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VOICE OF AN ANGEL: CHERYL LADD

By Jennifer Pfaff

She's been a cartoon rock star and an angel in disguise, and on January 22 Cheryl Ladd will also be an advocate when she speaks at Food for the Poor's twelfth annual *Fine Wines and Hidden Treasures* gala, held at the *Mar-a-Lago Club* in Palm Beach (tickets cost \$500).

The actress lent her singing voice as Melody in the 1970s animated series *Josie and the Pussycats* before landing the coveted role of Kris Munroe, one of the feather-haired police detectives on the hit TV show *Charlie's Angels*. The character, created in the second season after Farrah Fawcett left the show, made her an overnight success, and since then Ladd has continued to star in TV movies and series. An amateur golfer who has written a book about the sport, Ladd recently moved to Texas to be closer to family. (888-404-4248)

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Why was it important to you to attend Food for the Poor's gala?

CL: I've been a child advocate for many years, since *Charlie's Angels*. I've been involved with *Childhelp*, which is the largest nonprofit organization fighting abuse. My heart goes out to children. I just did a film called *The Perfect Wave*,

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where I played this mother who's prayed for her child's life. It had a big impact on me. When I became aware of how desperate so many people are, my heart went out to them, and I wanted to see if I could bring awareness and help them—and help people who help them.

Have you been to Palm Beach before?

I have. I had a brief visit there. I've driven by Mar-a-Lago, and I'm excited to go there. And I've met Mr. [Donald] Trump before. I played in one of his golf's tournaments.

You've had a lot of roles in your acting career, and your most well-known has to be Kris Munroe. What was it like being one of *Charlie's Angels*?

It was wonderful at the time, because it was so enormously successful. I was 25. I had my twenty-sixth birthday in the first season. At the time, I was the mother of a 2-year old. It was pretty big. But in meantime, I was on hiatus recording albums.

I must say, I love my *Charlie's Angels* fans; they've stuck with me all these years. And they're still showing *Charlie's Angels* on TV, so I get new fans— young fans.

Can you share a favorite memory from the show?

My favorite thing about behind the scenes besides the success was: It was so daunting walking in. I didn't replace Farrah [Fawcett], because we created a new character, but it was still up to me to keep the show going at that point. That happened, and the ratings went up, so I'm pretty pleased about that.

Another thing I value from doing the show is my friendship with Jaclyn [Smith]. She and I became really close. Only a handful of women know what it was like being on that show.

We're still close friends today. She had a birthday yesterday, and for the first time I haven't called her. She forgot mine this year, too [laughs]. But old friends forgive each other.



If you weren't a performer, what would you be doing?

Designing houses. We've built a few, remodeled a few and had such a fabulous time building this one. We took time finding the property and designing what we wanted. I love the light in it. There are so many windows and beautiful views. I'm a sky person. I love being able to look out the window and see the sky—not just across the street. In Texas, there are the most gorgeous clouds I've ever seen—big galleons floating across the sky.

Can you tell me a little bit about your interest in golf?

I wrote a book about it. In 1984, my husband said, "Honey, the kids are at camp. It's Saturday afternoon. Do you have anything to do? Let's go play golf." I thought, "I'm Scottish; I might be good if I try." I was a tomboy when I was young; I played basketball and softball and took 15 years of dance lessons, so

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I'm moderately coordinated. When I tried playing golf, I cracked a ball on the first day. It changed my life forever. You can get hooked the first time.

What would you say is the best advice you were ever given?

I've been given a lot of advice over the years, and I've actually followed some of it [*laughs*]. I think probably the best advice is to be true to yourself. Don't let people or things turn you into someone you're not, because when that happens, you feel so lost. I think it's important to know who you are and what your values are and stick to them.

What's your New Year's resolution?

I have learned over my life that the closer I feel to the Lord, the happier I am. When I allow myself to be too busy, the farther I am. I don't focus on that spiritual connection enough. I have to do it every day, and I try to do it in each of my actions. It's a lesson that was hard fought.

As young people, we have our ambitions, our work, our kids and a big life happening; you can get so disconnected from the core of what it's all about. My New Year's resolution is to try to continue to be connected to my spiritual life so that I can be happy. Just like a good relationship, it requires you to really invest yourself in it.

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