

# Letting Kids Shine With the Stars

By Carol Feineman  
City Star Editor

**Kyndel Gregory** wants to be like actress/singer **Mandy Moore**.

And while many other 8-year-olds in third-grade watching "The Princess Diaries" probably have that same wish, Kyndel has a personal connection with the movie's star.

She actually interviewed Moore on Oct. 7.

Sitting in the VIP booth at Moore's concert that night at the House of Blues in Las Vegas, Kyndel was also introduced by the celebrity to the band's guitarist and drummer.



Turley

The reason for Kyndel's special treatment?

The nonprofit A Star for the Night Foundation, based in San Francisco.

Foundation board members arranged this opportunity for Kyndel and two other children.

That's because Kyndel and the two others have endured more hardships than most children their age.

Kyndel had a cancerous brain tumor as a 16-month-old and was given four years to live. She has fortunately outlived that prognosis.

A Star for the Night founder **Debra Turley** said the Oct. 7 event was one of 40 events during the past eight years "that provide life-changing events for over 300 sick and disabled children, making them a star by sharing the spotlight with their favorite celebrities."

Children at these events usually join celebrities on stage to sing, dance or model, depending on the event. Afterward, the children interview the performers for a weekly nationwide radio and Internet show.

Each event, which is free to the children and their chaperones, includes limo rides to a complimentary makeover, shopping spree, dinner and the performance.

Stars participating recently include **Beyonce**, **Brian McKnight**, **Leeann Rimes** and **Rick Springfield**. The next event is with singer **Kenny Loggins** on Feb. 9 in San Jose.

"What a wonderful thing to do for these children. They just have a special night," said **Nancy Gregory**, Kyndel's mother. "It was fabulous. I don't know anyone who ever got to do anything like that."

## The Gregorlys were not expecting star treatment

After receiving a referral from a cancer center, Turley invited the Gregorlys to the concert.

Other referrals are from the Burn Foundation of Northern California, area hospitals and area homeless shelters, according to Turley.

Turley moved the founda-

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tion's headquarters from Chico to San Francisco 10 months ago to begin fundraising. She and five board members are all volunteers.

"It's imperative we get funding. We need about \$30,000 in donations to put on monthly events for a total of 450 children throughout the year," Turley said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF NANCY GREGORY

Kyndel Gregory, left, and Kayla Hubbard, right, interview Mandy Moore on Oct. 7 in Las Vegas.

Since the move, the foundation has raised \$28,000 from sponsors and individual donations.

In addition to the monthly events, foundation members visit children too sick to leave the hospital.

"For seriously ill children, we give them inspiration and healing endorphins when they need it the most, while they are going through their horrific procedures," Turley said. "We make the children deejays by having them interview their favorite movie star right out of their hospital beds to be broadcast on the nationwide radio."

Even though it means talking about her daughter to strangers, Nancy Gregory is happy to praise A Star for the Night Foundation if that will help raise awareness and funds.

"I absolutely recommend the events, which are a special treat for the children," she said. "It also helps them know that other people care about them. Mandy Moore is incredibly busy, making movies, touring. She took time out. Mandy didn't have to care, but she did."

For Kyndel, Oct. 7 is a night she'll always remember.

"It felt good because I in-

terviewed a star," she said. "I was kind of scared to interview her. If you go on the computer (www.astarforthenight.com), you see that my face was sort of shriveled up during the interview. I liked that we got to see people, sitting upstairs in a VIP box."

Kyndel now hopes to interview Moore again.

"I would ask if she has ever been a cheerleader," said the 8-year-old, who wants to cheer in high school.

And Kyndel's dream career? "I probably want to be a superstar like her," she said.

## How To Donate

To put on monthly events for children in need, A Star for the Night Foundation relies on donations from sponsors and individuals.

Sponsors receive airfare, a limo ride, dinner and an opportunity to meet the stars.

Donations are tax-deductible. To donate online, visit [www.astarforthenight.com](http://www.astarforthenight.com), mail to 2 Townsend St., suite 4303, San Francisco, CA 94107 or call 618-0406.

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