Miss Washington, from Vancouver, knows firsthand the value of youth mentoring
Miss Washington:

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weight, but I feel better when I eat certain foods," she said. So she sticks to turkey, chicken and fresh vegetables. Appearances are not what motivate Brown to compete in Miss America, however.

"This organization is not about beauty. It's about the whole package," Brown said.

She said contestants should not be dismissed as "beauty queens." "We're active in our community. We're students. We work. We represent today's modern young woman trying to achieve their goals to gain an education and to get into the professions we always dreamed of," she said. "We are the girls next door trying to make a difference."

She wants to advance her pageant platform of encouraging youth mentoring. She has been involved with Big Brothers Big Sisters and Lunch Buddies.

"I know I wouldn't be here today if it weren't for the mentors in my life," she said.

Role models

At 16, she filed for emancipation from her mother. Her mom never responded to the petition, so the court dismissed it. But Brown had already moved out. Brown lived with a friend, an aunt and a grandfather-figure until setting off for Puyallup this summer. Her mother's ex-boyfriend, Dave Jacobus, is the man she calls "Dad." He recalls her as energetic and outgoing as a youngster. Brown worked for his business, Jacobus CARSTAR, an auto body shop, for a time.

"I'm her No. 1 fan," Jacobus said. "She's my hero now."

He's among the adults Brown looked to for guidance. She also drew support from Summit View Church, where she participated in the youth program. She later became a youth mentor there herself.

A photography teacher at Evergreen High School encouraged her to compete in local pageants as a way to win scholarship money for college.

At 17, she entered the Miss Greater Vancouver contest and was third runner-up.

"I was discouraged, but I could see how devoted the volunteers were," she said. So she kept competing.

Whatever happens at the Miss America pageant in January, she hopes it will open doors for her.

Brown plans to obtain a degree in communications and become a broadcast journalist.

"I want to do something with my life," she said.

Your horoscope

By HOLIDAY MATHIS
Creators Syndicate

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You always feel better throughout the day when you can get some exercise in. When you feel yourself getting a touch moody, a brisk walk around the block for 10 minutes is all it takes to lift your spirits.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You feel like a student waiting for the bell to ring. Even though there is something wonderful waiting for you on the other side of the alarm, there are better things to do than watch the second hand go around.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). It's not enough to stay healthy, happy and generally effective, you must use your strengths and talents every single day, including and especially this one.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You are not exactly on the same mission as your kindred spirit, but you have enough in common to understand and support each other. It will not be a huge effort for you to encourage each other's growth.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Puttering around is part of your creative process. So don't fret if it takes you a few hours of wandering from room to room to get things done. This is what makes the day.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Sept. 12). You will get results this year — not always the results you want and expect, but usually results you can build on for your ultimate success. A change of pattern over the next 10 weeks leads to improved fitness and health. November brings entry into a new social arena. There's a professional boost in February. Cancer and Libra people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 8, 40, 18, 33 and 26.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22). Your loved one looks up to you, which is why they may try to present themselves in a light that is not entirely true. They want you to see them as they think they should be, not as they actually are.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21). There is a discrepancy between what you are asked to do and what you want to do. This could cause an ulcer. Cancer and Libra people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 8, 40, 18, 33 and 26.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). There is something fascinating about today's task, but it won't be readily apparent. You'll have to dig deep. Identify what is keeping you from wanting to know work. It's a pleasure.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You may not ever weigh compliments and praise like you don't like. You set the bar very high. They have come to expect great.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You're more interesting, know your way of making bold wrong. In time, you will fix your mistakes. But for now, trying and learning. PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). How patient with those who wish than you do about a bad situation. You'll wear the patience and that the ignorance of hope, pride and