

ENTERTAINMENT > LEGACY

Performing arts program being named after late Jewish actress

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MONTREAL — Universally adored as the English voice of cartoon character Caillou, for which she also recorded an album, Jewish actress Jaclyn Linetsky also had legions of fans for her voiceover work and a string of radio and TV commercials. But it was her role as 'A' overachiever Megan O'Connor in *15/Love*, a tween comedy drama on YTV about a group of gifted athletes at a tennis academy, which had her headed for stardom.

On Sept. 8, 2003 tragedy struck. Linetsky, 17, and co-star Vadim Schneider were being driven to the set in the Eastern Townships by a hired driver when the vehicle went out of control. Both teenagers were killed. They appeared in the first 11 episodes of the series. When officials from Gala Films met with the grieving families it was agreed to write their deaths into the script.

For the Linetsky family, coping with Jaclyn's death was painful to say the least. Initially they established an annual scholarship at her former high school, St. George's in Westmount, for a student who excels in drama each year. They also donated a machine in her memory that can detect



A legacy for Jaclyn Linetsky

hearing problems to the Montreal Children's Hospital and successfully lobbied the Quebec government to undertake a formal coroner's inquest into the accident that took her life.

It is only now though — five and a half years after her death — that the family has decided to honour her memory with a major project.

On Thursday, April 23 (6:30 p.m.) at the Just for Laughs Museum on Saint-Laurent Boulevard, a gala evening titled *A Night of Stars* will formally inaugurate and raise funds for the Jaclyn Linetsky Performing Arts Program housed at St. George's. The evening will cele-

brate her love and passion for the performing arts, while raising funds for a program and school that enabled the young actress to thrive in a nurturing environment.

"Jaclyn's passion and commitment for the performing arts and her innate desire to instill her love for the performing arts in others will live on in the Jaclyn Linetsky Performing Arts Program," said Larry Linetsky, Jaclyn's father.

"St. George's School of Montreal provided Jaclyn with a solid education, rich in the arts, and a strong support system that encouraged her talent," added her mother Terry. "Our goal is to offer similar opportunities to other students."

The Linetskys point out that despite her charged schedule, Jaclyn never missed a St. George's production nor a school assignment. As the family mourned they also felt strongly about establishing a legacy for Jaclyn. They were approached by a number of organizations who had proposals to memorialize her. However, it had to be the right fit. That's why Larry and Terry settled on the St. George's Performing Arts Program, which already had an excellent reputation and a connection to their late daughter. She had graduated from the school, where she was class valedictorian, only months before her death.

"Jaclyn's present and future was in the arts," said Larry. "For her, after CEGEP, there was only one place she wanted to go and that was the Julliard School for Performing Arts in New York City."

The evening will feature cocktails and entertainment, includ-

ing former cast members from the show *15/Love*, which debuted on YTV and is now airing in 72 countries around the world. Soprano Sharon Azrieli, Jaclyn's voice coach, will perform as will present-day St. George's student and Juno

award nominee Nikki Yanofsky. For more on how to donate and to buy tickets, log on to www.anightofstars.com or call Meghan Weinstein at (514) 772-0409. A fan of Jaclyn's from Italy has set up a tribute web site at www.jaclynlinetsky.com.

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