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FIRST PERSON

# Glee's Alex Newell on daring to dream

The Bishop Fenwick High School senior from Lynn talks about winning a spot on Fox's hit TV show.

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**I DREAMED OF BEING ON *GLEE*** ever since the first pilot episode. I fell in love with [actress] Amber Riley and all the characters, the music. It reminded me of my life. A friend told me about *Glee Project's* open auditions on Myspace in 2011. I auditioned with "And I Am Telling You I'm Not Going" from *Dreamgirls*. **IT WAS A LONG SHOT.** They got 34,000 responses. I was picked for the top 83. Then 43, 23, then 12 [for the show]. Then final four.

The original plan was to choose the top three and have only one winner. The finale was a last-ditch effort to show what you could do to win.

**NOT MANY BOYS CAN SING "I AM CHANGING"** from *Dreamgirls*, but I can. I



ESSDRAS M SUAREZ/GLOBE STAFF

**Alex Newell, 19, will appear on the current season of the Fox show *Glee*.**

went in thinking I could've won. We had no way of knowing there'd be an alternative outcome — two winners awarded with appearing on seven episodes of *Glee* and two runner-ups, including me, with two episodes.

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The *Glee Project* was like being in college with 12 people you know but really don't know and never leaving your dorm. All we did was: **SING. ACT. DANCE. EAT. SLEEP.**

I got so enthralled with LA. It was really hard to come back to actual living. For school, it's wake up at 6:30 a.m., go to school, do homework. Getting back into a routine was the hardest thing of everything. My clock was constantly changing.

I don't know **HOW MY LIFE WILL CHANGE**. My favorite line is from *Wicked*: "There are bridges you cross, you didn't know you crossed, until you've crossed." This was a bridge for me. **I WANT TO BE ONSTAGE** — on TV, in film, on Broadway. I want to be happy. I realize you don't need fame and fortune to be happy, just to do what you love.

— *As told to Kathy Shiels Tully* Interview has been edited and condensed.

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