

Miss Amazing Colorado Lives Up to Her Name
By Tamika Matthews
Epilepsy Foundation of Colorado



Savanah Overturf celebrates her victory as Miss Amazing Colorado 2017 with her service dog, Leia.

Savanah Overturf never felt much like the pageant type.

She'd never participated in a pageant. Never felt she could do something like that. Pageants, she thought, were all about beauty. That wasn't a feeling she always thought about herself.

But the 2017 Miss Amazing pageant – which helps females with disabilities develop confidence and self-esteem – proved otherwise. The 24-year-old won Colorado's inaugural competition on Jan. 21.

It wasn't always easy. Diagnosed with schizophrenia in childhood, and later with Asperger's syndrome and epilepsy, she's had plenty to overcome.

At times, people would describe her as “staring off.” It happened so quickly, Overturf didn’t immediately notice. It wasn’t until she was re-watching one of her favorite movies one day that she realized something was wrong.

She recalled the opening credits. The next thing she knew, the movie was underway – and she didn’t remember seeing any of the early scenes.

She had no idea that these missing swaths of time were actually absence seizures.

It didn’t help that Overturf also dealt with bullying at school.

She spent much of her days in self-contained special education classes away from fellow students who didn’t understand her experiences. Outside of those classes, schoolmates stole her things and threw candy at her. One even kicked a Heelys roller shoe at her head, giving her a concussion.

Overturf begged her mother to be homeschooled during her sophomore year – first refusing to ride the bus to school, then objecting in tears when her mother tried driving her.

Luckily, a few considerate school administrators helped her enroll in a special course that taught life skills to students with disabilities. Overturf thrived under the personalized guidance.

Now a student at Front Range Community College, Overturf wants to get her teaching license and assist the same high school program that helped her so much. She also hopes to become a public speaker to remind people with disabilities that they can achieve their dreams, too.

Those oratory skills were front and center at the Miss Amazing Colorado pageant, where she blew the crowd away with a performance of her original poem, [“If You Knew Me.”](#)

This two-minute proclamation addresses the both the misconceptions and truths about who she is, and celebrates everything that makes her special.

“Slam poetry is a way for me to release the things that are inside me,” she said. “For me, this is all about trying to put the story forward about what I’ve struggled with for years.”

Overturf will participate in the National Miss Amazing pageant later this year as testament to living her best life and spreading the message that people with disabilities are not alone.

“It’s magical to see that people can thrive in whatever life gives them,” she said, “Just keep pushing forward, and don’t give up.”