

H O P T O I T

# Young songwriter makes a believer out of judges

by Abigail Cukier  
Special to the Beaver

Jules Collarile likes to write songs about events in her life. The recent Girls Who Believe Fest might just make for some great material.

The 12-year-old Oakville resident won a national contest to open the music festival at The Great Hall in Toronto. Now in its second year, the festival celebrates the vibrant female talent in Canada, showcases female-run businesses and raises money for Girls Inc., which helps girls feel empowered through programs and workshops.

The contest was open to girls ages eight-16 who submitted a video of an original song. The judges were Lennon and Maisy Stella, Canadian sisters who were discovered on YouTube and are now featured on the ABC television show, *Nashville*.

"They thought Jules stood out. Her confidence came through on video. And the lyrics and subject matter of the song resonated with them and with the meaning of the festival," said Toronto-based singer-songwriter Meredith Shaw, and festival founder.

Jules' song-writing coach Robyn Dell'Unto told her to enter the competition. About two weeks later, while she was doing homework, her mom received an email.



Singer, songwriter Meredith Shaw congratulates Jules Collarile for winning a national contest to select the opening song for this year's Girls Who Believe Fest. Her entry,

*Supergirl*, 'wowed' the judges.  
| submitted photo



Left to right, T.A. Blakelock students Mason Gareau (Alex), Stephanie Wong (Bobby), and Sam Richardson (Riley) get into their roles during a dress rehearsal of *The Adventure Game*. The Grade 10 drama class took the show on the road, performing the play at local elementary schools.

| photo by Eric Riehl - Oakville Beaver (Follow on Twitter @halton\_photog) or www.facebook.com/HaltonPhotog

"My mom yelled my name. I jumped out of my seat. She scared me to death," Jules said. "It was amazing. I was so excited to win and then when I found out about the whole day, I loved it."

The "whole day" included a night's stay at the Pantages Hotel, a wardrobe from West 49 and makeup from Benefit with hair and makeup done by Alicia Nikole. Jules also met Eric Alper, director of media relations and label acquisitions at eOne Music Canada.

"I want this to happen every day," she said. "Meredith is amazing and I met other performers. It made me really think of how I want my career to go. It gave me a taste of what it would feel like."

And Shaw was just as impressed by Jules.

"She just rocked it. She nailed it, I was so proud of her. She has such a shot at this," Shaw said. "I can't say enough nice things about her. I really believe in her. To have that sense of yourself and what you want to say to the world at that age is pretty amazing."

"The whole point of the festival is to tell girls to dream big and keep going. When growing up, sometimes life gets in the way. We want to tell them to keep believing."

Jules, who is in Grade 7 at St. Bernadette Catholic Elementary

School has been writing songs for a few years. Her winning entry, *Supergirl*, was inspired by her mom and is about following your dreams to do what you want. Another song, *My Little Soldier* was inspired by a friend who is fighting cancer.

She has participated in school talent shows and Burlington Ribfest, as well as raised \$10,000 for Princess Margaret Hospital in honour of three moms from her school who died from breast cancer. She also cut her hair for Angel Hair for Kids and performed a song at her school's pasta night.

A hockey player for the Oakville Hornets, Jules also takes vocal and guitar lessons. She is working on an entry for the FIFA 2014 World Cup — the winning piece will become its theme song.

Jules plans to get even more involved with singing and songwriting and posting videos online to get feedback from others. And it seems performing at the Girls Who Believe Festival just made her even more motivated.

"I came home and started writing right away," she said. "It showed me what I wanted to do."

A video of *Supergirl* can be viewed at <http://goo.gl/J1ZvYB>.

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