

## Be Proud of Who You Are

I would like to run for 2019-2020 Miss Indian Youth of Lawrence because I feel that I can be a role model and active voice for my peers in Lawrence and outside of Lawrence. There are issues that affect the population on a daily basis and I would like to be able to use my role to have an influential voice. The primary message I would like to convey to my peers is to not let today's society influence how my peers perceive themselves. I would like to convey that you should be proud of who you are, proud of where you come from and proud of your history.

There are many social standards and stereotypes in the Native American culture that have an influence on my peers. One example of a social standard is that there seems to be an expectation on how other's should present themselves, how to think and needing to feel. For example, it is looked down on when a voice is used to be different or to fight an issue that is less talked about. A few issues that I think about are the mascot issue and NODAPL when the population has been perceived as "the problem."

Should I be selected, I would like to show that there can be pride by allowing myself to use my voice to influence others to use their. The social standard of being quiet is something that I would go against and be loud when I would tell my peers and others they should be who they are. To do this, I would also be involved in the community more with my peers and community members. I would educate others about current issues in the Native American culture and make sure to represent that education. Some issues that I feel passionate about include Native American rights, bringing more awareness and education to the LGBTQ Native American community, and Murdered and Missing Indigenous Peoples/Women.

Another issue that I feel passionate about is when clothing is used as a way for criticism. For example, I like to wear a Indian print jacket yet I still get opinions and criticism from peers because of the cultural piece. To the person, when opinions are provided, they may not know they are insulting where I come from and what I am proud of. I would like to have to opportunity to show that my peers should not feel ashamed to wear their culture because of standards from other.

I would like to show that you can be open about the culture and accept others while they accept you. I believe that my peers can bring a new generation of people that are proud of what's in their blood, and proud of where they originated with being heard. Being educated in the history of our people is crucial to that knowledge and knowing what the ancestors did before them could inspire them to be just as strong.