

PEOPLE: Stouffville kids work with movie, sports stars on TV, in films

# COMMERICAL SUCCESS

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When a musical theatre summer camp teacher suggested Melanie D'Aguanno get her three-year-old daughter Brianna into acting, the Stouffville mother of three didn't think much of it.

But one night, while surfing the Internet, Mrs. D'Aguanno looked up ACTRA, which represents Canadian actors and performers, and scrolled over to its list of agents.

"Let me send in her pictures and see what happens," Mrs. D'Aguanno said.

What happened next was Brianna signed with the agent and shortly thereafter, she was hired as the "I Love You" girl in the McCain Cool Quenchers commercial.

Throughout 2008-09, Brianna appeared in a number of commercials and did a variety of voice-over and radio work, as well as made an appearance on the CBC TV series *The Border*.

The roles kept coming and in 2010, Brianna starred in the CTV police drama *Flashpoint*, the Hallmark movie *The Santa Suit* with Kevin Sorbo, as well as in a web series and commercials.

"Right now, she's got this marketability," Mrs. D'Aguanno said.

Brianna, 8, however, isn't the only one in the D'Aguanno household with marketability.

Her older sister Delia recently starred in commercials for Purex and Hedbanz and their younger brother Joseph appeared in a commercial for Tim Hortons with Sidney Crosby.

## UNPREDICTABLE BUSINESS

One thing the past four years has taught Mrs. D'Aguanno, is that the entertainment industry is fluid.

"The only thing predictable about this business is that it's unpredictable," she said.

This is also why Mrs. D'Aguanno ensures her children's burgeoning careers do not disrupt the entire family.

"I'm not rescheduling around it. It's not that important," Mrs. D'Aguanno said.

The McCain commercial was not Brianna's first time in the spotlight. At age two she started dancing at Stouffville Dance Expressions.

There must be something in the water at the Main Street studio

because there are a handful of other students who are crossing over into the acting world.

Including Jenna Fraser, 6, who can currently be seen in a Zellers commercial and the MuchMusic Video on Trial promotion.

Another dancer, Victoria Lacquiniti, recently landed a recurring role on the upcoming animated series *The 99*, while Cassandra Fraser starred in Orco commercials and Jessica Goad can be seen in commercials for Leon's Furniture.

## FILMING IN S. AFRICA

"The way they've been taught, the confidence they've been taught," at Dance Expressions is Mrs. D'Aguanno's only explanation for why there is so much talent emanating from the studio. "Just the dance experience (itself). They're loving what they're doing and they love to perform."

Another student, Alex Wall, 12, is in South Africa filming a British television series, *Beaver Falls*.

This was Mr. Wall's very first audition.

He will remain in South Africa until mid-April.

## ADVICE FROM MOM

For parents who want to get their children into the entertainment industry, Mrs. D'Aguanno has some warnings for them.

"It is very easy for parents to believe that they need to pay for their kid to be promoted, but from my experience and from many other parents I know in the business, if an agent requires a parent to pay for anything or if they force the child to get headshots with a specific photographer, they are probably not very reputable," Mrs. D'Aguanno said.

Agents do not take money upfront, they get paid when their clients book jobs.

A good agent, according to Mrs. D'Aguanno, will also specialize in television and film, which includes commercials, or print and catalogue work.

A reputable agent will also not advertise to the general public.

For more information on the rights of child actors as well as how to find an agent, go to [www.actratoronto.com](http://www.actratoronto.com)



Brianna D'Aguanno learned confidence at Dance Expressions in Stouffville, her mother says. She's appeared in commercials, TV shows and movies, including *The Santa Suit* with Kevin Sorbo (left). Her siblings have been in commercials, including one for Tim Hortons with NHL star Sidney Crosby.

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