



Malloy has experienced everything from auditioning for a Broadway production to performing at the House of Blues in Houston

# Katyites on the Cusp of Stardom

## Rising Young Stars Pursue their Passion

Written by Cathy Sze  
Select photography by Katrina Katsarelis

When it comes to celebrities, ask anyone in Katy to recite the first person who pops into their head and they will more than likely respond, "Renee Zellweger" - the famous actress who graduated from Katy High School. But soon enough, that could change. Rising Katy stars Kady Malloy, Ashley Jackson, Chelsea Ricketts, and Joshua Kerlin are going from life in the suburbs to Hollywood, pursuing their passion to perform. From singing and dancing to acting and modeling, their stories are sure to inspire you to follow your dreams.

### **An All-American Idol**

Kady Malloy has taken her high school passion for singing to a whole new level. Graduating from Taylor High School in 2007, Malloy, 20, appeared in season seven of American Idol, after her mom insisted she try out. Passing three auditions before being seen by judges Randy Jackson, Paula Abdul, and Simon Cowell, she made it to LA as one of the top 24 finalists. "The first time I saw the Hollywood sign is when it hit me," says Malloy. "I thought, 'I can't believe I have made it this far.'"

### **Taking on the World**

Two years later, Malloy only wishes one thing could have been different - that Idol happened later in her career. "I was so young," she says. "I have grown so much and know a lot more about music. Now I feel like I can take on anything." And that's exactly what she is doing. From auditioning for a Broadway production and starting her own band in Houston, to performing at The House of Blues, Malloy says being on American Idol has made her unafraid and confident to take on any challenge. "I put my eggs in a bunch of different baskets and then someone picks them up and scrambles them," says Malloy of random jobs that can constantly change. "Even though it's not stable, it's totally worth it. I'm only 20 and I've experienced more than most people have in their whole life, and that's the best reward you have with being a singer."

A graduate of Taylor High School, Malloy discovered her passion for singing early on



Kady Malloy competed in the seventh season of American Idol as one of the top 24 finalists



Chelsea Ricketts (center) has been a working actress and model since age 4. She is a 2008 Seven Lakes High School Graduate.



### Backed by Positive Support

You may have seen Ashley Jackson on Disney's *Sonny with a Chance* or ABC Family's *10 Things I Hate About You*. The 20-year-old has gone from performing on the stage of Seven Lakes High School to auditions and roles on the big screen. She has been in L.A. for nearly a year and a half because of the support from her family and boyfriend. "They've always given me every opportunity to pursue my dreams," Jackson says. "Having positive support has made this experience a lot easier for me, and I don't know where I'd be without them."

### A Day in the Life

A typical day for Jackson involves hurrying from one audition to another and taking acting classes and voice lessons to keep her skills sharp. "Sometimes I'll have maybe two auditions in one day, and that can be kind of stressful to get from one job to the other and change clothes depending on the characters," she says. Even though it can be demanding and a big time commitment, she knows the work she has done has been a privilege. "This experience has been a blessing," Jackson says. "I've been very fortunate to meet the people I have and to be working in such a short time."

### Acting on Experience

Chelsea Ricketts' career in showbiz began as a baby, when she started modeling for companies like Osh Kosh and Foleys. At 4, she began booking TV shows and commercials. Since graduating from Seven Lakes High School in 2008, the 20-year-old actress has moved to L.A. and landed roles on *Lincoln Heights* and *10 Things I Hate About You*. She has even appeared as a guest on CW's *Melrose Place*,

ABC's *Grey's Anatomy*, and CBS's *CSI: Miami*. As a child, Ricketts was told to move to L.A. sooner, but she never regretted her choice to stay home in Katy. "I wanted to have the life experiences of a normal childhood," she says. "I was able to go to sleepovers, school dances, and be a cheerleader on student council. My acting was just another activity that I loved, and I feel that I can use these experiences in my acting."

