

# The Times-Tribune

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## Jermyn native crowned second runner-up in Ms. Wheelchair USA pageant

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Danielle Sheypuk, 34, a Jermyn native, speaks at the Ms. Wheelchair USA pageant.

She didn't get the crown at the end of the weekend, but judging by the outpouring of love, support, questions and inspirational stories Danielle Sheypuk received in the past month, she's definitely a winner.

Ms. Sheypuk, 34, was named second runner-up at the Ms. Wheelchair USA pageant Saturday in Ohio, getting lots of positive feedback and encouraging responses regarding her topic of dating, sex and relationships for people with disabilities.

"It's not whether or not I won this USA crown; it's this feedback and interest that is so strong, and it's just fueled my fire even more," the Jermyn native said.

On Friday, the contestants went through rounds of panel-judged interviews and individual interviews, then participated in an evening gown competition and performed their platform speeches Saturday, she said.

Ms. Sheypuk, who was diagnosed with spinal muscular atrophy at age 3 and was in her first wheelchair by kindergarten, spoke on the topic of dating, sex and relationships for people with disabilities - which has garnered local and national attention since she won Ms. Wheelchair New York earlier this year. She now lives in New York.

It's an issue she said struck a chord with many people and is one she hopes will be a part of conversations even after the pageant.

"The judges told me they were struck and inspired by my topic, and they'd never had anyone come in before with that topic," Ms. Sheypuk said. "The girls were great, and the contestants were really into my topic."

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