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Miranda Donovan: Taking Every Opportunity

Part of “Making Change Happen: Women Creating a Better Maine”

Written by Nicole Ouellette

In 2007, Miranda Donovan attended Maine Youth in Government, a mock legislative experience for high school students. As part of the three-day-long program, attendees draft legislation on a topic they think is important to Maine residents. Inspired by the memory of two close friends who had died in a car accident, Donovan chose traffic safety. She drafted a bill that proposed a traffic safety study on the Route 11 corridor, an Aroostook County road that is heavily traveled by logging trucks. Her fellow attendees—150 students from across the state—voted it the best bill of the session. Ask Donovan about the honor, however, and she shrugs it off. “I do Model State just for fun,” she says.

The bill, however, carried its own momentum. When Donovan returned

to her home in Ashland, the state representative from Kennebunk called to say that he would sponsor the bill. It turned out that wasn’t possible—Donovan’s own representative would have had to sponsor the bill—but the entire experience was a valuable one. While Donovan, an 18-year-old senior at Ashland High School, enjoyed it, she’s now clear that a career in politics isn’t for her.

Still, Donovan remains open to new experiences. She enjoys trying things out, seeing if she likes them and repeating the process again and again. For example, she recently traveled to Indianapolis to take part in a Future Farmers of America competition in agricultural sales. Donovan doesn’t plan

a career in agriculture, but she jumped on the opportunity to gain leadership experience and learn more about the field.

She's also been a Girl Scout and National Honor Society member. During the summer, she works at Ashland's Quick Stop Two to earn extra cash. Like many motivated students, she's often at a club meeting or volleyball, softball or basketball practice. And while



not many high school seniors run entire community projects on their own, Donovan saw an opportunity when the Little Miss Ashland Pageant needed an organizer. A few years ago, she took over, planning and executing everything from parent meetings to decorations and the final pageant itself.

Given Donovan's diverse interests and talents, it's no wonder she hasn't yet chosen a definite career path. However, she's pondering something in the medical field, thanks to inspiration from her mother. "She was diagnosed with MS a few years ago and she doesn't let it slow her down," Donovan says. "It makes you think about how to keep going—and how to help others."

As she thinks about a career in nursing, Donovan carries a full high school schedule and signs up for college courses as well. She took an online psychology class last semester and is taking another course—this one in the fundamentals of music—now. In some ways, Donovan says, these classes are easier than some of her more traditional high school classes. "You're on your own and it's not as structured as a classroom," she says. "You have to motivate yourself."

So it's no surprise that she approached her college applications with good humor; she hopes to attend the University of Maine in the fall. After that, it's anyone's guess what Donovan will do next. One thing, however, is certain: Miranda Donovan will say "yes" to the opportunities that come her way.

What have you
said yes to
recently?
Tell us.

