

# Baltimore Idol, a Catholic, hopes to become American Idol

**By Matt Palmer**

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On the night of July 15, Cecilia Sugarman was working at Chick-fil-A inside the Towson Town Center Mall. She was finishing a shift wearing the fast food restaurant's Cow mascot costume when she looked down at her phone.

Five missed calls from local television and radio stations, a display on the screen said.

Earlier in the week, the 17-year-old parishioner of St. Ignatius on Calvert Street had tried out for the Baltimore Idol singing competition, put on by WBFF Fox 45 and Z104. She was confident after singing Carrie Underwood's cover of "Home Sweet Home" during auditions at Al Packer Ford in White Marsh July 13.

Seeing the message, she wondered if she had won. She remembered hearing at the competition that if the winner couldn't be reached, a new Idol might be selected instead. Fear momentarily took hold. Soon, though, a camera crew from WBFF 45 was in the mall and she would hear her fate. She was the new Baltimore Idol.

"I've always wondered if anything big would happen," said Sugarman, who goes by the stage name Cecilia Grace. "I've always dreamed of being on the big stage. Now it's becoming more real."

Indeed, it is. Sugarman was flown to Oklahoma July 19 for an audition for the FOX ratings juggernaut "American Idol."

In the days following her victory, Sugarman made several television appearances.

"Lots of big things have been happening," she said.

Sugarman believes nothing happens without faith and before each show, she prays to the Holy Spirit for guidance and support.

"He's always singing along with me," she said.

When she tried out for the Baltimore Idol competition, friends from Chick-fil-A came with her as support. In line, they prayed together.

"It's always good to invite the Holy Spirit into whatever you're doing," she added.

Sugarman is one of five home-schooled Sugarman children. Some of them are currently in a band together.

"We all want to stay together as a band," she said. "Right now, they're very supportive of me doing this."

Cecilia's road to success started when she was a child. Her mother, Inchi, would sing to her.

"I've always loved singing," she said. "Any place I could sing, I would try it."

Now, with a shot at American Idol, perhaps the rest of the country will hear her.

*To read more about Cecilia Sugarman's family and strong faith, visit <https://tinyurl.com/sugarman>*

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