



## MS & MR WEST COAST COLLEGE BEAUTY PAGEANT

THURSDAY 01 SEPTEMBER 2011, 18H00, MALMESBURY

### SPEECH MRS RHAZIA HAMZA

### DEPUTY CEO INNOVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

*Thank you very much MC...*

First of all let me acknowledge the presence of the Deputy CEO for Corporate Services of West Coast College, Mr Andrey Booysen;

Also all the senior managers... *[acknowledge by name];*

I also want to acknowledge the Campus Managers - I see Mrs Esna Barnard, Vredendal Campus Manager... *[acknowledge others by name];*

Welcome and thank you very much to all the college support staff on the stage and behind the scenes who I am sure have put together a wonderful spectacle of entertainment for us tonight;

A warm welcome to all the invited guests and especially the judges who will be making some very important decisions tonight;

A warm welcome to all members of the community present, especially the family and friends of all the contestants;

I trust we will all enjoy each others' company tonight.

Ladies and Gentlemen, beauty pageants have a long, controversial and colourful history. Choosing symbolic kings and queens is an ancient custom in Europe in which beautiful young women symbolized their nations' virtues and other abstract ideas.

Did you know that one of the very first such events took place in Scotland in 1839? A lot of distinguished guests took part and it gained so much public attention at the time.

The first modern American pageant was staged in 1854 by a man called PT Barnum, but his subsequent events were closed down by public protest. He was so fascinated in beauty contests that he held dog, baby, and bird beauty contests.

Even the newspapers seemed to have been captured by this idea. They held photo beauty contests for many decades. In 1880, the first "Bathing Beauty Pageant" took place as part of a summer festival to promote swimwear. Thereafter there were Splash Days and other events.

But what is the purpose of beauty pageants? In the beginning they were viewed as "trivial" which required no scholarly effort. However for us pageants are part of promoting self-esteem.

Girls who compete feel a sense of belonging with the other contestants, and the larger community. Contestants gain the ability to speak in public, and a sense of confidence in themselves. Winners of pageants have often said they feel a sense of accomplishment.

Some pageants are aligned with clubs to raise money for charities. Women are becoming more and more educated; and they take up leadership roles in prominent positions in society and we need to encourage this through social events like these.

The winners of the pageants often become role models for little girls and teens. The key role in being a queen was to understand and support topical issues. The winners especially were the women whom the girls looked up to the most. They needed to be someone whom girls could connect with and aspire to be.

Ladies and Gentlemen, why is this important for us at West Coast College? It is important for us because too often our girls drop out of college because they are not valued at home; many of our girls are sexually molested, abused; they are emotionally abused in society and at home; they are made to understand they are inferior to men.

Critics of beauty contests argue that such contests reinforce the idea that young women should be valued primarily for their physical appearance, and that this puts tremendous pressure on women to "be beautiful" by spending time and money for fashion and cosmetics.

But that is not what tonight is about - tonight we want to celebrate and assert the role of our young girls in society. We want to showcase that West Coast College acknowledge that you have a right to express yourself in the way you want to.

Therefore our function tonight is not about the so-called "pretty face", or "perfect figure". Our function tonight is about affirming the importance of women in our society; the importance of girls in our college; the importance of girls to be what they want to be; for them to get an education and a qualification.

Regardless of who wins or loose tonight, it is up to each and every individual to determine his or her own destiny.

So everyone, please sit back and relax; and enjoy a splendid evening with us.

*I thank you...*