

She <Ms. Parr> seems to be growing that program.

She definitely is. We have six new officers coming on next year.

What do you like to do with what little free time you have?

I like to go to the horse farm and work and hang out with the horses.

Where is that?

It's in Camargo at TAPS equestrian center. I also like to hang out with my friends and family.

Didn't you used to show



Samantha Stevens poses at the 2019 VG FFA banquet. Photo courtesy of Stevens family.

cattle, as well? When did you switch to equestrian?

I switched in August.

How did you walk away from cows?

I just wanted to try something different after four years.

Do you see being around horses as part of your future?

Definitely, and cows, probably.

Do you like the business part of that?

I like the business side of it, but I also like the care side of it.

Is TAPS an animal rescue organization?

It is not a rescue site.

What is TAPS equestrian center?

They used to show horses, but they don't any longer. It's a local farm, and that's where I work.

Do they board horses there?

They used to, but they don't any more because it kind of gets overwhelming at times. They do have people that come in and ride,

every once in a while.

Is it open to the public?

You have to go through the process to follow insurance policies.

How did you find your way there?

I've known them since I was little, and so have my parents. I've been talking to them, and I just sort of joined their team, I guess.

We were talking about the CEO earlier. Have you tried to recruit people to the class?

I have tried to recruit. I've recruited a few juniors, because they don't think the fields they want to take are in line with what they need. There are some juniors who really want to take it their senior year because they don't have time in their schedules. I really think we'll have quite a few next year.

What is your plan for college?

I plan on doing the Parkland Pathway to Illinois.

Do they have Ag Ed at the University of Illinois?

They do. I Cont. pg. 2

Villa Grove Senior Center Collaborates with Community in Effort to Rebrand Center's Role

Villa Grove Senior Center is working in collaboration with Villa Grove Schools, Camargo Township Library, Sarah Bush Lincoln Hospital, Douglas County Public Health, and other local businesses to rebrand the Center's role in the community. The Senior Center is located at 610 Front St. in Villa Grove and currently serves Sarah Bush Lincoln Peace Meal Monday through Friday at 11 am. The site is open to the public 10 am - 2 pm, Monday through Friday and hosts a variety of events and activities for all ages. The Center is also available to rent

for your own events. The building has a full kitchen, large dining area, comfortable sitting area, and two restrooms. It is a great location to host a birthday party, family reunion, or monthly group/club meeting.

Our goal is to provide resources and relationships that will facilitate a connected community. The seniors and older adults in our community are an invaluable source of information, knowledge, and legacy. The Senior Center and other businesses have been working diligently to plan events that encourage

people of all ages to socialize with one another. Our most recent endeavor is the Intergenerational Lunch Program. The idea is inspired by a wonderful program out of Mattoon, IL called Community Bridges. This program cultivates opportunities to interact with people of all ages and learn how to contribute to one's community. Some of the "bridges", or parts of the program include: Learn-2-Grow, which allows students to learn how to grow and harvest food from gardens and donate their food to homeless shelters; Farm-2-table, which

shows students how to prepare the food they grow; Talents-2-Strengths, which helps students develop their unique talents and learn how to turn them into strengths; and Generation-2-Generation, which our Intergenerational Lunch Program is modeled after. Generation-2-Generation takes an elementary class to a local nursing home to spend time with residents. They typically read a book to the group and work on a craft together. Some of the seniors have made a scrapbook of keepsakes given to them by the students throughout the program! In Villa Grove, an elementary class invites an adult neighbor, friend, or family member (usually a grandparent) to join them at the Senior Center for lunch, a story, and a craft. The lunch is provided by Sarah Bush Lincoln Peace Meal. This program introduces people of all ages to the Senior Center and encourages intergenerational socialization. The lunches we have hosted so far have been wonderfully successful! Thank you, thank you, thank you Mr. Beck, Mrs. Schable, Mrs. King, Sarah Bush Lincoln, and the parents and grandparents who went out of their way to make these events possible! Villa Grove Schools, the Senior Center, and Peace Meal have already agreed to continue the program into the 2019-2020 school year!

As always, when you have big goals, you need people to make it happen. We are growing and changing, and we need volunteers! Our Peace Meal client list is getting larger and our delivery area is expanding, so we are in need of delivery drivers. We are constantly promoting and planning new activities for ALL AGES, so we are in need of people to pass out flyers, make phone calls, and spread the word. Also, the Villa Grove Senior Center will be hosting Douglas County Summer Fun and Meals, so we are in need of helpers/assistants during the summer meals program. Those who volunteer in the summer meals program will receive a volunteer hours certificate. This can be useful for high school students looking to enhance college or job resumes. If you are interested in volunteering with any of our programs, please contact Robin at the Villa Grove Senior Center: 832-9445, email: senior.center@villagrove.org, or message on "Villa Grove Senior Center" Facebook Page. For more information about the Community Bridges program: www.fit-2-serve.net For more information about Douglas County Summer Fun and Meals: www.dchealthdept.org Join "Villa Grove Senior Center" Facebook group page to stay informed of upcoming events!

Villa Grove School May Students of the Month Announced



Villa Grove School May Students of the Month (from left to right) Ella Frost, Quinn Lillard, Karlee Kilber, Zeva Kirkman, Maddy Alvis, Nadia Callison, Jackson Grimm.

Side Tracks your express route to upcoming VG events

WE HAVE NEW EMAIL ADDRESSES! news@thevillagrovenews.com to submit your news related items and advertising@thevillagrovenews.com for all of your advertising needs!

5/15 Motorcycle Safety Awareness Seminar from 10am-1pm at Villa Grove Senior Center

5/16 Girl Scouts Daisy Discovery Night @CTDL from 6-7pm

5/17-18 Villa Grove Town Wide Garage Sales 5/18 VFW Annular Rummage Sale @ VFW Hall 8-2

5/18 Countryside United Methodist Church Flea Market 7am-2pm

5/18 Camargo Township District Library Kids Prom for Pre-K - 3rd Grade 6-7pm

5/20 Villa Grove School Board Meeting @6pm

5/22 VGHS Finals Periods 1, 2 and 3

5/22 Villa Grove School Early Dismissal at 1:50 and 2pm

5/23 Villa Grove School 8th Grade Promotion

5/23 Donor Drive @ Camargo Township District Library 2:30-3:30

5/23 VGHS Finals Periods 4-5&6

5/24 VGHS Finals Periods 7&8 plus makeup

5/24 VGHS Graduation @7pm

5/25 VG Alumni Banquet at 7pm @VGHS

5/27 VFW Memorial Day Services @ Villa Grove Cemetery 10am at Centennial Cemetery @10:30 and Camargo Cemetery @11

5/27 Memorial Day

If you have an upcoming event that you would like to see featured in Sidetracks, email us at news@thevillagrovenews.com or call us at 832-4201