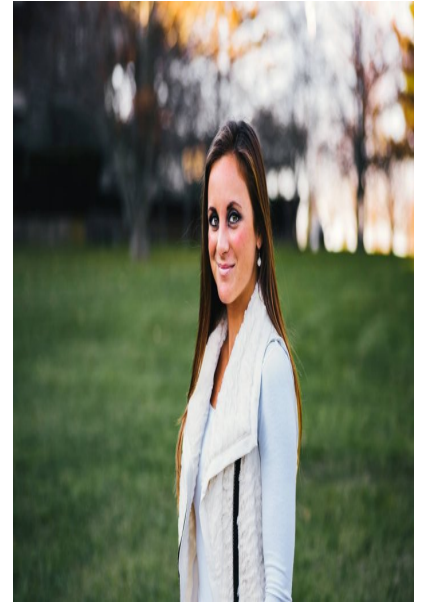


Faces Of New Bedford – #28: Ashley Bendiksen

Meet Ashley Bendiksen, a 29-year old, and the Executive Assistant to the Bristol County District Attorney.



Ashley, who had spent a brief time in college after she graduated high school, became involved in an abusive relationship which forced her to leave school. Once she eventually freed herself from that relationship she spent time volunteering and working in New Bedford to piece her life back together.

Remembering what her childhood dance teacher had told her about the Miss New Bedford contest, she saw that were she to win, she would receive a scholarship to allow her to afford to attend school again, as well as engage even more in the community. After lots of work and dedication she walked across the stage and received the title of Miss New Bedford 2009. As a requirement she also spent the next year volunteering to help raise awareness for domestic violence.

She eventually returned to school and at 26, she graduated from Salve Regina University as valedictorian, with her Bachelors Degree in Criminal Justice. She appreciates the experiences she has been through in order to get where she has

and New Bedford has played a major role in that. When she felt that she had nothing she was able to build her identity in this city through her experience, the community, and her job. She has had the opportunity to work on the Board of Directors of the YWCA, as the chairperson of the Miss New Bedford program, chairperson of the Southeastern Massachusetts Walk to End Alzheimer's and President of One Theater Group – a non profit theater group that she helped found which raises money for various organizations.

"New Bedford offers so much. As far as living here there is so much to do, diverse people, amazing music and arts, history and culture, and it's a great central location to enjoy the entire New England area. There's also so much opportunity here, whether it's running a business or starting your own nonprofit. I think it's just an awesome place to live."

Faces of New Bedford is a project by Colton Simmons. If you are interested in booking a shoot or getting prints from the series email all inquiries to colton@coltonsimmons.com

Follow Colton on Instagram:
<https://instagram.com/simmonscolton>