



EMPOWERMENT ACADEMY

The Empowerment Academy Signature Program: *A personal development experience*

Welcome! You have made a tremendous commitment to your personal development, and we are happy to have you as an Empowerment Academy Signature Program Delegate. Let's get started in your journey!

About

The Empowerment Academy Signature Program is a personal development experience that propels its Delegates to reach their personal and professional goals while completing a series of tailored benchmarks at their own pace. It is a non-competitive mentoring program that provides a personalized growth experience to women across the spectrum of age, experience and abilities.

Immense opportunities for personal growth can be gained from the goal setting and preparation process, even more so than the main event itself. The Empowerment Academy was created on the premise that goal preparation should be viewed from a holistic lens in order to obtain the greatest benefit from the overall experience... becoming a stronger woman, leader and community servant is more important than coming in first place in any competition. The real win is within YOU.

Mission

The mission of the Empowerment Academy is to give participants a path to identify their goals, visualize their highest potential and strive to be the best versions of themselves, in an environment that supports their personal and professional goals, through traditional coaching, virtual pageants and their Signature Program. The Empowerment Academy fosters a climate of growth and respect for women of all identities to realize their potential as changemakers, both in their own lives in their communities.

Core Values

The mission of the Empowerment Academy is to give participants a path to identify their goals, visualize their highest potential and strive to be the best versions of themselves in an environment that supports their personal and professional goals.

Target Participants

Women of all abilities and ages who identify as female are invited to apply to the Empowerment Academy.

Testimonials

“This has been a powerful tool for me. I have gained so much more confidence and courage in these 3 months than I ever thought possible. Working through my benchmarks has kept me focused on my pageant goals one step at a time, instead of being overwhelmed with everything and not knowing what to do first. I honestly feel like I can go to my National Pageant feeling very prepared.” ~*Sherry Walkush*

“As moms and business owners, we have to be intentional on personal growth. Darcy Castro wholeheartedly listens to your life goals and customizes a personal development plan to help you reach your next personal level of success in life and pageantry. I love being inspired by the other Queens with their platforms and passion to serve others.” ~ *Nancy Nguyen Liles*

“The Empowerment Academy has changed many things for me already in the short time I've been a Delegate. Being able to work on pageant and life goals with constructive criticism and a group of solid individuals in your corner is something I could never forget. This opportunity has given me so much and I couldn't be more thankful for being given a chance.” ~ *Cassandra Belgarde*

“The Empowerment Academy has really given my ambition a pathway to success that has been so helpful. Using the benchmarks, I am able to have a step-by-step plan that utilizes my time and talents effectively to help me achieve my goals!”
~ *Bridget Adams*

“The Empowerment Academy has given me the mentorship to push myself to the next level of pageantry. Working on weak areas and perfecting my strengths helps me to become the best version of myself!” ~*Katie Inouye*

“My time and experience here at the Empowerment Academy has been one of the best decisions I have made in my quest to always continue to better myself. The format and Darcy's experience makes it a personal and individualized program like no other. It has taught me to always take a fresh look at my goal setting, preparing for benchmarks and what steps I need to achieve my goals. Our lives change, our goals change, so our ways at achieving that must also change. I love that one of the biggest components is how much it helps you with self-growth and self-esteem. One important thing my pageant journey has taught me that I must share is that your self-worth, your self-image and your self-confidence is what truly makes you beautiful.” ~ *Anna Casador-Saccoccio*

“Darcy has challenged me to take all aspects of my pageant journey to the next level. My personalized program is targeting my goals and I’ll have tangible deliverables to use in the future. I love the supportive and uplifting community of fellow Delegates.”
~ *Claire Murdough*

“Having the opportunity to be a Delegate in this Academy has been rewarding on so many levels. One of the goals was very tough for me. Once I completed it, it was a moment of such clarity for me. I will not let self-doubt stop me from achieving my goals anymore!” ~ *Corinne Bergeron*

Pricing

The Signature Program dues are \$350 and are non-refundable. Dues cover all included benchmarks and prize package.

Structure

1. Application and Registration

Applications are accepted year-round, but Signature Program applicants will be accepted by discretion of the Executive Director. Applications are available online at DarcyCastro.com/Signature-Program. The Empowerment Academy Contractual Agreement for Participation must be signed at time of application.

2. Program participation

Once accepted as an Empowerment Academy Delegate, a custom plan will be crafted in conjunction with the leadership board consisting of 12 benchmarks that can be finished at your own pace. Benchmark will receive feedback as appropriate and may require a repeat submission in order to achieve excellence.

3. Empowerment Academy Signature Program Titles

Upon completion of the program, the Empowerment Academy leadership team will provide final decision on Spokesmodel titles awarded to Delegates who have successfully completed all benchmarks with excellence and diligence.

