

Hawaii Resident and Army Veteran Heads to Chicago to Compete for National Beauty Title



Photo by Russell Tanoue

MILILANI, HI – Hawaii resident Eva Salcedo, an Army Veteran and Platoon Sergeant with the Schofield Barracks Main Command Post Operational Detachment, the 25th Infantry Division’s only Reserve Element, is headed to Chicago in August to compete for the title of Mrs. Petite USA 2024. Sergeant First Class Salcedo has served in the Army for 14 years, including a combat tour in Iraq in 2020 in support of Operation Inherent Resolve, and active duty tours in England and Oahu.

She will swap her combat boots for stilettos, but her servant's heart remains. Her pageant platform named “Say No To Silence” was created based on her personal experience with intimate partner violence. Salcedo was 17 years old when she was finally able to break up her 2-year relationship with an abusive partner. “I am a mom to two daughters, and there is no issue closer to my heart than spreading awareness about domestic violence, and teaching people, especially youth, how to identify those red flags. I also want to use my cosmetology background to help survivors rise in the face of adversity.”

Salcedo is also a licensed cosmetologist and a graduate of Paul Mitchell The School of Honolulu and the Makeup Designory School. She has extensive experience as a makeup and hair artist through Oahu’s wedding industry, and she used her knowledge to create the “She Is Strong Makeup Kits” to donate to domestic violence shelters. “I selected a product I know works very well for most complexions and created the rest of the kit around it. It’s something to help survivors have good quality makeup, as they often must leave their situation quickly, leaving many of their personal belongings behind. I wanted to create something to help them feel empowered.”

To spread awareness, Salcedo created a class titled “Healthy Love Waves” which she teaches in person or on Zoom to small groups ages 12 and up. The class is also available for free download on her website radiantwitheva.com. It contains dating behaviors that are considered red flags, intimate partner violence indicators to look for in friends or family who are scared to speak up, and resources available for victims.

Salcedo heads to Chicago hoping to bring the national title to Hawaii for the first time. “Domestic Violence in Hawaii affects at least 1 in every 5 residents. I plan to use the title to raise awareness and raise funds to spread the message and educate, not just here in Hawaii but across the USA.”

The Petite USA Pageant takes place on August 3rd, 2024 at the Loews Chicago O’ Hare Hotel in Illinois.