

RECOGNIZING BRIELLE PAQUETTE OF SALEM

Ms. HASSAN. M. President, I am proud to recognize Brielle Paquette of Salem as October's Granite Stater of the Month. Brielle is using her creative talents as a videographer to help remove the stigma around mental illness and to help inspire her friends and neighbors to open up about their mental health struggles.

Brielle grew up in a family of photographers and filmmakers. From an early age, she found her passion in filmmaking. As she got older, Brielle recruited her young cousins to participate in music videos that she would direct and film, all with the hope of putting a smile on people's faces.

Brielle also grew up in a family with loved ones who experienced mental health challenges. Brielle's father struggled with alcohol abuse, and her mother lives with anxiety. Brielle developed an anxiety disorder, which she did not talk about with anyone, that left her feeling isolated from her peers.

When she entered high school, Brielle decided to use her talents with a video camera to help break down the stigma around mental illness. In 2019, Brielle submitted a PSA to a competition held by New Futures, a New Hampshire organization that seeks to promote health and wellness in the state.

Brielle wanted to highlight the high rate of mental illness in young adults. To film the video, Brielle went to a crowded area in Boston with a sign that read "20-50 percent of adolescents' struggle with mental illness. Hug to show support for people who are struggling." Brielle then tied a blindfold on herself and accepted hugs from strangers as her mom filmed from afar.

Brielle won the People's Choice Award for that video, and since then has filmed other PSAs aimed at destigmatizing mental illness and encouraging people to open up about their struggles. She also uses her platform as Miss Londonderry to promote this important message. Additionally, as a member of her school's women empowerment club, she is working on the early stages of a new PSA on body positivity.

I am proud to recognize Brielle for her efforts to break down the barriers that too often prevent us from talking about mental illness. By using her talents to help facilitate conversations about a difficult issue and raising awareness around mental health, Brielle exemplifies what it means to be a Granite Stater. I look forward to seeing what she accomplishes next.