



For Carla Gonzales

former Miss United Nations International, competing in pageants and amassing titles has a different meaning than just wearing a crown.

SHE started when she was just nine years old, then took a 20-year break before returning to competitions. What has happened in the life of this beauty queen? Well, for the past 20-years, Carla has been employed by the Oklahoma State Department of Health; and she earned a Master's degree in Clinical Social Work from the University of Oklahoma; and holds a National Certification in Grief Recovery. If that's not enough to keep a woman busy, Carla is a national certified Anger Management Specialist and certified as a Prevention Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP) facilitator through the Oklahoma Marriage Initiative. These days, Carla is spending a great deal of time on Bullying Prevention, in which she also holds a national certification.

ments for women who come in for family planning services. Soon, I will make presentations in schools (mainly alternative education) on Teen Dating Violence Prevention. I provide a "group" educational class once a week to women who are court-ordered to be in-patients at the facility. These women have spent time in jail/prison and their children are in "DHS custody."

"I hope to expand my Anti-bullying prevention effort to schools across the U.S. and eventually to other countries. If I make a difference to even one child, I've accomplished my goal. But my desire is to touch thousands across the world. Every child deserves to live bully-free."

With such a busy schedule, why did you go back to compete in pageants?

"My competing was part of the plan I created to inspire and empower women, by showing them that life doesn't have to end at 40. We can be moms, wives, employees, etc... and still do those things that we have interests in but maybe didn't get to do when we were younger because other things were taking precedence."

What is in the future for you?

"To continue my classes to become a Board Certified Life Coach and finish my training as an Anger Management Specialist. I'm also taking acting and hosting lessons in Los Angeles, pursuing a career in TV/film, hosting and modeling."

As for the use of her numerous titles, Carla is an active philanthropist not only in her state, but nationally and internationally. She travels across the United States making appearances and doing public speaking on her platform of Anti-Bullying prevention. Carla added Empowerment of Women, hoping to inspire young girls and women all ages to always follow their dreams and never give up on achieving their goals... an example she strives to live by as a role model.

Carla has won numerous awards. The Power of One award was presented to her by the Oklahoma Coalition Against Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault for her efforts to prevent Teen Dating Violence in schools across Oklahoma. Her most honorable award came from the President of the United States for recognition and appreciation of her commitment to strengthening our Nation and making a difference through volunteer service. **2011**

www.CarlaDGonzalez.com
Photos: Jasmine Baeza



Why did you choose these fields?

"I always knew I wanted to do something that helped others. As a young girl I had genuine compassion and empathy for people and that feeling continues to this day. I have an interest in mental health and human behavior, so the social work path allowed me to utilize my natural skills combined with my education to do the work that is fulfilling, challenging and rewarding."

Why bullying Prevention?

"I've worked as a public health social worker for over 20-years mainly working in clinics and providing counseling services. I devoted several years to studying, researching and training in the domestic violence area and began with students in schools, providing Teen Dating Violence Prevention education and volunteered at a domestic violence center in Oklahoma. I was asked if I would preside over anti-bullying. Even though I heard much about the issue, once I started to research it, I was overwhelmed by the information and statistics. I knew this was something that needed to be addressed, but what I didn't know was what would unfold before my eyes once I started going to schools and speaking on this topic. Kids opened up and spoke about personal experiences being bullied. Each time several kids would stay a flir I spoke and talk to me. Most would break into tears from the suffering and pain they were enduring. This was happening in every school and affecting kids all ages. The experience was enough to make Anti-Bullying prevention my top priority, and take it on as a platform to bring community awareness and education to an issue that affects each one of us because we all have children in our lives whether you be a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, school official, friend, neighbor, etc..."

What does your work week entail?

"During the week I'm booked with bullying/cyberbullying presentations in schools across the state of Oklahoma. I'm a member of the Human Trafficking task force and meet the third Wednesday of the month at the Attorney General's office where I do psychosocial assess