



Miss Maria Clara USA 2014-2016

MILLISA CHRISTINE HERNANDEZ -VASICH



Millisa Christine Hernandez -Vasich was born on April 12, 1980. The oldest daughter to Milan and Elizabeth Vasich, Millisa was raised in a loving, encouraging and highly supportive home with her younger sister Samantha. At a young age Millisa helped her parents in their business, where she was taught the important principles of hard work, responsibility and independence. Moreover, her experiences growing up and working closely with her family taught her about family values, generosity and togetherness. Those experiences made her not just a good and honest businessperson, but a respectable and admired woman in her community and professional circle.

A graduate of Northeastern Illinois University, Millisa took her double undergraduate bachelor's degrees in Psychology and Philosophy and organized a therapy program for Groups and Families at UIC with her professor. In addition, during her college tenure Millisa, along with her college mentor, did a study about children and their learning abilities which was published in *The Journal of Child Psychology* and presented in front of a panel of academia from Harvard, Princeton and Yale Universities. Millisa went on to Loyola University where she received a post bachelor degree to become a Paralegal. She specialized in Employment and Labor law and worked in several top law firms with her law professor.

Millisa is active in the community with her involvement in civic and professional organizations. Currently she serves as a director on an auxiliary board of directors for the Erie Health Center that assists those in underserved communities to obtain health care. She is active in the United Way Young Leaders Society and The St. Jude Young Professionals Board. Millisa is also a student mentor and tutor to inner city youth with the Chicago Youth Program.

Currently, Millisa works in Executive Administration as an assistant to the President and CEO of Northwestern Memorial Health Care. She will also begin a Masters in Business Administration program next fall specializing in Healthcare Administration.

Millisa hopes to continue her philanthropic and community projects both here in Chicago and in the Philippines with her mother. In addition she hopes to travel more and broaden her horizons learning about new cultures.



Miss Maria Clara Central USA 2014-2016

SARA CRISOSTOMO



Sara, daughter of Gerry and Eloisa Crisostomo, was a consistent honor student from elementary school, at St. Philomena School and St. Mary of the Lake School and at St. Benedict Prep High School, where she just graduated with honors. Sara was likewise chosen to participate in the Higher Achievement Program, a 2-year enrichment program for motivated middle school students, at St. Ignatius College Prep in Chicago. She was inducted into the National Honor Society in 2012, where membership is based on Scholarship, Leadership, Service and Character. She credits her dad, a ballroom dancer, and her mom, a pianist for her love of dance and music. She began her formal music and dance education at the age of 3 when she took up Creative Movement and Dance and also enrolled at the Suzuki School of Music. She has taken ballet-tap-jazz-hip-hop, Filipino folk dance and interpretative dance lessons. She was also a dancer of the Philippine Folkloric Dance Company of Chicago and the Lahing Kayumanggi Dance Troupe. Sara plays the piano, organ and also the guitar and is an active member of the Philippine-American Ecumenical Church youth group, band and choir. Sara started taking Vocal Technique and Performance at the age of 7, with noted voice mentor, Jillann Gabrielle. She has performed for dinner showcases and as a soloist in various functions, and was also a singer of the prestigious Chicago Children's Choir, performing at distinctive venues, for special events by the Mayor's Office, TV appearances, at the Ravinia Festival, NATO Summit in Chicago for President Obama and other world leaders, for visiting dignitaries like the Presidents of China and South Vietnam, and at local and international tours, with famous singers like Celine Dion, Beyonce, Al Green, Bobby McFerrin, Andrea Bocelli, etc. Sara is tri-lingual, equally fluent in English, Tagalog and Spanish. She loves to write, too. She was honored as one of 20 finalists from over 3,300 in the 2009 Citywide Seventh Grade Human Relations Student Essay Contest sponsored by the Chicago Commission on Human Relations. She also received a Top Finalist Writing Award from the Chicago "Do the Write Thing Challenge" 2010, chosen from over 1,000 entries. She is passionate in volunteering for charitable endeavours, particularly the St Vincent de Paul Project Hope for disadvantaged mothers and infants, and also in Filipino community affairs like the Laguna Association, where she was Little Miss Los Banos and Ms. Teen Lahing Kayumanġgi, and the Philippine Independence Week Committee, where she was Miss Teen Philippines and later on Miss Philippines-Illinois. Sara has always been a blessing to her parents, whom she considers her favorite persons in the world because they do for her more than the ordinary things parents do for their children.



Miss Maria Clara Illinois 2014-2016

KATELYN JEAN VALDEZ-JANKOWIAK



Katelyn is the daughter of Doris (Valdez) and Michael Jankowiak. Her brother, Zachary, is a senior at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana. She is 16 years old and a junior at Walter Payton College Prep. She is involved in her community and church. This year will be a challenging and busy time, she has three AP classes, preparing for the SAT and ACT. There will be college tours and interviews. In the midst of all that she is a student athlete who continues to keep her 4.0+ GPA being on the junior volleyball team and Varsity track. She faces challenges with a positive attitude and always strives to do her best.

She enjoys sports and other activities which include volleyball, basketball, softball, and track. She performs with the Filipino Transfiguration Dance Troupe. She enjoys drawing, painting, photography, playing the flute and learning the guitar. She loves to spend time with family and friends whether it's going out, at home, cheering on the Chicago teams or a day at the beach.

Although she has not decided what her major will be she has aspirations of becoming a Photojournalist. She loves photography, this would allow her to fulfill her dream and reach out to people and have an impact in making aware of various national and global events in moving and visual compilations.