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HUDSON TO HOLLYWOOD



Photo courtesy of Kellyann Chippendale

Kellyann Chippendale is seen accepting her Angel Award at the Monaco International Film Festival. The film that won her the award will be screened, for free, at KHS later this month.

Kearny's Kellyann Chippendale to screen award-winning film at KHS

By Kevin Canessa
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Kellyann Chippendale knew she wanted to be an actor. But living in Kearny, she knew she'd have to make a bold move and head out west to California — Los Angeles to be precise — if she ever wanted to make it big.

So several years ago, she did just that, giving up everything she knew and loved in town for the bright lights of the Big City on the coast of the Pacific Ocean.

Among the many things she's done in California was

to take a class to learn the Meisner Technique of acting, a method developed by theater guru Sanford Meisner. The technique involves repetition of what an acting partner says — and it's designed to get the actor to "get inside" the partner.

It's not about the words, but the emotions behind the words, Chippendale says.

"And I loved it," she said.

So much so that she made her first feature film based on the Meisner Technique.

"I wanted to show how one great teacher can impact a life

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Freeholders look to address HC jail mess

By Ron Leir
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KEARNY — A spate of recent inmate deaths — including one immigrant detainee — at the Hudson County Jail in South Kearny has prompted internal and external

investigations.

And it's prompting second thoughts among some of the county's legislators about Hudson's partnership with federal immigration authorities. Under an agreement known as the 287 (g) program with U.S. Immigration &

Customs Enforcement (ICE), the jail houses several hundred immigrant detainees, for which it receives about \$21 million a year.

On Jan. 18, Cynthia Acosta, 34, became the sixth inmate to die while in jail custody since early 2016. Inmate Dominick J. Ramunni, 41,

died three days before that.

The Hudson County Prosecutor's Office responded to both incidents involving Acosta and Ramunni and HCPO spokesman Ray Worrall confirmed that the HCPO is

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Photo courtesy of Kellyann Chippendale

Chippendale in a role as a police officer.

CHIPPENDALE

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forever,” Chippendale told The Observer in a recent interview.

Though she never met Meisner — he died in 1997 — it was his technique that she says has helped her to develop into an “A-list” actor.

Ironically, though, she only had a small role in her own film, “Meisnered,” that has landed her numerous awards, including three in the 2015 Monaco International Film Festival — or the Angel Film Awards.

The Angel Film Awards differ from many other festivals because all entrants — and winners — are films that do not have violence of any kind.

“I thought that was very important,” Chippendale said. “It’s the only non-violent film festival in the world.”

As for the film itself, “Meisnered” is about two people taking a Meisner-based acting class. Their teacher tells the two women to spend 24 hours straight with each other. Since they didn’t really know each other — despite spending time together in the class — it would be a time for them to perfect the technique.

The 24-hour period begins with a little bit of discomfort for both women. There are a few awkward moments. One is in a pool, sunbathing. The other is allergic to chlorine. One cooks a batch of Velveeta mac & cheese with a special ingredient. The other says she doesn’t like mac & cheese — especially the Kraft brand.

At one point, while they’re practicing their repetition, they head off to get McDonalds. Still practicing the technique, one tells the other it was the first time she’s ever had a friend stay over her home.

Why?

Her mom suffers from serious bipolar disorder. She never wanted friends over because of the mental

illness.

The other, then, says she gets it. She had lost her sister to suicide — she’d overdosed on drugs.

They both have an amazing realization that despite not knowing each other — and thinking they had little in common — they actually had more in common than they could have ever imagined. And they came to this conclusion thanks to a class, thanks to a great teacher, thanks to the Meisner Technique, which brought them together for a project, but made them friends forever afterward.

On Feb. 20, Chippendale will fly from Los Angeles back to Kearny, where she’ll offer a free screening of her film at Kearny High School, 336 Devon St., at 7 p.m. The public is invited to attend. She says she hopes screening the film will inspire KHS students, friends and alums that no matter what the odds, no matter what obstacles one might face, dreams can come true.

They did for Chippendale, that’s for sure.

And it all started when she was a student at KHS in the late ‘80s and early ‘90s.

Though video projects weren’t all that common back then, she and a few classmates created a movie consisting of the first three chapters of “Great Expectations,” by Charles Dickens.

“My teacher, Mrs. Jahn, gave us an A+++,” she recalled. “She inspired me to think big. That’s what I did.”

So what’s ahead for the Kearny resident turned Angelino?

Chippendale says she hopes to one day (soon) go on a speaking tour to speak to aspiring thespians.

“I’ve already spoken to a group of international students at the New York Film Academy,” Chippendale said. “I’d love to turn this into something that help me to make a living.”

And given her past, it shouldn’t be long before Chippendale is a hot commodity on the speaking tour.

And then some.

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