

Lyric of Life
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LOL



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Terry Benson / LOL Director / Father

LYRIC'S MEMORY ILLUMINATES ROOM IN SECOND EVENT

CHELSEA SAYS IT ALL

Chelsea Lagos took a weekend from a busy schedule and flew from New York City to be a part of the 2005 LOL Benefit on April 23rd. It turned out to be a major part as her few minutes of talking to those in attendance was powerful. She was, after all, Lyric's best friend in NYC.

It was Chelsea's second visit to the special LOL night as she also flew in for last year's initial event to honor Lyric Marie Benson and organ donation. This time, however, she took the microphone midway through the program and captivated the listeners. With heartfelt emotion, she spoke of how she met Lyric and how they clicked from the beginning. As part of the entertainment industry, they were out to conquer NYC and beyond.

As Chelsea explained it, that may have happened for Lyric through stage or screen. But now, in the wake of the tragedy, Lyric shines in a different way for all to behold. Giving of herself in a way nobody anticipated, Lyric has brought miraculous happiness to families of five individuals who received her gifts of life. Chelsea, who has also spoken on behalf of the New York Organ Donor Network, summed up her thoughts by saying, "I thank God that I knew her for the short time that I did, and I believe that the message she now carries through organ donation is as big of an impact as a person could make on this earth. And it's our duty, to Lyric and her friends and loved ones, to help all the dreams of those people in need of these gifts of life to come true. Lyric would want that. Lyric would love that."

Currently, Chelsea is quite busy working on projects from coast to coast. From her current home in NYC, she is also testing the waters of L.A. as she continues with her singing and stage opportunities.



A RADIANT LYRIC IN NYC

THEATER SCHOLARSHIPS

Just as Lyric Marie Benson gave from the heart to her stage and video work, so shall her articulate performances be remembered. From her dancing and singing at Yale in the popular "A Chorus Line" to the raw emotion and energy displayed in her one-person senior college project of "Margarita's Way," Lyric exhibited the talent to propel her far into the future. Now through Lyric of Life theater scholarships for high school seniors, that hopefulness continues for others.

Three \$500 LOL scholarships have now been granted. These are designed to help give high school students with theater backgrounds a financial boost to the start of their college careers. Students do not have to be majoring in theater but at least have plans to continue their craft during their college experience or as a community endeavor. Criteria for the scholarship include strengths in academics, leadership, character, community service, and theater.



Katie Berry and Ty Collins

www.lyricoflife.org

It goes without saying that the Internet has created a burgeoning of new communication and advertising potential. LOL is approaching the first year in taking its place among the multitude of Web sites.

What remains vital is that a Web site is important enough for people to visit and then to tell others about. If you have not been to Lyric's Web site recently, there have been some changes made. The first newsletter remains among the links, but recently added is a Lyric picture page and a sales page for T-shirts (representing two styles). A 30-second PSA for organ donation, which features Lyric and Chelsea, will be a Web site link soon.

Take a look. Then tell a couple of friends, especially those who may not be aware of Lyric's story. It could make a difference.



Chelsea Lagos

Katie Berry, from Turner High School in Kansas City, KS was the first recipient last year and will return as a sophomore this year to Stephens College in Columbia, MO. Ty Collins, also from Turner High, recently received a 2005 LOL scholarship. He will enroll at the University of Kansas in the fall. Ironically, Ty and Katie were dating as of the night of the benefit. They attended together. Victoria Santiago's 2005 LOL Scholarship was earned at Sumner Academy of Arts and Science in Kansas City, KS. Victoria will be attending Catholic University in Washington, D.C.

Captured Memories of LOL Benefit 2005



More '05 benefit pics at
www.lyricoflife.org

LOL CONTRIBUTIONS ('04 - '05)

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Contributions to \$250

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Contributions from \$501 to \$1000

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Lisa Trainer

Contributions over \$1000

Terry Benson
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Theater for Young America
Unicorn Theater

LOL Billboards Span Kansas City

www.lyricoflife.org

LYRIC OF LIFE

A beautiful person...
A Yale graduate...
An organ donor...

