

Washington Plus America

REAL Women . REAL Bodies . Making a REAL Difference . ©



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Stephanie Raines press@waplusamerica.com or 206.941.1344

Former Miss Plus America Launches the Washington Plus America Pageant

Seattle, WA. August 23, 2011—Latasha (Haskins) Raines carries many titles; 2010 Miss Plus America, former (at-large) Miss WA Plus America, plus size model, motivational speaker, community leader, former single mother and now Executive Director of the Washington Plus America Pageant. Washington Plus America is a pageant that promotes leadership, volunteerism and confidence for Washington's female majority who wear a size 12+. The first annual pageant is Presidents Day Weekend, February 17-20, 2012, at the Holiday Inn Downtown Everett. Winners will receive a generous cash award, wardrobe gift certificate, all fees paid for national competition and more. The Teen division winner will receive the above mentioned and an academic scholarship.

Washington Plus America (WPA) is the official state preliminary to the national Miss Plus America Pageant™. WPA's mission is to provide opportunities for women "as-is", with the understanding that, through doing, change happens. Latasha shares, *"If everyone waited until they achieved perfect physical fitness, make six figures, own a house with a white picket fence, 2.5 kids and a dog, we would be underdeveloped as a country. Many of the most influential and successful people in America's history were considered unqualified."* The Washington Plus America Pageant system believes that beauty and potential come in every size, and this reality only allows us to reach more people improving our communities through volunteerism.

Executive director, Latasha, explains that the pageant does not glorify or support unhealthy lifestyles. The pageant represents the 60% of American women who are a size 12 and up, and the majority of them are clinically healthy. *"As a toned, fit college basketball player I wore plus sizes"* says Latasha. However, size can be misleading; Latasha lost both her father (49) and brother (29) recently to undetected heart disease, both where consider the picture of health, and not required to take an EKG. Unfortunately, both passed in their sleep within months of each other. Therefore, size or appearance is not always the best indicator for health.

The Washington Plus America Pageant has partnered with two organization's that are near and dear to Latasha's heart. Contestants will each raise a minimum of \$100 in donations to be awarded to the American Heart Association and Cherish A Jewel. She wants to give back to the American Heart Association to increase heart health awareness and to decrease heart-related deaths. Latasha was the 2011 Cherish A Jewel Life-Line Award Recipient for her advocacy of single parents. Cherish A Jewel is a Seattle non-profit that provides motivation, support and resources to young women and single mothers.

The pageant has four divisions: Mrs. (married by February 1, 2012 and age 20+), Ms. (ages 30+ no age cap-can be married, widowed or divorced); Miss (ages 18-29 can be married, widowed or divorced) and Teen (ages 13-17 have never been married or pregnant). The Mrs./Ms/Miss division size requirement is women's size 14 and up. The teen division size requirement is junior size 12 and up. There is an opportunity for 15 women in each division to compete. The areas of competition include: Interview, Pant Wear and Evening Gown. All eligible women are encouraged to visit the Washington Plus America [website](#) for an application.

Washington Plus America pageant is Washington's only pageant exclusively for America's female majority, the women who wear a size 12+. To connect with [Washington Plus America](#), please contact us at press@waplusamerica.com or 206.941.1344.