



WALL OF FAME: Derek Jeter poses near his advertisement for Fila athletic gear on side of building at the corner of Wooster and Houston. New York Post. Charles Wenzelberg

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DR CHARLES JETER, father of Darok Josep

By THOMAS CULLEN

Derek Jeter celebrated his 23rd birthday yesterday in style. A massive advertising mural featuring the Yankee shortstop in Fila athletic gear was unveiled in SoHo to kick off Jeter's new community action program. A crowd of about 200 was on hand to sing happy birthday, eat cake and help the young shortstop celebrate.

In association with Fila USA (with whom Jeter has an endorsement deal) and Jeter's own Turn 2 Foundation, the Yankee star announced a program called Jeter's Leaders. The program will recognize young men and women in their communities who exyoung men and women in their communities who ex-hibit extraordinary leader-ship while spreading the message of drug and alco-hol abuse prevention.

Family, friends and fans were on hand to help celebrate the agreement. Jeter's father. Dr. Charles Jeter, who is the executive director of the Turn 2 Foundation, said he was extremely proud of his son.

"This is him giving something back to the community," the senior Jeter said. "This is him doing something positive for the kids. That is beyond his baseball talents. This is a special day and I'm proud of him. To see your son up on the wall like that is really something."

"Any time you have the opportunity to

"Any time you have the opportunity to help out the community, I'm all for it," Derek Jeter said.

Baseball was also on the shortstop's mind

ing him Wednesday off. "He's killing me," cracked Jeter. "I'll never catch Cal Ripken this way."

When asked about interleague play and the recent Mets series. Jeter said, "Aside from postseason, I've never seen the house [Yankee Stadium] that full. It was a great series for New York and for baseball."

A World Series rematch with the Braves is on the horizon beginning Monday, but Jeter doesn't want to look too far ahead. "We have got to deal with Cleveland first, but it's [the Braves series] something that everyone will be excited about."

And, of course, wherever he single shortstop And, of course, wherever the single shortstop heart-throb goes, young girls are sure to follow. Kerryann Pozzi a 14-year old from lower Manhattan, got a baseball signed by Jeter.

"I think he is gorgeous and he is really cute and he plays really good. I've taken thousands of pictures of that mural," she said be-tween bites of birthday

tween bites of birthday cake. "It was a very good moment to me, getting to meet Derek."

Clarissa Jimenez, another 14-year old from lower Manhattan, admired the new mural. "It's gorgeous and I wish I could have it in my room," she said. "I want to marry him."

Not a bad day for the Yankee shortstop—an endorsement deal, a huge painting of himself on a wall, formation of a foundation to help kids, a birthday party and a marriage, proposal. Life couldn't be any

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