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# Cary girl gains recognition as a performer

Adela Crandell Durkee — July 19, 2015



Mary Hilbrink is nationally recognized for her short film about the history of Cary.

"If people don't accept you, or look down on you for age, race, gender, just keep trying," says Hilbrink, who suffered four years of rejection before she won her first contest at the McHenry County Fair.

"It felt so good," Hilbrink said.

Now Hilbrink is nationally recognized for her short film about the history of Cary. Nestlé's is using her short film as part of their promotional material. That is because Hilbrink mentions the world famous candy bars, Butterfingers and Baby Ruth, in her film. The original manufacturer, the Curtis Candy Company, was located in Cary.

Hilbrink's short film was one of many from across the country about history of hometowns that were played at a school near Washington D.C. Although this is not her first film, it is the first one to be shown in public.

Hilbrink began performing when she was 3 years old. Her first competition was at Wauconda Fest when she was 7.

"I fell in love with competition," she says.

She began competing in singing contests as a soloist and in duets. Competing helped Hilbrink build her self-confidence. Still, she suffered a lot of rejection before her first success.

"A lot of judges didn't pick me for the finals because of my age," Hilbrink says. "They thought I was too young to handle the pressure."

Hilbrink begins recording with the Tate Music Group in Mustang, Okla. Aug. 10. She sings contemporary Christian music. Hilbrink is quick to point out that she does not write music, so her album will be familiar songs like "Mercy Me," by Mandessa and "Proof of Your Love" by For King and Country.

Hilbrink is a student at Trinity Oaks Christian Academy in Cary. She likes school, especially science. A self-proclaimed "visual learner" Hilbrink enjoys the hands-on projects and experiments, rather than just learning things from a textbook. So far, she is not involved in sports or extracurricular programs, because her performance activities take up too much of her time.

Hilbrink is an only child.

"My friends take their siblings for granted," she says. "Sometimes it can get a little boring and uninteresting with just parents to hang out with."

Hilbrink can be found on YouTube. Fans can follow her on Instagram @M.A.R.Z.

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