

DAILY NEWS

UPTOWN NEWS

MOVERS & SHAKERS

Nine vying to be named Harlem burger joint's 'It' girl

BY JAN RANSOM
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TIME TO shake, rattle and roll. Nine women want to be the new face of a popular uptown burger-and-milkshake joint, and their fate lies in the hands of those clutching the sirloin patties at the Lenox Ave. eatery. Patrons have until Aug. 31 to vote on-site for the next "Miss Harlem Shake," but these delectable dishes will need more than their good looks to win the top spot.

inflammatory demyelinating polyneuropathy, a neurological disorder characterized by progressive weakness and diminished sensory function in the legs and arms.

Jackson became an advocate for the disabled after her diagnosis in 2012.

"If we look at all of our differences, we'll see they're all wonderful things," she said.

The five contestants who net the most customer votes will continue on to the final round, which will be decided by a panel of judges, on Sept. 13.

Three-year Harlemite Danielle Summons has been praying for a hamburger with a side of prize.

The winner gets a \$500 prize plus \$1,000 for a local charity. Summons said she would donate hers to Harlem School of the Arts.

"A lot of kids in the area don't have the means or opportunity to explore the arts," she said. "I would love to be a part of helping someone else get that opportunity."

Model and actress Shannon Thornton, 26, was selected out of a pool of 15 to be last year's Miss Harlem Shake.

But this is the first year restaurant patrons have a say.

"She looked like a really nice person ... that's why I voted for her," said Tiara Williams, 8, who gave the nod to Summons. "I think she can win."

Williams' 8-year-old sister, Kayla, and their father Tony voted for two others.

The title comes with more than a tiara; the winner gets free burgers for a year, and her portrait placed on the Wall of Fame among the likes of Maya Angelou and Bill Clinton.

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"It's not a classified beauty contest," said restaurateur Jelena Pasic, 39. "We're looking for someone who is engaged in the neighborhood, from the neighborhood, is giving back, is smart, strong and beautiful in and out."

The contest kicked off in May with 55 applicants. The finalists — all Harlem residents — range in age from 19 to 51 years old and include an accountant, health educator, singer, teacher, food blogger and methadone treatment counselor.

The pool of poster-girl wannabes also includes inclusion activist Liz Jackson, best known around the nabe as "Smiley," the cheerful woman with a purple cane.

"Miss Harlem Shake should be someone who is just happy with who they are," said Jackson, 32, who suffers from chronic

