

Miss Latina Canada World gets the most from her opportunities

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Jul. 24, 2005

Daniela Cruz, an Etobicoke resident, didn't just participate in the Miss Latina World pageant to win.

The Argentinean-born woman attended the international competition in San Antonio, Texas earlier this month to network, grow and proudly represent Canada's Latin community.

MEET PEOPLE

"It gave me an opportunity to meet people from all walks of life," Cruz, who was elected Miss Latina Canada World 2005 this spring, said of the experience.

She has been involved in pageants in her native Argentina since she was just 15 years old.

And although Cruz didn't come out victorious at the prestigious competition, she did finish third and said the experience has helped her grow as a person.

"Every time you compete you find something good about yourself," said Cruz, who runs her own non-profit organization called Toy Love International 2005, which donates toys from Canadian children to their counterparts in Argentina via shipping containers. The program is run through York University, where Cruz currently majors in philosophy and communications.

"This pageant was also a great way to meet people who could help my organization," added Cruz, who is also in the midst of wrapping up courses to become a certified real estate agent.

Elizabeth Singh, chief financial officer of ES Team productions, the organization that co-ordinated sending Cruz to the international event, said she couldn't be more proud of Canada's first official representative at the Miss Latina World pageant.

Singh's sister Stefany, the company's president and chief executive officer, was Miss Latina Canada World in 2003.

MEDIA ATTENTION

"Daniela was a perfect contestant. She stirred many pots over there," said Singh, noting Cruz was the recipient of a lot of media attention at the Texas competition.

"She's a great example of a Latin-Canadian woman."

For now, Cruz said she'll focus on her studies, her charitable organization and the many guest appearances at cultural events, festivals and functions she will attend as part of her Miss Latina Canada World duties.