

A MATTER OF Virtue

Inside Hollywood Michael D. Reid

It's no secret patience is a virtue, Lord knows, we're reminded enough in newspapers, magazines talk shows, sitcoms and movies of that wildly overused adage. But what about all those other basic virtues that can make us better human beings and help us achieve our untapped potential? What about idealism, kindness, reverence, forgiveness and tolerance?

In *Virtues: A Family Affair*, a 13-week series of documentaries that premiered Jan. 6 on Vision TV, a mother-lode of such virtues is being celebrated.

The series based on *The Family Virtues Guide: Simple Ways to Bring out the Best in our Children*, internationally renowned SaltSpring-based psychotherapist Linda Kavelin-Popov's best-selling parents' guide and spiritual opus. Created in association with her husband Dr. Dan Popov a pediatric clinical psychologist, and her brother John Kavelin, a show producer with Walt Disney, the handbook is based on the Popov's The Virtues Project.

The TV series, made with the financial participation of Vision TV, Telefilm and BC Film, was conceived as another way to convey the philosophy of The Virtues Project — that we can bring out the best in ourselves and our children by acknowledging our virtues instead of laying blame. "No matter what they've done, they always have a choice to act out their virtues," said Popov in an interview late Saturday, just hours before she was to leave for a trip to New Zealand, Fiji and Australia, where she will lead more virtues conferences for the next three weeks.

As remarkable as Popov's inspired international achievement is, the high profile national TV series is being produced by the May Street Group, a vibrant local production company that has created film and television programs since the 1970s and is now making a name for itself on the global market.

Popov wrote and produced the series with Hilary Jones-Farrow, the innovative, award winning Victoria writer, producer and director best known for projects like *Smudge*, her Emmy-nominated special produced for Baton and Turner Network Television; the children's television series *Take Off*; and *One Hit Leads*



Linda Kavelin-Popov, a world-renowned psychotherapist and author has brought her belief in the power of virtue to television.

to *Another*, her best-selling docudrama on family violence.

Jones-Farrow has earned a reputation for producing projects that espouse positive values and offer an alternative to the mindless drivel that predominates on network television so it's not surprising she was selected from dozens of top Canadian producers to over see this series.

"In a time of increasing peer and societal pressure, parents are seeking ways to instill values," says Jones-Farrow, a mother of five. "Parents want to know how to teach children right from wrong, to have confidence in themselves, to be thoughtful, respectful.

Many Canadians, for many reasons, no longer know how to pass these practices on to their children."

After being invited by Maureen Leavitt, Vision TV's western development executive, to create a series based on The Virtues Project while she was toying with the idea herself, Popov teamed with Jones-Farrow because they were on the same wavelength.

"We chose Hilary because of who she is, a woman of tremendous compassion and



Hilary Jones-Farrow, an award-winning writer, producer and director co-produced *Virtues: A Family Affair*.

insight," said Popov, "I think she's one of the finest producers in this county and an idealist, I feel blessed."

In attempting to convey a strong cross-section of virtues practiced by families of different cultures and traditions across North America, Jones-Farrow and her collaborators filmed in Victoria, Houston, Texas, Sandy Bay Saskatchewan, Flin Flon, Manitoba and Moses Lake, Washington where the crew captured footage of a mother who helped her community cope with the trauma of a high school murder using what Popov calls "the silver thread that runs through all faiths and religions throughout history — the practice of virtues."



VIRTUES PROJECT
INTERNATIONAL

Condensed from Times-Colonist, Victoria, BC
January 10, 2000