

# Katy's Crown Jewel

## BROOKLYN BERGERON

WoodCreek Junior High student doesn't let cerebral palsy interfere with her goals and encourages others with special needs to do the same

Written by Holly Leger | Select photography by Anetrius Wallace

Wearing a purple dress, a white "Miss Katy Lone Star Angel" sash, and a sparkling crown, 13-year-old Brooklyn Bergeron walks on the stage from one woman to the next, until all 10 contestants of the Brookwood Special Needs Princess Pageant have crowns on their heads.

Although it's typical at pageants to select only one winner, all 10 competitors at this pageant are declared Miss Brookwood - and it upsets no one. In fact, the entire line of special needs women are smiling their absolute brightest, excited that their favorite dresses, interview sessions, and talent performances were recognized and applauded by the audience.

As someone who also has special needs, Brooklyn says she knows how important those moments of achievement are. She helped with the first Brookwood Community pageant last year and was glad to do it again in June. "I like seeing all the talents - seeing them actually doing what they love to do," she says. For Brooklyn, participating in pageants is what she loves to do. However, having cerebral palsy has sometimes made it a physical challenge for her to compete in pageants.

### Learning to Walk

At the age of 5, Brooklyn had double heel cord surgery, and by 6 years old, she learned to walk for the first time with the aid of ankle-foot orthosis.

Brooklyn's mother, Darla Bergeron, says walking was a huge success for Brooklyn. However, she walked differently than everyone else, and she was often made fun of at school, even being pushed down the bus stairs one day. "In third grade, she went through a very bad year of bullying," remembers Darla. "It was a tough time."



Bergeron with Miss Texas 2013, Ivana Hall

Concerned for their daughter's mental well-being, and the effect bullying could have on her in the future, Darla says she and her husband began to think of ways that Brooklyn could be involved, be herself, and feel accepted.

### Becoming an Angel

As an executive director in the Miss Texas organization, Darla proposed the idea of a Miss Texas Lone Star Angel program, which allows special needs girls of any age to compete in a pageant of their own. The Miss Texas Pageant embraced the idea, and in October 2013,

Brooklyn was crowned Miss Katy Lone Star Angel, the very first titleholder of the program. "I was so happy just to have a title and to be with the other girls," Brooklyn recalls.

### Helping Others

Since then, she has used her platform, "CP doesn't define me," to share her story about setting goals and pursuing them despite having a disability.

“Even though you have a disability, you can achieve your goals and dreams.”

- Brooklyn Bergeron

Brooklyn Bergeron, diagnosed with cerebral palsy, is the very first titleholder for the Miss Lone Star Angel program, a pageant designed especially for girls with special needs

One of her favorite places to spread this message is through an organization at WoodCreek Junior High called PACK. In this organization, Brooklyn spends time every Monday and Wednesday with other special needs children at the school. Together, they recycle, play games, and talk.

“I know what they’re going through, because I have special needs, too,” Brooklyn says. “I didn’t really have that many friends throughout the school year, so I just wanted to be a friend to them.”

### Sharing the Crown

Brooklyn said she is proud of her accomplishments, like learning to walk, ride a bike, and participating in gymnastics. She still has future goals in mind, too, including pursuing a career as a physical therapist.

But for now, Brooklyn enjoys supporting those with special needs in the Katy community. She helps them feel like royalty, and sometimes that means placing 10 sparkly crowns on 10 deserving young women. “I just like to encourage other kids that have disabilities and let them know that dreams can come true,” she adds. “Even though you have a disability, you can achieve your goals and dreams.” **KM**

*HOLLY LEGER is a freelance writer whose favorite story assignments are ones about inspirational leaders like Brooklyn.*

## Brooklyn BONUS FACTS

- Active member of National Junior Honor Society
- Junior high cheerleader
- Loves to be on stage
- Plans to walk in five-inch heels someday
- Volunteered at the YMCA Healthy Kids Day



## Koko FitClub

### An open letter to our community,

Fitness is a very personal choice. We all want to be fit and healthy, but how we choose to do it, or not, becomes very individual for every person.

We started Koko FitClub here in the Greater Houston Area because we believe there was something missing for people (me included) for whom big mainstream gyms simply don't work.

Traditional gyms have never provided me with the support and guidance that I needed to get the results I hoped for. I've always had the motivation, but I have never had a program that kept me engaged for very long, either mentally or physically. And as my life got busier, my gym became less and less a part of my life – other than when it was time to pay the monthly bill. I believe being healthy is one of the most important responsibilities I have to myself and my family. Plus, I like how I feel when I am in better shape. So, giving up wasn't an option for me. I also knew a lot of people were struggling just like me, so I decided to do something about it. I became determined to be part of a gym that would provide everything a typical person in the real world needed to get on – and stay on – a healthy path.

**That's why I joined the Koko FitClub Team here in Houston, Texas.** At Koko FitClub, we exist for one reason and one reason only: to change lives in our community. We specialize in helping people who just don't fit into the typical gym scene get real results.

Our job is to guide you, motivate you and support your personal fitness journey. Koko is a one-of-a-kind, proven approach to fitness, based upon a personalized and structured programs that can be done in as little as 30 minutes, just a few times per week. The Koko "Smartraining" System has worked for thousands of people nationwide, people just like you and me. We knew there had to be a better way, and Koko is it.

If you are new to fitness, ready to make a change, or just out of excuses, come try us, completely risk free, for 30 days for just \$30. Let us prove to you that fitness can be simple, and let us show you how easy it can be to stick with our program and change the person you see in the mirror.

My team and I look forward to getting you started on your new journey today!

Yours in fitness,  
John Denson & The Koko FitClub Team

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## WE CHANGE LIVES



There is absolutely no way I would achieve what I do at this club ANYWHERE else. I've lost over 15 lbs, my blood pressure is lower, and I am looking and feeling better than I have in 10 years! ~ Scott Kreitz

Within 2 months, I hit my goal weight. I'm still losing weight while gaining strength and getting toned. I am down 27lbs and have my figure from 25 years ago, BACK!!! Honestly, I didn't know it was possible but here I am! ~ Connie Parker



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