

Miss Portsmouth 2026 works with ‘Foster the Future’

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For JOUR 2311

Danica Faith Claypool, Miss Portsmouth 2026, aims to raise awareness for her efforts towards supporting foster care through her Miss America Community Service Initiative. Based on her personal story, she hopes to use her platform to talk to the Ohio Senate about Bill 25, the Fostering School Success Act, which ensures consistency in education for children in foster care.

“I am trying to get a hold of local government ... I have really pushed for them to be behind this issue and help me bring (the issue) forward,” Claypool said. Through the Miss America scholarship program, Claypool is networking with the community to share her initiative.

Claypool has done pageant programs since she was 18 months old. Programs like Miss America have impacted her confidence and strengthened her leadership experience.

“I’m on my fourth year of competing for Miss Ohio and I never want to stop,” Claypool said.



Official Miss Portsmouth headshot of Danica Faith Claypool, taken by Sylvart Studios. She uses her platform and imaging to advocate for her cause.

Claypool mentions how pageantry has had a negative portrayal in the media that created body image issues. However, Miss America is more than that by pushing young women, like Claypool, to lead in their communities.

Foster The Future is a national initiative aimed at supporting children in the foster care system and helping them transition into adulthood.

Currently, Claypool has launched a petition in support of “Foster the Future” to strengthen child safety and stability in Scioto County, where she is based.

The petition aims to request revision of the current parenting curriculum to encourage reunification. It also requests the Ohio General Assembly and Scioto County Juvenile Court to implement mandatory, court-ordered education for any parent or guardian with Child Services reports.

“I have taken (the current curriculum in Ohio) myself,” Claypool said. “It does not include the same kind of curriculum you would get as a foster parent.

“I think if we want to remain a reunification state, we need to bring education to parents of children who are being brought into the (system).”

Claypool’s family started fostering when she was 12

years old. She had an older half-sister who was 10 years older; Claypool was raised like an only child.

Her family considered fostering when her mother didn't think she could have another baby.

Claypool said her initiative was born from a young age seeing different kids, different situations, and the struggle of being a foster parent. She aims for more recognition and advocacy for those taking care of kids in foster care.

Through fostering, Claypool's family has adopted. She says her family knew as soon as they met her younger sisters that they were a "puzzle piece" and weren't supposed to go anywhere else.

One of her adopted sisters had overdosed on Suboxone as a toddler. Claypool is grateful for the availability of Narcan. Being able to make sure all foster children are cared for during situations like that is another thing Claypool advocates for.

"(My sister) would not be with us today if Narcan was regulated the way that people are trying to push it to be regulated," Claypool said. "So, there are so many different aspects that I have advocated for over the years. I feel like each year things that I'm really pushing for, but this year, I'm trying to just have an overarching theme of 'Southern Ohio in general,

needs a revamp of our foster care systems.'"

Alongside her own story, Claypool is inspired by other stories to be aspects in her advocacy of making sure each child is in a safe space.

For example, she mentions that the Dylan Groves case in 2020. Groves was a three-month old baby and was reunified and murdered by his biological parents. Claypool hopes her petition will begin a revision of education for biological parents during reunification.

Jessie Bear has worked closely with Claypool. After knowing Claypool since she was a child, Bear watched her grow up. Bear said her daughter even looks up to Claypool.

Later, Claypool asked Bear to be her pageant coach, helping with wardrobe and public image. Scioto County River Days and Miss America's Teen Division is where Bear began working closely with Claypool.

"It's been really cool to watch (her grow up)," Bear said. "She's always been passionate about foster care ... she was worried about their hygiene items ... it was more of a teen level, but she was putting the work in."

Bear admires how Claypool's initiative has matured with her. Going from impactful community actions to legal actions.

"She's going to go speak at the state house, so now she is using her voice, as (Miss Portsmouth), and making a bigger impact."

Bear said she is also an advocate for children as a schoolteacher and Claypool is making positive changes for children in the community.

Eventually, Claypool would like to be the Admitted Director of Scioto County Children's Services. She said her attitude is exactly what the county needs.

Working at Portsmouth City Schools, Claypool has interacted with students who have been in foster care, live with a grandparent or need to be in foster care, but are strained on resources.

Claypool said the community has the potential to reform policies and provide resources.

"As Miss Portsmouth, and hopefully as Miss Ohio, I get to drive (my initiative) even further," Claypool said. "I want to make Ohio stronger than ever."

Those who wish to support Claypool's initiative can sign her petition at <https://c.org/9rC8TBMFfh>