

## Child's dream is mother's quest

Written by Amy Schlanger  
Saturday, 07 May 2016 12:00

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**The author, Amy Schlanger (right), with her daughter Becca.**

***Contributed to the Filipino Reporter***

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My daughter is a stage performer and a classical singer.

As a mother, I take pride and joy in all her accomplishments.

I share her anxiety whenever she prepares for an audition.

I feel the excitement when she gets ready for a performance.

I guide her to aspire for her best talent and make her dreams a reality.

Does this make me a stage mom?

I think not.

I am a supportive mother.

I take care of my child's physical and emotional well-being, giving her an endless supply of unconditional love.

I have to admit that it's not easy.

It's manageable.

I just have to prioritize her needs over mine, and I happily oblige.

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Am I the only one who feels this way?

Then I thought of a celebrity mother who parallels my experience.

Both our daughters are artists whose passion is performing in the world of entertainment.

They recently advanced from their teenage years, turning 20.

The activities that surround our daughters' chosen careers become our tasks.

We manage the path to their fulfillment.

However, there is a remarkable difference between us.

Her daughter is the multi-awarded actress Kathryn Bernardo, Teen Queen of Philippine showbiz.

Admired by millions of fans all over the world, Kathryn's biggest supporter is her mother Min Bernardo.

"She wanted to be an actress at a very young age," said Min when I asked her how Kathryn got into showbusiness.

"Kathryn was inspired to work," she explained.

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**Kathryn Bernardo (left) and her mother Min.**

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Min saw Kathryn's passion and determination to get that break into the business.

The long rides from Cabanatuan City to Metro Manila and then lining-up for hours to audition was tedious but worth it.

Eventually, she got a role that marked her star in the entertainment industry.

That's when Min and Kathryn moved to Manila.

"My husband and I made that decision to support Kath's budding career," she recalled.

"We used to go home to the province once a week. But when her career took off that all changed."

How do you manage that?

What if your child finds huge success early in life?

Constant guidance and tireless support keeps her relationship with her daughter close.

"Kathryn knows that she can come to me for anything," she explained.

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"I am not judgmental. I encourage her to open up. I trust her and she knows her limitations. She is not spoiled," and with a big smile on her face she continued, "She's not a celebrity at home."

That's the impression that I got when I met Kathryn.

She's sweet, kind, respectful and very charming.

Stardom has not affected her ability to stay grounded.

To raise a talented daughter in the dog-eat-dog world of creative media is a challenge.

The world is not forgiving.

Min's daughter is a constant spectacle to the public, loved and hated by many.

This can be disheartening.

Every little thing that she does is examined, criticized or praised by people who don't know her.

"Kath is not comfortable being the center of attention," Min said.

"She's timid and very conscious not like me," and with a playful tone she continued, "I am verbally expressive and speak my mind."

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When is a mother's quest a mission or advocacy?

Min is an advocate, not just a shield or a dreamer.

She promotes her daughter but she does not live through her.

That's a very fine distinction when millions of fans want their say in her daughter's daily life.

Most of all, being an advocate as a mom means dealing with the daily grind.

"I'm with her all the time," she says with a laughter in her voice, "but seriously, it's important for me to be by her side all the time, especially when she is working."

Min endured the long hours of taping, traveling on location, seeing after her needs, and dealing with the endless details that make the daily life on the set possible.

It takes more than patience.

Is this an expression of a mother's love?

A mother's labor of love is not like a bank or an investment where you make a deposit and expect a return.

It is more like cultivating a delicate flower.

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You care for it, nurture it.

You pour your hopes and dreams into it, and at some point, sooner or later, it blossoms.

When this blossoming of love happens, it gives us joy unlike any other.

It is both selfless and without any measurement.

I see this joy around me.

We have a special place in our hearts for the love that our children have for us.

At birth, there is pure motivation of love of the mother to her child.

That purity of love never diminishes, it becomes stronger in time.

That bond is never more apparent when you watch your loving child at a distance up on stage or on the big screen.

It is a crucible, where only those who can reach out with their emotions can draw the audience into a singular experience with them.

When that emotional flow happens, it's a sensational feeling.



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To know that the child has mastered so much talent, has such an exulted place for the mother.

It doesn't take any special talent for mothers and children to love each other.

What's important is how that exceptional mother's love can be so high over other emotions.

I remember one day on the set when I was chatting with Min, someone came up to her and told her that Kathryn needed help with her outfit.

Min's eyes brightened.

When she got up to deal with her daughter, it struck me how little it mattered if the support that we, as mothers, can offer is great or simple.

What matters is that we're there for our children, always and forever.

And that's the joy that Min Bernardo and I both share.

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**Min Bernardo (left) and Amy Schlanger.**