

## Q&A with Miss Arizona USA

Written by Written by Julia Swem

Tuesday, 10 May 2011 15:04 - Last Updated Wednesday, 11 May 2011 07:31

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Miss Arizona USA reflected on her amazing experience as title-holder and preparations to compete in the Miss USA Pageant this June.



"It's just been a whirlwind," Brittany Brannon, Miss Arizona USA, said. "I got to meet some of the most amazing people and it really was an amazing opportunity."

Brannon said her most memorable moment as Miss Arizona USA was working with the Wounded Warrior Amputee Softball Team USO. The team is composed of war veterans and active duty soldiers who have served their country and lost a limb in the line of duty.

"These guys are so fun and so selfless," Brannon said. "They do everything for our country. I was just astounded with their will to live life to it's fullest, which was so inspiring."



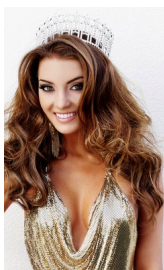
Brannon said her whole experience has been inspiring but being Miss Arizona USA doesn't come without pressure and responsibility.

She said a title-holder needs to be very versatile and handle making appearances at a lot of different events. A typical day could be interacting with little kids in the morning, a lunch with important people in the senate mid-day and an event at night with some of the most influential people in the state, she added.

Brannon said the hardest thing about being Miss Arizona USA is not to worry about other people's opinions.

"You really do have a year of opportunity and you have to realize you can make a difference," Brannon said. "You have to set your own goals and go after them. People are so critical and always will be so you can't let others tear you down."

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Brannon said two common misconceptions about pageants are that the girls are too perfect and too rehearsed.

"There have been two or three girls who have given us a bad name," Brannon said. "All the girls I've talked to are extremely intelligent women and aspire to do good. We are women of substance and have the true passion and desire to make a difference."

She said it is very important to show the public that you are not perfect and can be relatable.

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"We are human and encounter challenges," Brannon said. "It's about how we overcome those challenges. My dream was to dance in New York but I injured my foot senior year of high school and couldn't go. But I think that was all part of God's plan."



She said being in the right place mentally has been really important for her preparation for the Miss USA Pageant being held Sunday, June 19 at Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino in Las Vegas.

Brannon said preparation has two components: getting in shape physically through healthy means and mentally preparing yourself.

"It's all about your mental state," Brannon said. "You need to realize you are good enough and believe in yourself. God has a plan for you."

She said competing has taught her so much already. She competed twice before she won Miss Arizona USA and she said she learned what parts of her life she needed to work on as well as her strengths and that life is full of opportunity.

Brannon is a broadcast news major at Pepperdine University and hopes to be a political or international anchor on Fox News. She also hopes to create her own non-profit clothing company called Basics that will ship clothing to people in need.

"Win or lose at Miss USA I've had an amazing opportunity and year as Miss Arizona," Brannon said. "To me it's a win-win situation."