

LONG ISLAND / SUFFOLK**At circus prom, Patchogue-Medford teen keeps family first**

The prom was held at Villa Lombardi's in Holbrook.



Tashanah Vallon hangs out with her family outside the Patchogue-Medford High School prom at Villa Lombardi's in Holbrook Tuesday. Photo Credit: Marlo Jappen

By Marlo Jappen

Special to newsday.com

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At Patchogue-Medford High School circus-themed prom Tuesday night at Villa Lombardi's in Holbrook, 560 students munched on popcorn and posed with a man balancing on sky-high stilts while a live band took the place of a DJ.

But for all the pomp and circumstance, Tashanah Vallon had a slightly different way of celebrating in mind. While many teens see prom as chance to show off their independence, she saw it as a way to say thanks to her family before heading off to the next stage in life.

Outside the venue, Vallon, 18, happily snapped photos with her family — parents, cousins, sister and aunt— all by her side seeing her off for her big night. She wore a peach halter gown with silver beading as she and the group gathered in front of a cascading waterfall.

— “I wanted them here with me because they’ve been with me through everything,” she says. “They support me and everything I do.”

Vallon plans to follow in her parents’ footsteps by pursuing Suffolk Community College’s nursing program in the fall.

Her father, Joseph, a nursing assistant at Grace Plaza Nursing & Rehabilitation Center in Great Neck, says she has the right personality for the field.

“She’s compassionate and sensitive,” he says.

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family.

— “I’m very thankful for them,” Vallon says.

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Her mom, Youseline, a nursing assistant who works at Gurwin Jewish Nursing & Rehabilitation Center in Commack, says she’s proud of her daughter’s decision.

“It’s a nice way to help others who are ill,” she says.

Tashanah finally joined in on the fun inside, but not until indulging in one last photo with her