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ARTS&LIFE

Young actress nominated for Joey

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A Richmond teenager has been nominated in a new, Oscar-style awards for young Canadians working in the TV and film industry.

Colleen Booker, 18, — a Hugh Boyd secondary grad — has been given the nod in the “Best Actress Age 10 to 19 in a Short Film” category in the inaugural Joey Awards.

Booker was one of dozens of up-and-coming actors from across the country, aged nine to 19, nominated for a “Joey,” which will be awarded at a “red carpet” gala night in New Westminster next month.

She was nominated for her recent roles in coming-of-age short film *Up and Down*, directed by Jason Karman, which was filmed in the summer of 2013 in North Vancouver. Also, this year marked her first professional television credits on an episode of *Untold Stories of the ER* and the Discovery/Science Channel series *Close Encounters*.

Booker has just started studying English at a university in Ontario and her mom back in Richmond, Olwen Walker, couldn't be prouder of her daughter.

“She did a few a small acting things at the church and the school, but it wasn't until she started studying the profession in 2010 and got her first agent in 2011 that it became serious,” said Walker, who admits she and her husband were reluctant for their daughter to enter the industry.

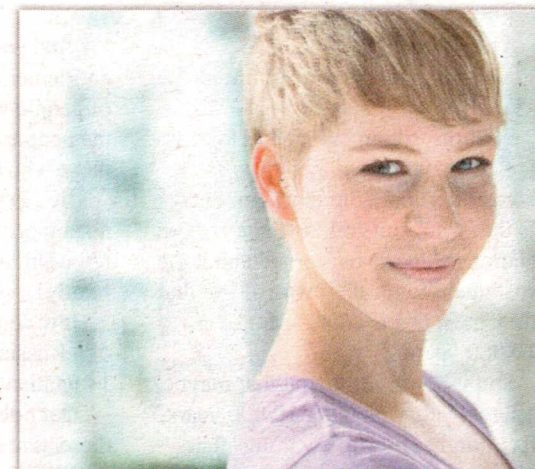
“She then picked up a lot of independent and student film roles and appeared in some commercials and a couple of small TV roles.

“It was clear this was something she loved doing and she has studied very hard for this.”

Walker said her daughter, who began her formal training as an actress in 2010 at Richmond's Gateway Theatre, before transitioning to act in film and television, is “very excited” about the nomination.

But she is “extremely disappointed” that she won't be able to fly back from Ontario for the awards, ironically so close to home in Richmond.

And Walker won't be at the awards either, as she's given up her only ticket to *Up and Down*'s director, Karman.



Actress Colleen Booker is getting recognition through the inaugural Joey Awards. Photo submitted

“He deserves to be there, so I thought it was appropriate that he goes,” added Walker.

Up and Down is available online through the National Screen Institute, while *Close Encounters* is due to air later this year on the Discovery/Science channel.

The Joey Awards recognizes even the smallest of roles and bookings, as “no role is ever insignificant,” according to the organizers.

For more information on the Joey Awards, visit www.joeyawards.com.