### Fans for Life

Like Jackson, living the life of an actress can be very busy for Ricketts. "I could have five auditions in one day and the next day I could have none," she says. "I could be filming several days in a row and then have nothing for a week." Ricketts' family also gives their complete support, and she wouldn't be able to pursue her acting career without their help. "I have been so incredibly lucky to have them," she says. "They not only support what I'm doing, but they are my number one fans."

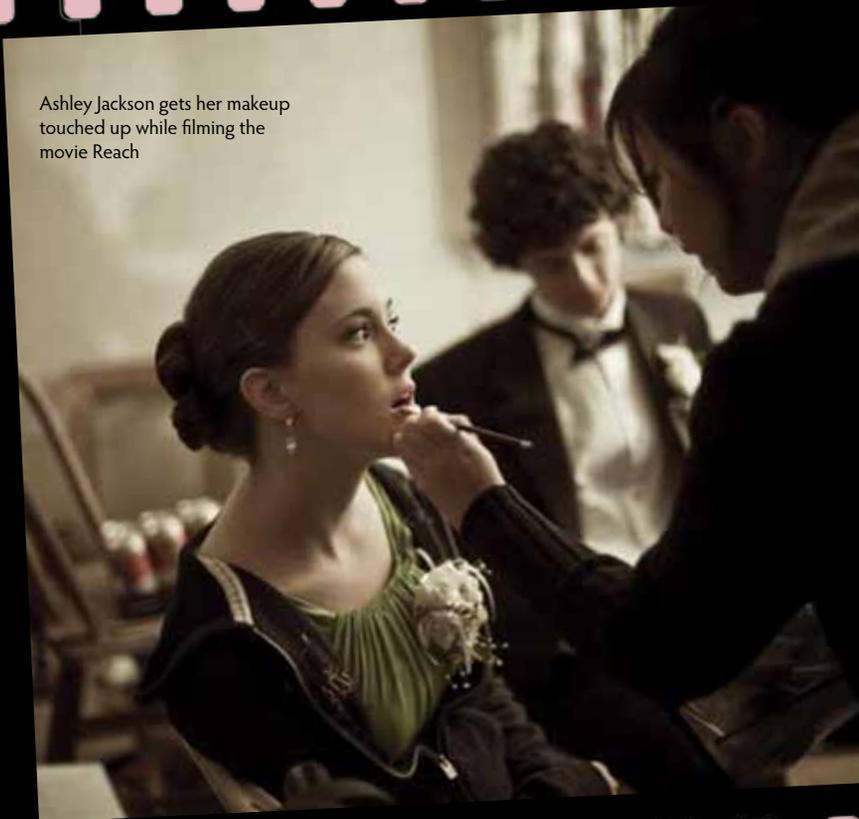
### A Passion for Performing

Joshua Kerlin, 18, also got an early start performing and has been singing, dancing, and acting since the age of 3. The 2009 Cinco Ranch High School graduate started out dancing around the house and putting on shows for his family and friends. "I would sing whenever and wherever I could – and sometimes couldn't," he says. "The feeling I get when I perform, whether it's for a huge crowd or just a couple people, I love it."

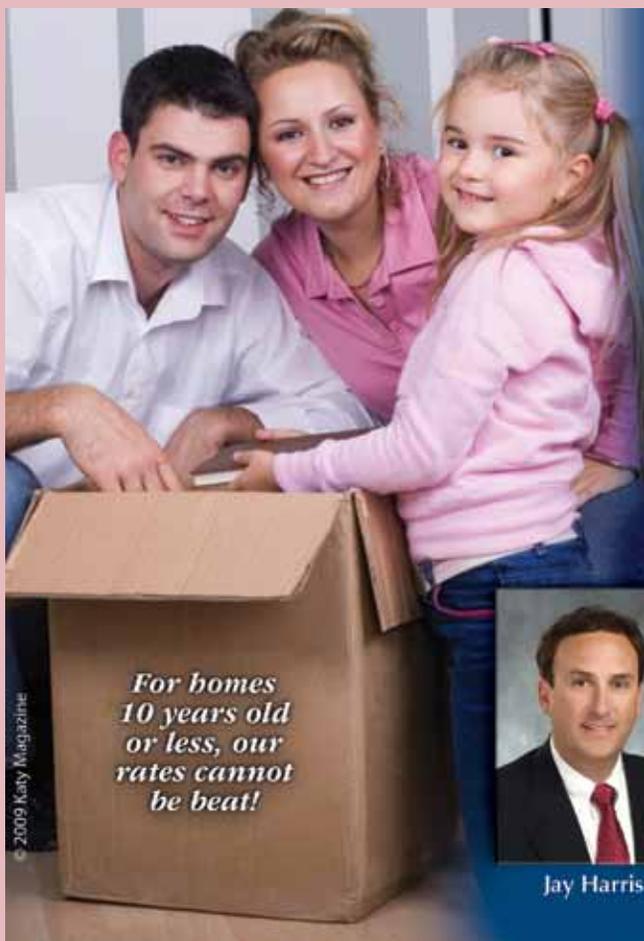
His love of entertaining others led him to study musical theater at the American Musical and Dramatic Academy in Hollywood, which offers a two-year conservatory musical theater program. "I'm



