

# Finding a Diamond in a Haystack

## Rising Country Star Alli Gillis

While most 14-year-olds have spent their summer break swimming, sunbathing and vacationing, Richland High School freshman Alli Gillis has instead been the opening act for some of the biggest names in country music. This month the up-and-coming country singer will travel to Nashville to finish recording her first album.

Alli has long had a passion for the country music genre. "I have been listening to country music since I was one or two," she says, adding, "It always kind of relaxed me, and now I just love it."

At age 11, Alli first began singing on stage with her grandpap, Chuck Townsend. Together, they performed 50's-style music with groups like the Holidays and the Vogues. Later inspired by local country singers Joe Patrick,



Christine Krauss and Dave Hanner, it was soon obvious that country was a perfect fit for the young artist.

"I don't think there are too many other things that would replace country music for me," she says. "Right now, my main focus is country, and there isn't any other way I would have that."

Alli's passion has helped her to accomplish much in a short time. This year alone she has opened for major country stars John Michael Montgomery, Lee Ann Womack and Charlie Daniels. Recently, Gillis was the opening act for Miranda Lambert, and she even performed for and met President Bush during his presidential campaign in Pittsburgh.

Manager Ron Brown of Shaler knew he had found something special in Alli, not only as a singer, but as a person as well. "Alli is a pure country singer," Brown says, "totally different than anybody we've ever handled here. When

**How To  
Avoid Wasting  
Your Child's Summer**

**The First 5 Tips**

**Tip #1** Do not assume your child has necessary school skills. Find out by asking the teacher or through testing. Instead of just grades, insist on "standard scores" for a more accurate comparison with peers.

**Tip #2** Ask your child's teachers:  
1) What was easiest this school year for my child? 2) Please prioritize skills to improve this summer to be more successful next year.

**Tip #3** When planning, remember enrichment of natural strengths and interests.

**Tip #4** Only invest time and resources in the best tutor and best program. (See report for choosing a tutor.)

**Tip #5** Remember to plan both fun and learning activities based on family values.

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*Dr. Brian Kilpela*  
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because it's something I enjoy," she says.

One of Alli's favorite songs to perform is called "I Wouldn't Put It Past Love." She explains that the song's message is, "With love, you can overcome anything." It's an apt ballad for this talented young girl, because it's clear that Alli's love of music and performing will

help her overcome the rocky terrain of the music industry.

Alli's debut album on the CharTunes Records label is scheduled to be released this coming December or January. For music samples, live performance dates, booking contacts and other information, visit her website at: [www.alligillis.com](http://www.alligillis.com). ❖

she's done with a concert, she goes out and thanks people. Her niceness comes off the stage when she walks around, and everybody loves her."

Unlike the sometimes shallow pretenses that afflict some performers, Alli is the real deal. "Her sweet personality is all natural," says Brown. "That's just the way she is."

Many people describe Gillis' voice and talent as pure. And after listening to her for the first time, this really is the most accurate description. With a current trend in popular music that relies so heavily on technological enhancement and "supplemented" (Ashlee Simpson-style) live performances, it is both refreshing and faith-restoring to hear a poignant and powerfully real singer like Alli. Brown agrees, adding, "Her talent is awesome. It's pure, natural singing – nothing else."

However, success in the music industry is never a sure thing, no matter how talented the performer. Notes Brown, "The music business is like the analogy of a needle in a haystack. When we started Alli out, she was the needle, but every day that she performs makes the haystack so much smaller."

Alli acknowledges the sometimes random uncertainties of the music business and takes them in stride with a sincere, sure honesty. "If this doesn't work out, I'll continue singing just for fun, [www.northhillsmoonthly.com](http://www.northhillsmoonthly.com)

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