Delegates awarded the title of Empowerment Academy Spokesmodel will receive a prize package to commemorate their status and achievement.

Spokesmodels may be asked to serve on the Empowerment Academy leadership board, create content for the Empowerment Academy resource network, represent the organization within pageant industry groups, and speak to the media or attend and speak at events on behalf of the organization.

4. Ongoing opportunities

Gold and Sapphire Status

Empowerment Academy Spokesmodels are invited to return as Delegates progressing towards the prestigious Gold and Sapphire Spokesmodel titles. Benchmarks will increase in expectations of excellence in order to achieve the

elevated titles. Delegates who achieve these ranks will receive a new prize package to designate the elevated title.

Empowerment Academy Ambassadors

Any participant or program supporter who recruits three participants will be eligible for Empowerment Academy Ambassador status, which will be recognized on all Empowerment Academy platforms and includes the presentation of an award and scholarship towards Empowerment Academy programs.

Darcy Castro, Executive Director

Darcy created the Empowerment Academy because she deeply understands, first-hand, the significant positive impact pageantry can have on the lives of women of all ages. In 1995, she watched her first pageant and began to see herself in a new light, ready to set goals and strive for experiences she once thought herself not worthy of. She won her first Miss America Scholarship Program local pageant the following year, and the experience transformed her life. It motivated her to pursue other scholarship and academic opportunities, and graduate college with honors, debt-free.

After four years as a local titleholder, she went on to become a local executive director in the Miss America system. **In her program's inaugural year, her very first local titleholder went on to win Miss America!** Being a part of the support team for Katie Harman, Miss America 2002, gave her a unique view of pageantry that has deeply influenced her roles as director, judge, competitor and pageant industry business owner.

In 2018, Darcy took the vulnerable step to return to the pageant stage as a competitor in her 40s and ascended the ranks to win her first national title in 2019, and has continued to compete, gaining valuable insight that fuels her pageant-industry business. She created the Empowerment Academy to bring her years of experience in all facets of pageantry and her firm grasp of its benefits, along with her impressive professional acumen, to be a leader to women across the spectrum to help them set and achieve their goals.

Darcy Castro Productions LLC is the parent company of the Empowerment Academy. By trade, Darcy is a freelance public relations consultant, journalist, and event host. Learn more at DarcyCastro.com.

Pageant Industry Experience

Miss Portland 1996 (MAO)

Miss Washington County 1997 (MAO) – Top 10 Miss Oregon

Miss Metro Area 1998 (MAO) – Top 10 Miss Oregon, Academic Achievement Award

Miss Mt. Hood 1999 (MAO) – Top 10 Miss Oregon, Preliminary Talent Award

Miss Portland Scholarship Program Executive Director 2000 – 2002 (MAO)

Mrs. Oregon America – Judge

Miss El Paso (MAO) – Judge

Miss Wolcott (MAO) – Judge

Miss Spirit of the USA – Judge

Miss Make-A-Wish – Judge

Elite Connecticut American Woman of Service 2019

- Crown of Service calendar winner

Classic Ms. Queen of New England 2019

- Overall High Point winner
- Pairs Modeling runner-up
- Modeling winner
- Outfit of Choice Modeling winner

Classic Ms. New England 2019

- Spirit of Pageantry winner
- Talent winner
- Modeling winner
- Outfit of Choice Modeling winner
- Comp Card winner
- Portfolio winner
- Photogenic winner

Classic Ms. US of America 2019

- Outfit of Choice Modeling Winner
- Photogenic Winner
- Talent first runner-up
- Modeling first runner-up
- Comp card winner

National Elite American Woman of Service 2019

- Overall interview winner
- Eric Medeiros Memorial Foundation Award
- Photogenic winner
- Personal Platform Presentation winner
- Americana Theme Wear winner
- Fitness winner
- Positive Pageantry Writing winner
- Director's Award
- Presidential Service Award

Pageant Platform Elite Local Winner 2020

Pageant Platform Elite State Winner 2020

Pageant Platform Elite National Second Runner-Up 2020

Lifetime Ambassador American Woman of Service

- Presidential Service Award

America's Classic Yankee Ms. 2020

- Role Model winner
- Portfolio High-Point winner
- Comp Card High-Point winner

- Modeling winner
- Talent winner
- Outfit of Choice first runner-up
- Photogenic winner

Ms. Georgia North America 2021

2nd Runner-up Ms. North America 2021

2021 Presidential Service Award winner

Full member of the Society of Pageant Women

Mrs. Marietta America 2021

Mrs. Georgia America 2021

Semi-Finalist Mrs. America 2021

Mrs. America 2021 Fabulous Face winner

Contact Information

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