

King City's Olivia Forte in the running to be crowned Miss Canada Universe in August



By Jim Stewart

Olivia Forte aspires to be the next Miss Canada Universe and her dream of being a national goodwill ambassador on the international stage got closer to fruition last week. The lifelong King City resident was chosen as one of 60 delegates for the pageant from a pool of thousands of candidates across Canada. Forte will compete in the 2025 Miss Canada Universe preliminary show at the St. Clair College Chrysler Theatre in Windsor on August 7. The final show will be on August 9. If the 19-year-old captures the crown in August, she would represent Canada at the Miss Universe Pageant in Thailand in November. Nobleton's Tim Hortons was an appropriate setting to interview a Miss Canada Universe contestant on a Sunday afternoon at the tail end of an ice storm. The poised and articulate graduate of King City Secondary School looked right at home and comfortable at the iconic coffee shop on Highway 27. Forte expressed her gratitude toward her family and to the residents of King Township after being selected for the

upcoming Miss Canada Universe pageant: "My biggest supporters are my mom and dad and my older brother, Andrew. So many people have been so generous. My neighbor Anna has helped me pay for my makeup, dresses, and travel costs. I've been able to secure sponsors in King City who have donated items that I'll be using in Windsor. Celeste recently donated \$1,000 to help me with my costs with the pageant. It feels good to know my community is cheering for me." In addition to the local support she has received from the King Township community, Forte also described her inspirational connection to her faith community at Sacred Heart Parish in King City: "The most important aspect in my life is my faith in God. It's important to me because we all go through things that can be difficult. I've learned there's a bigger reason for our pain. One of my favorite Biblical passages is "For those who believe in God and are called to his purpose, all good will happen to them." I have a spiritual power within me that keeps me believing and achieving. I feel that I am here to help my community and that I have come to serve others." Forte expressed her admiration of her teachers' call to service at King City Secondary School and described her experience at high school: "I loved it. I miss it. One of my teachers, Ms. Le, assigned us a project on what we wanted to be when we left high school. She mentioned that she couldn't wait to see how I'd fulfill my goals. I appreciated everything my teachers did for me. They taught me about resilience and instilled core values that encouraged us to make positive change in our communities. I learned from them that it's important to keep trying." Forte contemplated the implications of not succeeding at the pageant as well as the brighter prospects of winning in Windsor: "If I don't win, I won't let it be a setback. As Denzel Washington said, "Fall forward, don't fall back." I would accept not winning this pageant as a stepping stone to future success. If I win, there's a great humanitarian aspect built into the role of Miss Canada Universe. I would want to share my story about overcoming an eating disorder earlier in my life and help others who might be facing the same challenges." I would love the world travel that would come with the job. The best part, for me, would be meeting people and sharing our stories. I love knowing people "to know them deeply "and to create lasting friendships, especially with other contestants. I would like to leave a positive impact on the world." In addition to her call to service, Forte also shared her calling to create art and discussed her lifelong love of drawing: "I've always been a doodler. I love to draw. I had great art teachers and won an art award in high school. I feel power in drawing. It's an emotional and creative outlet for me. I've drawn at times simply to give my subjects life and it's fun to capture what the mind is thinking in images that you create." While Forte has an eye for artistic detail and revels in its recreational benefits, the King City teenager's eyes remain on the prize in August: "I want to represent Canada at the Miss Universe pageant in November. Canada means so much to me because of my family's connection to it. My family immigrated to Canada from Italy and my grandparents and parents have given us so much so we could live our best life. I want to give back to them and to my country by helping Canadians in my role." "I'm here to help. I've come to serve and help solve the challenges facing our nation. Affordable housing and food uncertainty "including right here in King Township, too, with our Food Bank "are two big problems we have to solve as a country."