

Belleville teen crowned Miss Canada Teen Global

Jelena Savic is queen for a year. The 18-year-old Belleville resident was named Miss Canada Teen Global at Sunday's pageant in Surrey, B.C. The title means she's now an official spokeswoman for Variety & The Children's Charity, and must appear on its behalf at several events throughout the year in addition to raising funds for Variety on her own.

"It feels amazing," Savic said Monday from B.C. "No matter what happened, I was going to continue believing in myself, and that's what got me through.

"When you get a chance like that, you really have to put your all into it. You've just got to really have confidence."

Katherine Grefner, the pageant's national director and producer, said Savic performed well in many categories.

"She has a lot of the characteristics that we were looking for," Grefner said. "She's gracious, she's kind, she's beautiful inside and out."

Grefner said Savic won the evening gown competition and was one point behind the top entrant in the interview category. Her harp performance was also received well.

{mosgoogle left}"She was one of our top-four talent presenters as well."

Ten per cent of delegates' final grade is based on the dollars they raise for Variety prior to the pageant. Despite being a late entry & Savic had only a month between applying and the event itself & she topped her own \$1,000 goal by \$200.

"She was able to prove herself a true queen by doing a significant amount of fundraising in that time," said Grefner.

"I'm very happy I was able to raise that much," Savic said. "It's all for a good cause; it all goes to the children."

Savic will now appear on Variety's telethon on the CanWest Global network Feb. 16, and during the year must make five more high-profile appearances.

Grefner said all four past queens have been from B.C., so discussions to determine how to promote Savic are underway.

She'll also have to raise more funds for the charity during her reign.

Savic plays both piano and harp, and had raised money for Variety by playing at various events. She said the best part of the competition was being selected to perform on her harp on television during the talent contest.

"That was so exciting for me. That was all I really wanted to do & make it to the top eight and perform for everybody."

Savic added she had a few "slip-ups" while competing but still believed she had a chance at winning, though she was still surprised when she won.

She said she'll continue to raise funds and "be a strong leader and role model." "The crown isn't magic. It can only give me the experience of what I challenge myself to get out of wearing it. And that's what I'm really going to work hard to do," she said. "What you put out is what you get back. Whether you think you can or you think you can't, in both cases you're right." /intelligencer.ca