Josh Kerlin films a public service announcement at the Alexandria Hotel in downtown Los Angeles in the same ballroom as the last scene of the movie Flashdance



Ashley Jackson gets her makeup touched up while filming the movie Reach



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Ashley Jackson, a 2008 Seven Lakes High School graduate, has appeared in many TV sitcoms

proud of myself for moving out to L.A. to pursue my career,” says Kerlin, who had a hard time deciding if he wanted the conventional college experience. He thanks his family for their help. “I absolutely, 100 percent could not do it without my parents and family. I could not ask them to be more supportive of what I’m doing and the person I’ve become.”

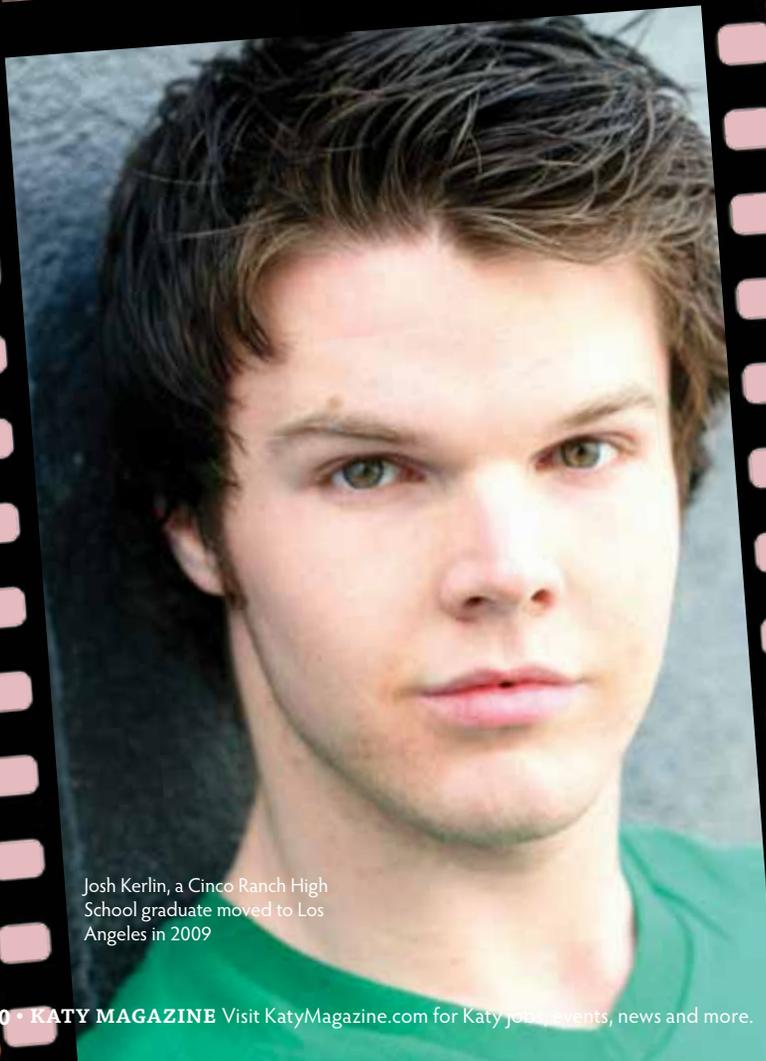
### Whirlwind Schedule

Dance class on top of school five days a week doesn’t leave Kerlin with much time for auditions. “It’s constantly insane,” says Kerlin who is always on the go. Even with a hectic schedule, he has still found the time to appear in a public service announcement, as well as in a cabaret and theater production of *I Love You, You’re Perfect, Now Change*. Words can’t even describe what Kerlin has been through in his new home in L.A.. “It’s incredible, amazing, terrifying, rigorous, frustrating, motivating, and everything,” he says. “I’ve learned that I have to stay true to myself and be who I am and not what others want me to be, and that is incredibly beneficial.”

