

## Miss Love IQ Chosen in Pennsylvania

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The Miss Love IQ Essay Contest is a search for the best candidate who exemplifies inner beauty. It is a contest that promotes discipline, self-control, and helps high school students to focus on their future career and maintain purity in their heart and spirit. This year's candidates had to write an essay answering the question: "What is my concept when it comes to abstinence?"

From among the 15 entries submitted, we refined the search to the top four finalists. Finally, on July 9, we welcomed this year's Pennsylvania Love IQ winner, Miss Lashannah Bryant, a twelfth grade student from Penn Wood High School. She is also an honor student in her class.

WFWP USA President Angelika Selle came to Pennsylvania to present the award to the winner. After the winner was announced and the award given, a Bridge of Peace ceremony brought the WFWP members together in a deeper relationship with the Pennsylvania community leaders in attendance.

Please enjoy reading Lashanna's winning essay:

What I love most about our bodies is that it is and will always be our temples. Abstinence, in this society, is practically frowned upon by those who believe their self-worth is measured by alcohol intoxication and sexual favors. They are being forced into these actions due to societal pressures that make them feel as if their temples belong to everyone – but that is not the case. Our bodies are ours for the taking and abstinence is our way of being in charge of our lives.

So, what is abstinence and why is it important? Well, abstinence is the practice of restraining oneself from indulging in an activity. It is important because the pregnancy rate in high school students, in Pennsylvania specifically since the year 2010, has increased to 45%. That's close to nearly half of the population's percentage in our state. This means that every 45 per 1,000 women in the state, ranging from the youngest age of 15, are getting pregnant every year. The question could come up; why should I care? Frankly, the answer to that is quite simple but at the same time eye opening.

Imagine that you are grown up with your own children. You have a son and a daughter, both beautiful, wonderful kids with their whole lives ahead of them. Now, picture that your daughter got pregnant at 16 years old or younger. You know in your heart that the child will be taken care of and welcomed with open arms, but you can't help but think – What will this mean for my daughter's future? Will she be able to finish school? How will she provide for her child? And those questions are paired with a fear not too many parents want to possess.

Now, imagine this scenario: Instead of your daughter getting pregnant, your son has now conceived a child at a very young age. The most responsible route is for your son to help in taking care of his child. However, the same questions that parents fear for their daughters are the same they'd fear for their sons. What people don't realize is that unintended pregnancy affects not just the female, but the male as well. Bringing a child into the world and becoming a parent is not even close to a simple task. This is where abstinence falls into place, let your childhood be your childhood – a child should not have to raise a child. Abstinence is the only form of birth control that is 100% guaranteed to work.



There are also other forms of practicing abstinence that are just as important as preventing pregnancy, for example, the non consumption of alcohol. Alcohol is always paired with a “good time” by most, however alcohol can also be very dangerous. It can be so dangerous in fact that innocent people can lose their lives by being struck by a drunk driver or the destruction of their liver after consuming the drink. If the things in life that would really hurt you presented themselves beforehand in that manner, do you honestly think you'd still go through with them? Is being in the in-crowd worth hurting yourself and others? I don't believe so, and I have seen first-hand what it can do to an individual – most importantly, a loved one.

My father had fallen under the influence of alcohol. Growing up as a young child you should not be subjected to an environment where you feel as if you are unsafe and inequivalent to a bottle of liquor in your father's eyes. My education was put last, while on his list alcohol was always put first. It is a draining and upsetting feeling to watch a person be taken over by drinking. It is even more unbearable to watch that happen to your own father, and not fully understanding what's going on because you're too young to understand. Abstinence is important because alcohol shouldn't tear between a father and his daughters. Abstinence is important because it not only saves lives, but prevents situations like these from occurring. With all this, abstinence should be practiced at home, at school, and in communities as well. No young people, like myself, should have to go through this to have to carry on into adulthood. Remember, your body is your temple and you should treat it as such.