

## **UWO's Miss Oshkosh using her title to build autism awareness**

**by Derek Paulus - Wednesday, April 24, 2013**

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/26326/uwos-miss-oshkosh-using-her-title-to-build-autism-awareness/>

The recently crowned Miss Oshkosh, Chelsey Wasielewski, is using her title to make a difference in the world of autism.

Wasielewski, a psychology major at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, competed against 13 others to earn the title of Miss Oshkosh in March. She said she hopes to make a difference through her pageant platform.

“My platform is autism awareness, but in the platform I also incorporate not only how we need to raise awareness for autism, but if someone has autism how the importance of therapy comes into play,” she said.

Wasielewski said she first discovered a passion for autism after joining the Fox Valley Autism Treatment Program, where she does in-home treatment therapy for those with the disorder. She also works as co-student director at Campus for Awareness and Relationship Education (CARE) on the UW Oshkosh campus.

Wasielewski joins a long list of former and current UW Oshkosh students who have been crowned Miss Oshkosh. Students from the University have earned this title every year since 2004.

Being 100 percent Polish is what Wasielewski said is responsible for sparking her initial interest in pageants. At the age of 8, she attended Polish Fest, where she competed in Little Miss Polish Fest and won. Wasielewski participated in her first pageant put on by the Miss America Organization last year.

But there is a misconception regarding what these pageants are all about, Wasielewski said.

“It’s not a beauty pageant. Any pageant in the Miss America Organization is a scholarship pageant,” she said. “It’s really more or less a platform for young women to share their interests and share their talents and their goals and their intelligence, and then have something that they are really passionate about... and take that to higher levels where it can be reached more.”

The organization awarded Wasielewski with a \$3,500 scholarship for winning the pageant. All pageant contestants receive a minimum \$350 scholarship.

Wasielewski already has plans to spread autism awareness through her pageant platform. She recently created a [Facebook page](#) that provides information about ways people can contribute to the cause and opportunities to hear her speak at area events.

“It’s not only about me being proactive about autism awareness but I really want to include everyone else as well,” she said.

Wasielewski attended the recent United Way Day of Caring event to speak on the disorder and she will speak at the [April 27 Walk 4 Autism](#) which funds autism research.

In being crowned Miss Oshkosh, Wasielewski will have the opportunity to compete to become Miss Wisconsin, and perhaps even Miss America. Like her work raising awareness about autism, Wasielewski said these pageants are all about “making a difference and being the best person you can be.”

Learn more:

- [Make a difference. Become a UW Oshkosh volunteer.](#)
- [Campus Awareness for Relationship Education \(CARE\)](#)