### Shining in Show Business

With years of opportunities ahead of them, these four young Katyites have the chance to experience anything and everything in show business. “I just want to keep doing what I’m doing and inspire more kids through working with Disney,” says Jackson. “That’s all I’ve ever wanted since I was little - to work on Disney and be a good role model for kids.” Ricketts wants to remain a working actor in Hollywood, as does Kerlin, who also wishes to use his love of music to become a recording artist. “I want to look back and know that I have inspired people with my passion for performing,” he says. Malloy dreams about going to New York and one day being heard on the radio. Dreaming big, all four will continue to leave a lasting impression on their audience and fans. **KM**

*CATHY SZE is a sophomore at the University of Texas at Austin and is earning a journalism degree. She has been inspired by Jackson, Ricketts, Kerlin, and Malloy and will continue to pursue her dream of working in the magazine industry.*



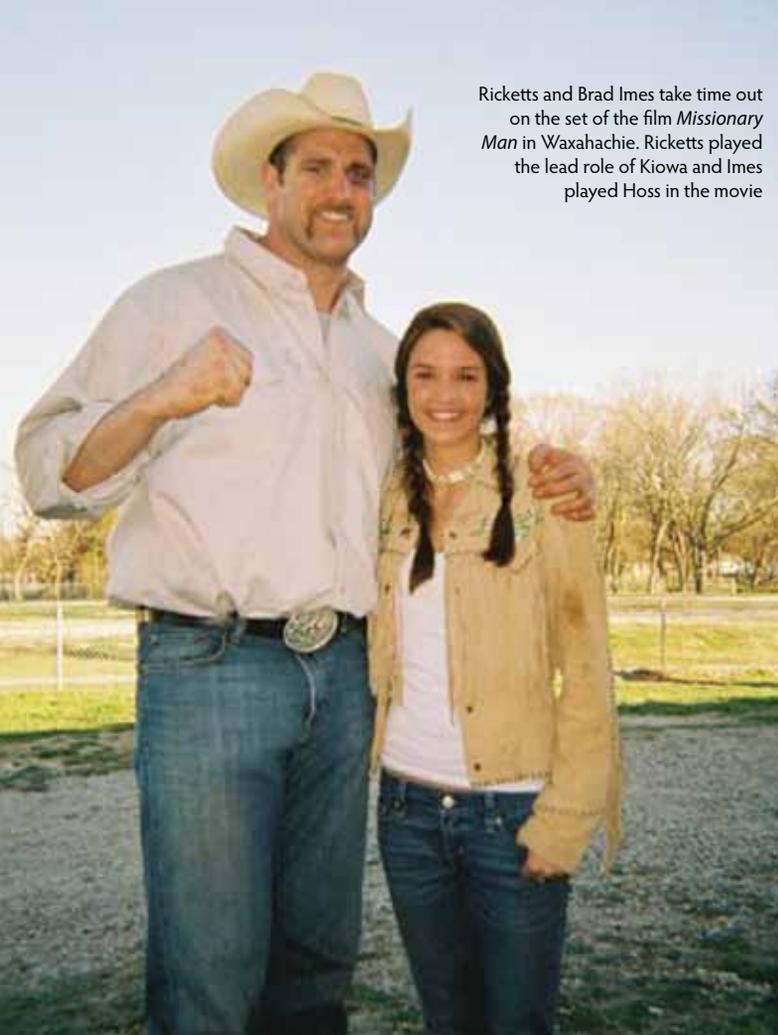
Josh Kerlin, a Cinco Ranch High School graduate moved to Los Angeles in 2009

