

THE LITCHFIELD COUNTY TIMES

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Photo by Karen A. Chase

The girls who made up a soccer team for the CBS TV show, Madam Secretary, starring Tea Leoni: From the front, left to right, Victoria Nylock, Caitlyn Chemero, Hannah Richards, Aiyana Miller; Back row, left to right, Kendall Williams, Chloe Chemero, Alyssa Svinte, Brianna Hatzmann, Erin Lewis, Sheah Toolery, Leah Grill; Angela Lian; Back center, in pink shirt, owner Starr Jeffreys.

Dance Students To Appear on CBS Show

By KAREN A. CHASE

KENT – Seventeen local teenage girls traveled to New York City on Sept. 29 to take part in the filming of a segment of the hit CBS TV series “Madam Secretary.”

The girls, all students at Starr’s Studio of Dance in Kent, got to meet actresses Téa Leoni, who plays Secretary of State Elizabeth McCord, and Katherine Herzer, who plays her youngest daughter, Alison.

“(They were) not as mean as we thought,” the girls said. Actually, much to their surprise, “they turned out to be really nice. They took the time to learn some of our names.”

The dance students weren’t dancing on the show. Instead, they had a

crash course in soccer. They worked with a coach on Thursday, rehearsed on Friday and went on the set at 6 a.m. on Monday.

In the show, two of the girls play prep-school students and the other 15 make up the soccer team playing against the team McCord’s youngest daughter is playing on. The scene had to be filmed “over and over,” the girls said.

Starr Jeffreys, owner of Starr’s Studio of Dance, is a professional dancer, actress and figure skater who at one time skated with “Disney on Ice.” Part dance instructor, part acting coach and part agent and manager, she is a full-time den mother to 95 students, both girls and boys, ranging in age from 2 to 18.

“I never wanted to own a dance studio, but this was God’s path for me,” said Jeffreys, who grew up in Huntsville, Alabama.

It all began with a 50-percent off Black Friday website sale, she said.

“I was working at another studio and didn’t agree with the practices and the way they were teaching the students, and I felt that there was nothing in the surrounding area for kids,” she said. “I began playing around and made up a website.”

Next thing she knew, she was running a trial class with 10 students at South Kent School in December 2012.

By January, she had a studio in the Kent Green. “Thanks to John Casey who believed in me and gave me a great opportunity and lots of support,”

she said.

With the help of two other instructors, Ami Bush and Merdith Porri, she teaches ballet, jazz, tap, lyrical acrobatics, musical theater and techniques for ballet.

“I have a strict emphasis on flexibility and training,” she said. “We are the only studio in the area that competes and my students have won over \$1,000 in scholarships.”

In July of this year, a group of students went to Disney World for “Dance the World.” Dressed in fiber optic costumes, they danced down Main Street with other dancers from each state and from Canada, Mexico and Brazil.

“The kids had rehearsals with the

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