Lyric Marie Benson

April 23rd Benefit - Uptown Theater

Lyric's beautiful and smiling face graced four billboards in metro Kansas City for about a month prior to the 2005 benefit. Not only were onlookers reminded of the need for organ donation, but the LOL benefit night was displayed as well.

The company of Viacom Outdoor was able to place four large non-highway billboards for city traffic view. Locations included 12th and Central in Kansas City, KS, as well as Missouri sites at 84th and Wornall and two near 39th and Broadway, a few blocks south of the Uptown Theater. Plans for future billboards will be forthcoming.

Lip-sync 2006

Can't Sing? No Problem

It became part of what Lyric did each year...help entertain in a family-style lip-sync deck party. And she set the standard.

It was just a theme for an annual party, but for Lyric it was a chance to have a great time and to entertain the party-goers. There were always others who would also get "on stage" to deliver their music/theater renditions, but Lyric would be the one you looked forward to most. Everyone was encouraged to perform. Most people just enjoyed watching. The idea was simply to have fun.

The parties at the Hadley Street location in Overland Park started in 1987 and lasted through 2001. Lyric performed from age 6 through 19 and wowed the onlookers each time. Songs she portrayed included Kokomo (Beach Boys), More and Cry Baby (Madonna), Love Shack (B-52s), Supermodel (Rue Paul), All I Wanna Do (Sheryl Crow), and Look at Me, I'm Sandra Dee (Stockard Channing). Lyric also performed as a background performer for many other acts.

The lip-sync parties have discontinued for the past several years. However, at the last LOL benefit, it was suggested by Amanda Davis and Al Boan that we try it again...for Lyric. Amanda is Lyric's aunt and Al never missed a deck party. That's a persuasive combination.

With that endorsement, the 2006 LOL benefit (April 29) will ring of Milli Vanilli and other infamous lip-syncers. To be part of the show, go to Lyric's website (www.lyricoflife.org) and click on the "Contact Us" link or call Terry Benson at (913) 642-2534.



Do you know others who would benefit from knowing about Lyric's story and organ donation? Please share her causes with others. They may need or give the gift of life.

Event has MOTION...Musically Speaking

To me, this story has the charm and giving that parallels what the LOL event is all about. It started in late February 2003. Only a few times have I visited the historic Elm's Hotel in Excelsior Springs, MO. It's about an hour outside Kansas City. That weekend, I was there with friends celebrating a couple of birthdays.

We decided to leave the hotel and check out the only dance spot in town, The Goldust (now called Lucky Shots). It was a small and quaint hangout frequented mostly by locals. The four guys we saw playing music when we entered were not of the youthful rock star variety. They were a bit rounded and ripe, but they could play.

After a while of listening and watching, I recognized the keyboard player, Tony Rustici, from a band about 15 years ago in Kansas City. We talked with the band between sets and were provided a business card in case we could help them find a private party to play or possibly an area nightspot. The band's name was Motion.

This occurred about two months before Lyric's tragic death. In September of the same year, soon after the inception of LOL, I called Tony. It wasn't easy talking about why I wanted his band to play at our function. I knew by the time April rolled around, we all needed to be in better spirits about helping others through Lyric. Tony, a father himself, absolutely agreed.

Motion has volunteered its time in both LOL events and has been the pulse of the parties in terms of keeping things musically upbeat. The sounds of Motion go from easy listening to rock and roll favorites. The dance floor was almost always filled. A big thanks goes out to Tony and the other band members for believing in this cause and making the celebrations fun. Those members include drummer Rick Dennison, guitar player Steve Gronemeyer, and bass players Steve Hicks and Dave Nauman (played in '04 event).



Steve G., Rick, Tony, Steve H.