

# THE SUN COURIER

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## Jessy is taking life's challenges all in stride

By Mike Kezdi  
Staff Writer

The life of Jessy Yates is one of overcoming adversity at a young age and having the potential to become a star.

She wasn't premature and her birth was normal, but for some reason she didn't walk and, at 18 months, was diagnosed with cerebral palsy.

Doctors told her parents she probably wouldn't walk — and, if she did, it would be with a walker.

"I often asked the question, 'Why?'," said Kathy Yates, Jessy's mom. "Why was she given this disability?"

Kathy said that, over the years — and especially recently — she is beginning to receive her answer.

Jessy's most recent accomplishment was singing a solo in the 2007 Singing Angels Christmas choral concert at Playhouse Square.

"I was really shocked," Jessy said after learning she got the solo. "I think there are more who deserve it, but, hey, I'll take it."

The kind of persistence and strength that gave Jessy the ability to perform the solo also gave her the ability to walk — and to do so, eventually, without crutches.

Jessy, now 14, gave up the crutches at the age of 8 — because, she said, the adult crutches were uncomfortable.

But if you ask mom, Kathy will say it was because the adult crutches weren't as pretty as the children's crutches.

And, through various forms of physical therapy, horseback riding, taekwon do (she's a black belt) and swimming, her ability to walk has improved.

The main inspiration in her life thorough all of this has been her mom.

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After being involved with Singing Angels for four years, 14-year-old Jessy Yates was awarded the opportunity to sing a solo in the 2007 Christmas concert at Playhouse Square.

## Jessy

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"Celebrities? Honestly, who can you look up to?" Jessy asked. "My mom has always been there for me."

Beyond being a singer, Jessy enjoys acting, having performed in several local theater productions. Playing Templeton in Brecksville Theater on the Square's production of "Charlotte's Web" and the lead teacher in Broadview Heights Spotlights Community Theater's production of "School House Rock Live" were her favorite roles.

Though she enjoys singing

and acting, Jessy hopes to some day enter the field of law and eventually become a politician.

Why law and politics, rather than acting or singing?

"I know I have limitations in theater," she said. "I understand and try to look past that."

She also takes into account that she isn't very "outdoorsy" and doesn't want to sit at her desk. Add her gravitation to leadership roles, and politics is a no-brainer.

After all, she still needs to finish her last year at Brecksville-Broadview Heights Middle School and make it through high school.