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# SMALL FEET CHA-CHA THEIR WAY TO THE STARS



Jaryd, a fourth-grader at Our Lady of Peace, signs autographs for members of the school's cheerleading squad.

## Fancy footwork sends dancing duo to ABC's hit show

BY CHANDRA M. HAYSLETT  
STAR LEDGER STAFF

The cameras were rolling. The crowd was cheering and it was the perfect setting for dancers Jaryd and Cara to show off their moves.

With grace and elegance, and nearly walking on lippy-loes, Jaryd Farcon, 10, led his partner, Cara Abaya Campos, 8, to the gym floor at Our Lady of Peace School in Woodbridge. The music was cued and they performed a one-minute cha-cha routine with precision worthy of a top prize.

The two are hoping the judges will be just as excited about their dancing May 13, when they represent New Jersey and the East Coast during a special kids' segment of ABC's "Dancing with the Stars."



Cara and Jaryd performed during a special kids' segment on ABC's "Dancing with the Stars" and will compete again in the finals next month.

Jaryd, a fourth-grader at Our Lady of Peace, and Cara, a second-grader at St. Clara Catholic School in Clifton, competed April 12 on the hit-television show, which pairs a celebrity with a professional dancer.

They were selected from 55 youth couples from around the country, said Angela Prince, public relations director for USA Dance, the nonprofit that's recognized by the United States Olympic Committee as the national governing body for dance sport, and who scored for couples for the show. The 55 couples were narrowed to six, who appeared on the show. And the top three were selected as finalists.

"I never thought we would end up on TV," said Cara, who lives in Nutley and started dancing in January 2006. "I was like 'Oh my God, we're meeting stars.'"

Jaryd and Cara met 14 months ago during a talent showcase in Elizabeth organized by a group of mothers in the Filipino community.

"I happened to be sitting at the same table (as the Farcons) and I liked his footwork," said Cara's mother, Irene Abaya-Campos, who added it's rare for dancers to find a good partner. "I asked them if Jaryd was looking for a dance partner and the rest is history."

The two performed yesterday during a pep rally at Our Lady of Peace so ABC could shoot additional footage for the show airing at 9 p.m. May 13 on ABC. Viewers will have to call or text message the show to vote for Jaryd and Cara.

Jaryd, who's been dancing since he was 3, said he and Cara are still working on their Samba routine for the finals. They only



PHOTOS BY ANAHEAD TOWNE FOR THE STAR LEDGER

Cara Campos, of Nutley, and Jaryd Farcon, of Fords, dance a cha cha for students at Our Lady of Peace in Woodbridge yesterday.

have one minute to impress the judges, which Jaryd said is challenging.

"It's really hard because you want to put all the cool moves into it," he said.

Both dancers said their favorite type of dance is the cha-cha.

"There are more movements. You get to move your hips," said Cara.

Both kids come from a family of dancers. Jaryd's parents, Eddie and Annie Farcon, started ballroom dancing 10 years ago. And Cara's mother and father, Waldor Campos, are also ballroom dancers.

"It's in their blood," said Abaya-Campos.

Jaryd started with ballet, but has since taken up jazz, tap, hip-hop, and lyrical or expressive dancing.

He also has a black belt in taekwondo, takes voice lessons, is a figure skater and plays the trumpet and piano.

"He loves to compete," said Jaryd's mother, who's a dentist in Fords with her husband.

Michelle Wright, director of American Ballet Academy in Dayton, who has worked with Jaryd from the beginning, said he always stood out.

"When he first walked into my class, I knew he was going to be special. I could tell by his focus and the way he followed directions. He's just been the most amazing student," she said.

Last year, Jaryd and Cara placed first in the nation in the USA Dance Pre-Teen II Silver Latin Championship and second in the Gold Latin Championship,

which is a harder division. This year, they placed second in the nation in both the silver and gold contests.

"They hold their own. They are phenomenal," Prince said.

Eddie Farcon said he never thought his son would get this far with dancing.

"We don't push him. He says it's fun. He's the same kid as always," he said.

To his parents, he may be a regular kid, but Jaryd and Cara became local celebrities yesterday as they signed autographs for students.

The kids, who say they are best friends, both want to be professional dancers when they grow up.

Chandra M. Hayslett can be reached at chayslett@starledger.com or (732) 235-4929.