

Photo exhibit at Lambert Castle highlights Paterson students from 'Let's Be Real' program



ED RUMLEY
Destiny Diaz in front of her photograph, with her mother Marilyn Camacho, at the Lambert Castle's 'Real Beauty Uncovered' exhibit.
BY ED RUMLEY
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PATERSON – None of the Paterson students featured in photographs in a new exhibit at Lambert Castle wore makeup when they posed for the portraits.

That's because the ban on cosmetics was part of the theme of the six-week "Let's Be Real" program run by Youth Consultation Services Inc. at Eastside High School this summer. Organizers said the series of seminars was designed to help adolescents develop an authentic sense of beauty and value, regardless of peer pressure and other outside influences.

“Beauty is not what other people define you as, but how you define yourself,” said one of the participants, Destiny Diaz, who plans to enter ninth grade at the Eastern Christian High School in North Haledon in September.

Destiny was among 30 youngsters and their family members who attended last Saturday night’s unveiling of the photo exhibit entitled, “Reveal,” at the castle, which is run by the Passaic County Cultural and Heritage Council.

Edna Angelos, program director for Youth Consultation services, addressed the group before everyone ascended the palatial steps of the castle to the third floor exhibit.

“Everyone makes mistakes,” Angelos said. “Knowing myself and how I feel is important...Life has a way of slowly taking you away from yourself.”

The seminars covered such topics as parenting, sexual abstinence, communication skills and relationships, organizers said. “We want to foster and shed light on the brilliance of our young people,” said Angelos.

The program also provided instruction in salsa dancing and yoga as well as field trips to amusement parks and a Circle Line Cruise Tour around Manhattan.

“I’m a very shy person, so this program helped me be more outspoken,” said 15-year old Ty’Yanna Johnson of Paterson, who is entering her sophomore year.

“Attending this summer helped me with confidence to enter the 9th grade,” said Destiny Rivera, who lives in Paterson’s Lakeview section.

The students didn’t see their photos until the weekend unveiling.

“I like my photo,” said Destiny Diaz. “Beauty isn’t always what you see. Someone may be beautiful on the outside but not on the inside.” She said preparing for the no cosmetics photo shoot was not a problem.

“I don’t wear any make-up,” she commented. “My mom wants me to wait to wear make-up so I don’t appear to be older than my age.”

Destiny Diaz said she grew up watching Disney movies and, for a time, she said she thought, “Everyone should look like a beautiful Disney princess, including having a small waistline.”

The youngster said she left her elementary school in the 4th grade due to bullying.

“A group of girls at my school made fun of me,” Destiny recalled. “They laughed at me because I was chubby. They called me names and said I had a gap in my teeth.”

But this past spring, Destiny Diaz said she was named valedictorian of the 8th grade at her Paterson's Dawn Treader Academy.

With her mother, Marilyn Camacho by her side, Destiny spoke of the guidance she received at home.

"My mom has had a great impact on my life," Destiny said. "She has always helped me. We talk about everything. She does not just give me rules but gives me advice from her experiences."

The exhibit, which features photos by professional photographer Dani Allen, will be on display until September 3. For more information about the Lambert Castle, call 973-247-0085 or go to [www. Lambertcastle.com](http://www.Lambertcastle.com).