

Miss Teen contestant dressing for success

BY HANNELORE VOLPE
Staff Writer

Chelsea Pullen didn't bring her rugby jersey to represent Whitchurch-Stouffville at the Miss Teen Canada competition on now in London.

Instead, her suitcases were bulging with other outfits required for a pageant contestant. She has a cocktail dress, ball gown, a little black number and several outfits for "going around town", said the 17-year-old Cardinal Carter Catholic High School student.

More importantly, she must impress judges with her "platform", telling them how she plans to

involve her community in her main interest, the welfare of animals.

As Miss Teen Whitchurch-Stouffville, Ms Pullen is competing against 70 contestants, all of whom were selected from hundreds of applications from across the country, said Jennifer Handsford, office manager at Canada Pageant.

RAISED MONEY

But before she left, Ms Pullen had to raise more than \$1,500 to cover the registration fee, the cost of a half-page space in the pageant's program book and travel expenses.

Part of the pageant's mandate

is to have contestants gain the experience of finding sponsors. Linda Pullen, Chelsea's stepmom, noted. She is co-owner of Charlinda Belgian Chocolates in the Musselman's Lake area.

There isn't a swimsuit competition in this pageant. Instead, judges are looking at how the girls carry themselves and what they have to say, Ms Pullen said.

She was drawn to the pageant through a sense of adventure as well as the \$1,000 scholarship the winner receives. The Miss Teen Canada winner goes on to compete in the week-long Miss Teen International pageant in July in Chicago.

The Grade 12 student has played on the Cardinal Carter rugby team for three years and sings in the concert choir after school. The former farm girl cares for four dogs and several cats at home and is doing a co-op program at a veterinary clinic.

TORONTO ZOO CO-OP

Last year, her co-op experience took her to the Toronto Zoo, where she worked with the animals in the Eurasia, Australasia and birds of prey exhibits.

"My family supports me 100 per cent," Ms Pullen said. Her dad, Brad Pullen, is accompanying her on the trip.



CHELSEA PULLEN: Representing Whitchurch-Stouffville at Miss Teen Canada event in London this week.

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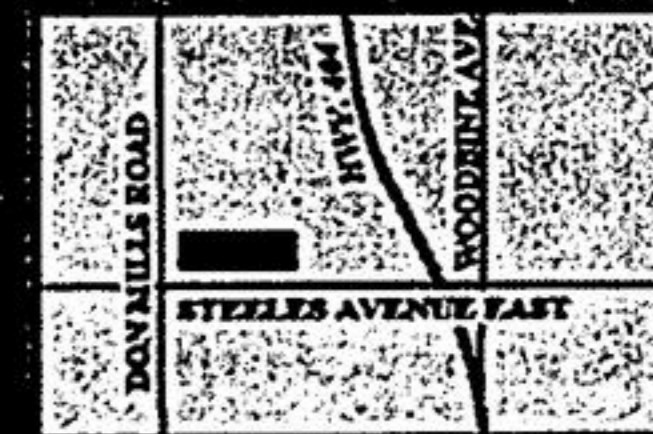
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