

GH's Cynthia Preston Appears for Make-A-Wish®

Written by Linda Marshall-Smith
Tuesday, 07 October 2003 16:00

Preston, fresh off the film set, supports Make-A-Wish®

Soap Star Shines for Charity

Cynthia Preston (Faith, GH) is one gracious and giving woman. Several weeks ago she hosted, along with GH Co-Star Alicia Leigh Willis (Courtney, GH) a benefit for the Desi Geestman Foundation at the Ivar in Hollywood, CA. Over 30 soap stars attended, most from General Hospital, but Days of our Lives, Bold and the Beautiful and Young and the Restless were also respresented. Their combined efforts, coupled with the turnout of fans, raised \$25,000 for Desi Geestman Foundation.

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On September 29, 2003, Preston was out once again, participating in a charity event at the Ivar in Hollywood, CA. This time, Elevation 9000 Films, Annie Oelschlager and 1421 Productions hosted over a thousand industry insiders, including Preston, for a special event hosted by Anheuser Busch, Film Threat, Crest National, American Video Group, and The Ivar to celebrate the completion of their latest film, "Gretchen Brettschneider Skirts Thirty," and to make some dreams comes true for children with life-threatening medical conditions. Over \$6,000 was raised for the Make-A-Wish Foundation®.

The award-winning short film "Gretchen Brettschneider Skirts Thirty" is the story of a woman desperately trying to escape her thirtieth birthday. Undaunted by logic and supported by a Greek Chorus of show-tune singing friends, she attempts to avoid the dreaded event through all means legal and scientific. The movie's fantastical and irreverent style is reminiscent of Elevation 9000's debut production, "The Boy Scout," while demonstrating real growth for the entire team.

"Turning wishes into realities is the concept that Make-A-Wish® was founded on," said Bart Verry, Vice President and Director of Development for the Make-AWish Foundation of Greater Los Angeles. "We are pleased to be working with Elevation 9000 Films, Annie Oelschlager and 1421 Productions, a group that has also demonstrated this idea through hard work and dedication to their craft."

Elevation 9000 screened the company's first 35mm film short, "The Boy Scout," at more than 15 film festivals, winning a variety of audience and jury prizes. The premiere of "The Boy Scout"

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last year enjoyed attendance of more than 700 industry insiders, raising awareness for both the project and the production team. Corey Blake, Brad Morris, and Christopher Liebe then launched the Elevation 9000 Film Lab that inspired the production of eight short films, two of them to be directed by Blake and Liebe, including Gretchen B.

Pictured here with Cynthia Preston (Faith, GH), Annie Oelschlager, writer, star and executive producer of Gretchen B, developed the project in the film lab after spending several years doing stand-up comedy, independent films and stage while training at Playhouse West School and Repertory Theatre. Prior to that Annie completed the agent-training program at UTA and worked as a story editor at Alliance-Atlantis Films. 1421 Productions, a third partner in the production of Gretchen B., just enjoyed the premiere of its debut project, Warning Sign at the Dances with Films Festival. This team's principals, David Cohen, Jesse Biltz, and Michael Galatte served as producers on Gretchen B.

Thanks to the work of award winning DP Ken Glassing, recently named one of Variety's "ten cinematographers to watch for," and Production Designer Nicole Cramer (Laurel Canyon, The Wayne Brady Show), both of whom worked on "The Boy Scout," this film shares the distinct visual style that Elevation 9000 has become known for. The original score, created by newcomer Mark Wedin, underscores the look and feel of the film with a bouncy, upbeat rhythm. Gretchen B is the directorial debut of E9K prexy Corey Blake, pictured at right, whose acting credits include Fastlane, The Shield, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, To Hell with Love and "The Boy Scout."

But how does GH's Cynthia Preston fit into all this? Her acting coach, Tracy Aziz also works for Playhouse West, which is where Elevation 9000 originated. Preston is also extremely supportive of children's charities, and this was a benefit for Make-A-Wish®.

The private event took place on September 29th at The Ivar in Hollywood. The film screened at 8,9, and 10pm. Anheuser Busch test marketed a new beer, food from local restaurants Baja Fresh and Café Tu Tu Tango among others was served, and a silent auction took place from 7:00-10:00pm. Then the night got into full gear as DJ Moses spun from 10:30-1:00am.

Photos of Cynthia Preston and Annie Oelschlager with Cynthia Preston by Zak Woodruff