

Miss Staten Island stands on Make-A-Wish Foundation platform

When Eltingville's **Jamie Lynn Macchia** expressed a desire to compete in the Miss Staten Island Scholarship Pageant, she learned she was required to adopt a platform — a cause or purpose she would promote — should she be crowned Miss Staten Island. For the 20-year-old Wagner College student, her choice was clear. Jamie chose "The Make-A-Wish Foundation: Kids For Wish Kids," and recalled how The Make-A-Wish Foundation had granted a wish for her best friend **Dominic LaForgia** when he was stricken with leukemia.

"Dominic passed away nearly six years ago," says Jamie, who adds that she can only hope to have an impact on others in the same way he had an impact on her.

According to **Jim Smith**, executive director of the Miss Staten Island Scholarship Pageant, even before Jamie was crowned Miss Staten Island 2012 last November, she began planning a fundraiser to support her platform.

Jamie's vision came to fruition on March 10 when she played host to "We Dance for Dreams" in the Music Hall at Snug Harbor Cultural Center & Botanical Garden, Livingston, where Dominic's family, along with more than 300 other revelers, joined in to show their support.

Because Jamie's platform focuses on kids becoming involved in volunteering, the event featured young performers from across Staten Island.

Among those showcasing their talent were vocalists **Frank Galante**, a student at St. Joseph by-the-Sea High School; **Maria DeSantis**, Miss Staten Island 2011 and current Miss Brooklyn; pint-sized singer



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Matthew Roman; Meghan Morash, a junior theater performance major at Wagner College; and dance-pop singer-songwriter **Reina**.

Jamie also reprised the lyrical dance, "Permanent," which garnered her the Performing Arts Award at the Miss Staten Island Scholarship Pageant.

Participating dance studios included: Gigante Dance Center; Star Struck Dance Studio, with instructors **Maria Boshnack**, a Nets dancer; Mr. New York 2010, **Jeffrey Watson**; Dance Factory; The Studio Dancers; Exposure Dance Studio; Inspirations in Dance; Dance Sensations; part of the Wagner College Dance Team; and The Nubian Student Union, a Wagner College step team.

Also sharing the stage were former Miss Staten Island Outstanding Teens, and sisters, **Shelley and Shreya Jain; Jessica Reznik and Dennis Merzlika**, a ballroom dance duo from PS 39, and "**Magic Mike Sherman**."

Capping the event were **Alyssa and Natalie LaForgia**, Dominic's sisters, who presented Jamie with flowers. The reigning Miss Staten Island thanked all who contributed to the night's success, including Star Sponsor, Rogers Surveying and Wish Sponsor, The Naso Organization.

Throughout the evening Jamie was assisted by her parents, **Dawn and An-**

thony, her brother, **A.J.**, and other family members and friends who volunteered to sell tickets, T-shirts and refreshments or lend a helping hand wherever and whenever needed.

"The night wasn't about me or the crown," Jamie said, but rather "it was about a community coming together for a very special cause."

The event raised more than \$8,500 for the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Metro New York and Western New York, with donations still pouring in at this writing.

Jamie Lynn will set her sights on completing her junior year at Wagner College, continue to organize fundraisers for the Make-A-Wish Foundation, and prepare to compete in the upcoming Miss New York Scholarship Pageant set for June 16 at the St. George Theatre.



Carolyn LaForgia, mom of Dominic LaForgia, who succumbed to leukemia, and her daughters, Alyssa and Natalie LaForgia, along with Jamie Lynn Macchia, Miss Staten Island 2012, at "We Dance for Dreams," a fundraiser where more than \$8,500 was donated to the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Metro New York and Western New York, staged in the Music Hall at Snug Harbor Cultural Center & Botanical Garden.