

Aimee Mullins' great expectations

By DIANA MORSE
Special to The Press

Aimee Mullins knows how to make an impression. Rather than her porcelain skin, sky-blue eyes or shining blonde hair, however, the most noticeable attribute of the actress, who has modeled for Alexander McQueen, is her heart of gold.

The Parkland High grad, born without fibulae in both legs, appeared March 25 as keynote speaker for Via of the Lehigh Valley's All Star Classic Banquet at Freedom High School, Bethlehem.

Mullins cheered on 2009 All-Star Hall of Fame inductees Traci (Zarbatany) Cyr, former Notre Dame Green Pond coach; Truman Frey (posthumously), founder, Eyeglass Fund Game; former NCAA official Joseph "Jody" Silvester; and 1996 Stroudsburg High School grad Ken Lacey.

The former NCAA athlete and active spokesperson for rising above limitations was disappointed she would not be able to remain in the Lehigh Valley to participate

GOOD CAUSE

in Via's March 28 Basketball Classic.

Instead, Mullins was to appear at The Actor's Studio in the New York premier of "Crazy Eyes," John Buffalo Mailer's play about the post 9/11 anthrax scare.

In her banquet talk, Mullins shared inspirational stories, including how the doctor who delivered her — and the news about her legs — to her parents, now cites Mullins as an example of "the 'X' factor," in which a patient rises above medical diagnoses and expectations.

Mullins urged athletes and guests to push past perceived limitations, describing a young student's reaction to a question she once posed to a group at the Boston Children's Museum.

"I had asked the near 300

six- to eight-year olds what kind of legs they would design for me if I wanted to jump over a house," she recalled. "One suggested kangaroo, and another said 'frog legs.'

"Then, a young boy asked, 'Why wouldn't you want to fly, too?' I realized we still put limitations on ourselves, and a shift in perception is key to moving forward. The way athletes, like the Via champions, train themselves parallels learning to deal with adversity."

SouthSide Film fundraiser: Bethlehem's SouthSide Film Institute (SSFI) flaunts superstition and proves size doesn't matter, screening 13 independent short films April 2 at Allentown Brew Work's High Gravity Lounge. The fundraiser promises a colorful evening of movies, with a side of live music by Religion & Cash.

Doors open at 7 p.m.. screenings begin at 7:45 p.m., admission includes snacks, soft drinks and coffee, and a cash bar and menu will be

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Actress, advocate and Parkland High School grad Aimee Mullins greets Mike Shelton, right, and Matthew A. Dorman, left, of Summit Management and Realty Company, a sponsor of Via's All-Star Basketball Classic Banquet.