“I want to look back and know that I have inspired people with my passion for performing”

– Joshua Kerlin

Ricketts advises young actors to build their resume in a small market before moving to Los Angeles





Ricketts and Brad Imes take time out on the set of the film *Missionary Man* in Waxahachie. Ricketts played the lead role of Kiowa and Imes played Hoss in the movie

“I wanted to have the life experiences of a normal childhood. I was able to go to sleepovers, school dances and be a cheerleader on student council. My acting was just another activity that I loved.”

—Chelsea Ricketts

*Katy Magazine would like to thank these Katy residents for keeping us current on their latest endeavors. We wish all of them well as they pursue their dreams*

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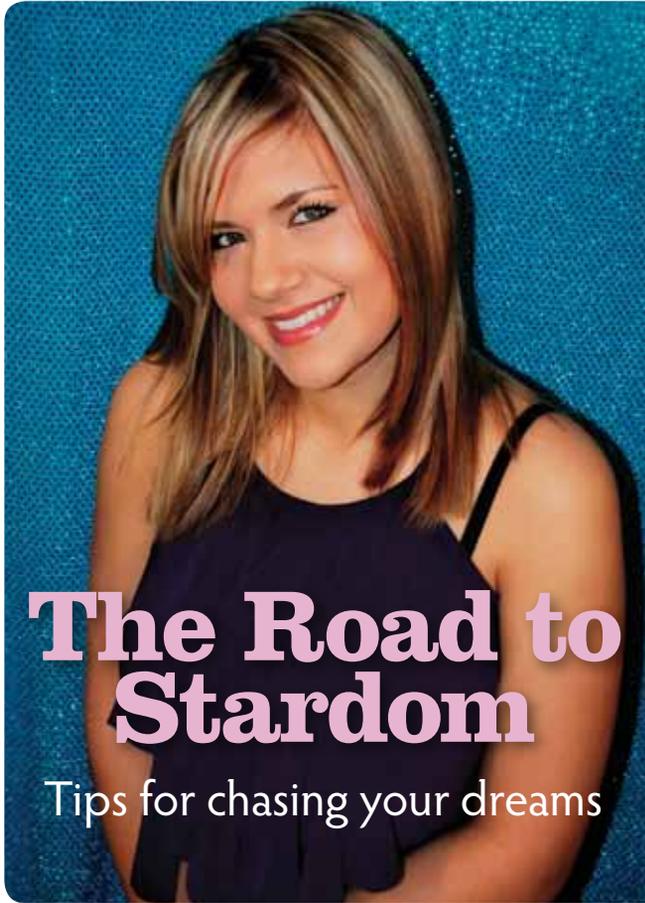
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# The Road to Stardom

Tips for chasing your dreams

- ★ "Make sure you can handle criticism. If you can't handle it, this isn't the business for you. You have to be comfortable with yourself and love yourself. Also, the more music you love, the more you love music, so take in all genres of music and all forms of music." –KADY MALLOY
- ★ "Get involved in different things around town. School is a wonderful place for theater and there are many acting classes you can take downtown. Community theater is a great place to work with different ages of talent and to learn from them." –ASHLEY JACKSON
- ★ "Do it! It's a competitive profession where the odds are constantly stacked against you, but if you want something bad enough, go for it. Don't wait for others to make the decision for you." –JOSHUA KERLIN
- ★ "Start in a small market and try to become the big fish there before you make the move to Los Angeles. There are many local talent agencies in Houston and Austin that you can sign with. You need to build your resume, so that you can compete competitively with the L.A. talent." –CHELSEA RICKETTS

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