

## 2013 Miss Virginia Association of Fairs



Sarah Grace is the twenty-two year old daughter of Annette and James Fitzsimmons. She grew up on her family's farm in Woodstock, Virginia with her parents and three older siblings. Her sister Margot lives in New York City, Rachel lives in Philadelphia and her brother Christian is serving in the U.S. Marine Corps stationed in Georgia. Sarah Grace has lived in the same farmhouse in Woodstock her entire life, but that has not stopped her from traveling all over the world to Europe, South America, and Africa.

Sarah Grace attended Central High School where she was involved in cheerleading, soccer, competitive horseback riding, dance classes, numerous plays, musicals, chorus and select choir. Growing up, she spent her summers at Camp Strawderman, attending cheerleading camps, gymnastic camps, and playing around her family farm by the river. She transferred to Eastern Mennonite High School in Harrisonburg, VA when she was seventeen. Sarah Grace spent two years at EMHS singing in EMHS' auditioned Touring and Chamber Choirs. Being a member of these choirs gave her the opportunity to travel the mid-west and Eastern Europe.

Sarah Grace graduated from EMHS in the spring of 2009 and began attending Eastern Mennonite University with the help of a fantastic financial aid package. During her first few years at EMU she was a campus tour guide, involved with "Take Back the Night" week, performed solo selections at Noon-Recitals, worked various work study jobs on campus and had the lead role in EMU's *The Triumph of Love*.

In the fall of 2011, Sarah Grace was given the life changing opportunity to spend almost four months in South Africa with 25 other EMU students. Sarah Grace lived with host families, volunteered, and learned about the culture and history of South Africa. After South Africa, Sarah Grace decided to take a break from school in order to reflect on her experience abroad and save money for school since her financial aid package changed significantly.

After returning home, Sarah Grace was reminded of her childhood dream to become Miss Shenandoah County Fair. She had won Jr. Miss Shenandoah County Fair when she was 15, but had not even thought about pageants since. Sarah Grace then spent the summer of 2012 working as a riding instructor and camp counselor at Camp Strawderman, while preparing for Miss Shenandoah County Fair. When August 18<sup>th</sup> rolled around, which happened to be Sarah Grace's birthday, God blessed Sarah Grace with the opportunity of becoming Miss Shenandoah County Fair 2012. Following her achievement, Sarah Grace began her job at the Woodstock Café, started classes at Lord Fairfax Community College and prepared for Miss Virginia Association of Fairs 2013.

Since becoming Miss Shenandoah County Fair and Miss Virginia Association of Fairs, Sarah Grace now has 3,200 dollars in scholarship money for school! Sarah Grace will be returning to EMU in the fall of 2013 where she will finish her undergraduate degree and become a nurse. She originally started college as a vocal major, but has since felt God's call in her life towards nursing to help take care of others. Sarah Grace plans to work with children as a pediatric nurse and eventually return to Africa to work for Doctors Without Borders.

As Miss Shenandoah County Fair, Sarah Grace was able to participate in the greased pig scramble, where she successfully caught two pigs with the help of her sister queens. She sang the national anthem to open up the tractor pull and both demolition derby events, handed out ribbons for most 4H/FFA livestock shows and enjoyed taking pictures with young girls that were so thrilled to meet a real princess! What Sarah Grace loves most about being a title-holder is the opportunity to be a role model for youth and girls in her community.

Sarah Grace loves to spend time with her family and dogs on her 100-acre farm. She has a long list of hobbies that she enjoys when she is not studying, working as a waitress, or preparing for a pageant. Sarah Grace loves reading, thinking about life, playing with children, spending time with friends, traveling, horse back riding, archery, dance, yoga, snowboarding, working out/staying active, singing opera, eating healthy, hiking and being in nature. Her platform is focused on reaching out to children and educating them on how to maintain a healthy lifestyle through eating well and staying active. Sarah Grace is thrilled that she is now Miss Virginia Association of Fairs and has the opportunity to advocate for her platform and represent the Association at Miss Virginia MAO in June!

Follow Sarah Grace on her blog at [missshenco.blogspot.com](http://missshenco.blogspot.com) to find out how she spends her year as Miss VAF 2013.

First Runner up was Savannah Lane of Chesterfield County Fair

Fourth Runner up was Natalie Flagg of Charke County Fair

Fifth Runner up was Heather Conley of Rockingham County Fair