

Paterson student lands a leading film role

By Sarah Wakefield
Staff Writer

FLEMING ISLAND – After years of hard work on the boards at local playhouses and school productions, a Fleming Island student has hit the big screen nationwide.

Evan Brinkman, 10, a 5th grade student at Paterson Elementary, stars in a new film titled “Doctor Bello” starring Isaiah Washington, co-star of the hit hospital television drama “Grey’s Anatomy.” Brinkman plays a young boy suffering from a brain tumor in the Tony Abulu film set in Nigeria.



Evan Brinkman

“Before filming the movie, I was like an overfilled balloon,” said Brinkman. “I always try to make it seem as real as possible. I am really a cancer patient I tried to tell myself.”

Brinkman plays Sam Stein, a typical seven-year-old and the son of a wealthy couple. After being diagnosed with a brain tumor, he falls into a coma with a few days to live. A Nigerian nurse pleads Stein’s oncologist, Dr. Durant played by Washington, to get help from Dr. Bello. The under-



NEW YORK – Makeup artists transform Evan Brinkman into cancer patient Sam Stein.

ground, uncertified Nigerian doctor living in Brooklyn is well-known by the African community. Dr. Bello secretly visits the child and performs an African ceremony with potions after which Stein wakes up the next morning astonishingly on the road to recovery.

“I actually accomplished my dream,” Brinkman said. “The hardest scenes are crying scenes. I was so happy to be working with Isaiah, but I had to cry.”

Brinkman started modeling at the age of five and has posed for The Gap and filmed TV commercials. To prepare him for different types of acting, he took acting classes and participated in Orange Park Community Theatre summer camps where he earned the leading role in “Rumpelstiltskin.” He worked as a live model for a back-to-school clothing special during a live news broadcast. Disney World and Nemour’s Children’s Clinic have chosen Brinkman for print campaigns. He’s worked in print, stage and screen but prefers live acting.

“I think the one thing that sets me apart is my memory,” Brinkman said. “I have great recall.”

Brinkman’s father, John Brinkman, said that his son’s success stems from his disposition and genuine inner happiness.

“He doesn’t get stressed,” John Brinkman said, a general physician at Orange Park Medical Center. “He never asks, ‘Did I get it?’ He just goes on with being a kid and doesn’t dwell on things.”

Brinkman’s mother Andrea Brinkman contributes her son’s success to the ease of technology. Using her iPhone, she could quickly record her son and instantly send the video file if a producer requests Evan to read through a few lines.

“He wouldn’t have gotten the role unless we had the technology,” Andrea Brinkman said. “We don’t live in New York City. It’s not like we can be there in person in an hour, but a video is the next best thing.”

When Evan Brinkman is not filming movies with Hollywood stars, he lives a normal suburban life. During down time, he enjoys playing video games with friends and watching movies. Science is his favorite subject at Paterson.

“From atoms to weather, there is always something new to learn,” Evan Brinkman said.

Brinkman’s sisters both attend Paterson. Ellie, 12, is a year ahead at Paterson and swims for the prestigious club swim team at The Bolles School. Ava, 5, is in Kindergarten at Paterson and enjoys being



SPECIAL TO CLAY TODAY

On the set

NEW YORK – Fleming Island resident Evan Brinkman, playing the role of cancer patient Sam Stein, lay in the bed in this scene while Isaiah Washington “examines” him in the film “Doctor Bello.” One website said Brinkman steals the film from Washington, co-star of the hit TV series “Grey’s Anatomy.”

a Daisy Girl Scout.

“I think it’s cool that I’m related to a movie star,” Ellie Brinkman said.

Evan Brinkman has also earned esteemed praise from former vocal and technique acting professor Kathleen Myrick who ran Broadway Kid Starz in Orange Park.

“When he walks into a room, his smile is extremely captivating,” Myrick said, currently working on a PhD at New York University. “This child is as genuine as they come. He is a hard worker and so polite. I think he’s going to have tremendous success in all his endeavors.”



Left to right, John Brinkman, Evan Brinkman and Isaiah Washington