

the little red truck

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Little Film That Could Wins in Hollywood

“The Little Red Truck” Playing to Packed Houses, Gaining Momentum on Festival Circuit

(March 10, 2008) Missoula, Montana — **“The Little Red Truck,”** a documentary film chronicling the world’s largest touring children’s theater and the youth it impacts, was **awarded “Best Feature Documentary” at the International Family Film Festival on Sunday, March 2 in Hollywood, California.** The festival was held at the historic Raleigh Studios on the city’s famous Melrose Avenue. Adding to the festivities, the Goodyear blimp, which makes an unexpected (and rather funny) appearance in the movie, flew over the studio post-screening with a special message: “Goodyear Salutes “The Little Red Truck.”

“The Little Red Truck” premiered to a pack house and standing ovation at the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival in Missoula, Montana in late February. Most recently, it played to yet another full house at the San Luis Obispo International Film Festival in San Luis Obispo, California. Filmmaker Rob Whitehair and producing partner, Pam Voth, are thrilled with the warm reception the film is receiving.

“We’re absolutely ecstatic with the response the film has been receiving,” says Whitehair. “Audience feedback has been incredibly positive and encouraging. Already, we’re being asked where people can see the film or send their friends and family to see it. We’re optimistic that its theatrical release, later this summer, will be well-received.”

Described by media as “a masterful, emotional tour de force...” and “....like ‘Spellbound’ meets ‘Waiting for Guffman,’” the film records the emotional highs, lows and in-betweens of more than 250 kids in five communities when Missoula Children’s Theatre (MCT), via its signature truck, comes to their towns. Packed with pretty much everything necessary for staging a full-scale musical, the little red truck comes seeking just one thing: 50 to 60 ambitious youth, grades K through 12, to serve as cast members.

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While the truck is the film's focal point, the real story is the children who do the improbable: learn a show's dialogue, songs, dance moves, and staging in just six days (six days!). **It's magic and mayhem captured through the lens as the kids, under the direction of the two professional tour actor/directors who come with the truck, audition, rehearse, mess up, have the occasional meltdown, overcome personal obstacles, jump for joy, don costumes, and eventually grace the stage for a one-hour performance.**

Woven throughout the one-week tour are life lessons in teamwork, trust, self-confidence, the ability to see a project through to the end, and acceptance. Bringing it all to light are the personal stories captured on high-definition video. For example:

The young girl who experiences such stage fright she considers bowing out just moments before the curtain rises.

The young boy who asserts that MCT helped him break free of gangs.

The blind girl who memorizes not only her lines, but those of her cast mates, feeding lines to one lost actor on stage with her.

Whitehair, who made a name for himself capturing wildlife on film for National Geographic, Discovery and PBS productions, says, "This film restored my faith in humanity. It forced me to look at things in a different light and ask myself, '**At what point do we lose the ability to say anything is possible.' These kids still believe.**'"

According to Voth, the decision to turn the company's cameras on kids, rather than the usual wild animals, was easier than one might expect. "For us to venture beyond wildlife filmmaking, the story had to be extremely compelling and entertaining," she says. "This project promised that and more. **Over the course of six days, you see kids blossom and grow, and you get to witness personal triumphs they'll carry into adulthood.** Add in the amazing tour actor/directors who hold it all together and you have a truly powerful story, no matter what angle you approach it from."

Whitehair and Voth spent nearly a year shadowing the tour in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut, Canada; Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Hollywood, California; Americus, Georgia; and Somerton, Arizona. Although these communities are geographically and demographically distinct, they share one common thread: the need for fully accessible performing arts programs.

To learn more about "The Little Red Truck," Tree & Sky Media Arts, the filmmakers, and **view a film trailer**, visit **HYPERLINK** "<http://www.thelittleredtruck.com>" www.thelittleredtruck.com.

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