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THE WORD STAR has become cliché when referring to performers and entertainers. It does seem they resemble the stars in the solar system in that they're dazzling and constantly around us. However, throughout history, stars have done more than simply shine for the sake of shining. They have also provided a reliable sense of direction for those who looked to them to guide their way. That is where the metaphor breaks down. After all, some so-called "stars" don't even seem that bright!

However, two sisters from Frisco are likely to be notable exceptions: Bailey and Macey Cruthird are rising stars in the entertainment universe, though they glow in different galaxies. Seventeen-year-old Bailey is considered, by those "in the know" and by anyone who's heard her sing, to be a shooting star soon to be visible to anyone watching the already star-studded galaxy of country music.

Macey, at 13, is an up and coming star in the galaxy of acting. She's already found a place to shine on the ABC sitcom *Hope and Faith*, where she plays Hope's daughter, Hayley. If you've watched the show, you can't miss her obvious talent. She seems more like she is Hayley, rather than playing a character.

Both girls demonstrated their respective star qualities early on. Bailey's mom, Cindy, first realized her daughter was imbued with extraordinary talent while she was doing her hair one day. Bailey was little more than a toddler when she heard her mother singing, "Its My Party." Cindy was startled when her little one repeated the song perfectly in pitch. "I sang more of the song to see if she could do it again. I just couldn't believe my ears." Bailey kept on singing and hasn't stopped. Her dad, Todd, recalls wishing, at times, for a window in the car that could

close off the back seat from the front, "She was constantly singing. Sometimes I'd turn on the radio just for a change. But then she'd say, 'Turn the radio off, Daddy, I'm



Macey Cruthird

photo by Chris Johnson

A Star-Studded Family

By Caren Elizabeth Austen

not done yet!' She was never done."

Macey first demonstrated her affinity for performance by mimicking lines from television shows, movies, and commercials word for word after hearing them only once. She wrote her first play when she was six. "Our hearth became a stage for all kinds of performances when the girls were growing up," says Todd. "Plays and concerts were regular occurrences at our house."

Todd recalls when Macey was called to Los Angeles for the first time. Once she'd gone through the various auditions and screen tests, studio executives came to their hotel room to offer her a contract. "There she sat, this little seven-year-old girl, looking like Edith Ann with her feet dangling in this big, overstuffed chair. After hearing the offer, Macey, in all seriousness responded, 'Well, I'll come out to Los Angeles and make a movie or do a TV show, but I'm going to live in Texas 'cause that's where my family is.' She had her priorities straight even then."

As a regular on *Hope and Faith*, Macey has finally had to make the move to New York City, but the careers of both girls are still very much a family affair. "When my Mom and I took an apartment in New York, my grandparents helped out. Both my parents already had other commitments, so our grandparents hooked up the U-Haul and drove us from Texas to New York." Bailey chimes in at this point, "It was a regular family trip. We stopped at all the historical sites along the way. They didn't want to miss an opportunity to further our education!"

Extended family and close friends are credited with helping keep the girls from becoming impressed

with their own success. "They're very proud of us," says Bailey, "but they make sure we remember who we are." Todd and Cindy's attitudes toward the girls' careers have shaped how Bailey and Macey view themselves and their careers. "I keep reminding them, 'this is not who you are, it's what you do,'" says Cindy. Todd adds, "They know that if they lose their sense of grounding and of who they really are, we'll cancel the contract and bring 'em home



Bailey Cruthird
photo by Chris Johnson

separated more.” Their “travel-size” pups are Bailey’s Multi-poo, Peanut, and Macey’s Maltese, Gidgit. Even the dogs get along well. They love to play together and even “talk” on the phone, as Macey said.

Todd and Cindy work hard to nurture their daughters’ extraordinary talents, as well as their spirits. Todd balances his own career with managing Bailey’s singing career. At 17, she’s already garnering attention for her unique, country style. Her second CD, “Don’t Look Down” was released December 23 after months of writing, arranging and recording.

I keep reminding them, this is not who you are, it’s what you do. Our job is to raise children, not stars!

“I went on a writing binge last summer and wrote about 60 percent of the album. I’m particularly excited about this album because I had more influence over the sound and was able to make it my own.” Bailey’s father and grandfather are essential to her musical process. Someone from her family is always with her when she’s writing, touring, and recording. “My family and friends are such an integral part of what I do. It couldn’t happen without them,” she says.

Commitment and love seem to be the ingredients of the glue that holds this extraordinary family together: commitment to values; love for one another. Perhaps these two stars will be true to the metaphor. They’re undeniably bright and strive to live by a compass of values that others would do well to emulate.

Caren Elizabeth Austen is a freelance writer living in Frisco.

without a second thought. Our job is to raise children, not stars!” This upbringing shows in the confident, yet down-to-earth persona both girls possess.

While Macey and Cindy live in New York for eight months out of the year for the filming of *Hope and Faith*, Bailey and Todd remain in Frisco until Bailey’s tour season begins in March, just about the time Macey and Cindy return home. Though they spend so much time apart, it’s obvious to any observer that this is an exceptionally close and loving family. And they not only love each other, they genuinely like each other. They laugh together, talk over one another and finish each other’s stories—all indications of people who know one another intimately and just enjoy being together.

“Both girls have been touched by God with special gifts and blessed by special

people along the way who have helped cultivate those gifts,” comments Todd. “Both Bailey and Macey are anxious to encourage others to pursue their talents in the arts, whether they want to make it a career or just an avocation they can enjoy their whole lives.”

How do they manage to stay close when separated by so many miles? “We keep the cell phone company in business!” says Todd. “We talk between one and five times every day when we’re apart.” Macey adds, “Sometimes we even let the dogs talk!”

She’s referring to the traveling companions the girls have acquired to keep them company. Cindy comments, “The dogs are constants in Bailey’s and Macey’s lives that help them feel at home wherever they are. We got them this year because we knew we were going to be