

**Brie Gabrielle-Baldrice, Miss Jupiter USA 2015**

As a young girl, I was severely bullied in middle school almost to the point of no return. I had just entered 8th grade and was new in a new California school just having moved from Colorado. Being the happy go lucky type of girl I was, I walked into class expecting to be welcomed with open arms and was so excited for the new opportunity to have new friends. This did not happen. I was instantly ridiculed for what I was wearing, how I looked, and referred to as "the stuck up new girl." Rumors began circulating around the school that I was going to be the "school bike" when I got to high school the following year because many of the older guys were calling "dibs" on me. Completely oblivious to what any of what this talk meant, I knew I was being ostracized and despite my efforts, couldn't make one single friend. I began to wear baggy, dark colored clothing, used black eyeliner, and wore hooded sweatshirts to school because I just wanted to be invisible. I ate lunch in the library, if I ate lunch at all. Every morning before PE I would cry in the locker rooms and beg my mom to come pick me up. Hurting myself in some way, and even suicide became options slowly drifting into my head.

Finally I actually became ill. After 3 days I was feeling better, however I told my mom I wasn't. After another week went by, she began to get suspicious and told me I had to go back to school. That was my breaking point. I cried for hours which lead to multiple panic attacks. My poor mom didn't know what to do. After meeting with a few schools we decided that independent study, or homeschooling would be a good option so that I could focus on my acting career. This changed everything for me and I slowly

began to become Brie again.

When I attended college at Pepperdine University for college, I became involved with the Kind Campaign which focuses on diminishing the bullying that goes on among young women. After graduating and moving back to Florida, I wanted to find or start an organization that really made efforts to significantly diminish the prominence of bullying. That's when I found the Stop Bullying Now Foundation. After meeting with Lowell and seeing how passionate he is about this detrimental movement among our youth, I knew this was a foundation a wanted to be a part of and contribute in any way possible. With this issue being so close to my heart, I just want to thank Lowell for being so persistent with his efforts and really using every donation he receives to relieving this national epidemic that has taken the innocent lives of so many children. We need to STOP BULLYING NOW.

*Brie Gabrielle*