

# the little red truck

Media Contact: Susan Doherty  
406-360-2212/sdoherty@fuelpublicrelations.com

## **Hollywood Schoolhouse Featured in Documentary Film Set to Screen at International Family Film Festival in Hollywood 2/29 & 3/1**

### **Movie Follows World's Largest Touring Children's Theatre into Five Communities, Capturing Kids Doing the Near-Impossible**

(February 20, 2008) Missoula, Montana — **Hollywood's very own Hollywood Schoolhouse—and 50 of its students—is one of five North American schools/communities featured in a new documentary film titled “The Little Red Truck.”**

The movie, which chronicles the world's largest touring children's theater and the youth it impacts, screens in Hollywood at the International Family Film Festival on Friday, February 29 at 4:15 p.m. and Saturday, March 1 at 2 p.m. Both showings will be held at Raleigh Studios, 5300 Melrose Avenue. J.K. Simmons, of Spider-man and Juno fame and a participant in the film, plans to attend the Saturday screening. The Goodyear blimp, which makes an unexpected (and rather funny) appearance in the movie, is scheduled for a fly-over post-screening. The filmmakers will be on hand for interviews. Also expected to attend are many of the Hollywood Schoolhouse students (who are featured in the film) and their families.

Hot off its premiere to a packed house—not to mention a standing ovation—last week at the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival, the little film that could has been described by media as exactly that and more: “a masterful, emotional tour de force...” and “...like ‘Spellbound’ meets ‘Waiting for Guffman.’”

“The Little Red Truck” 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. The film was written, directed and produced by award-winning filmmaker Rob Whitehair and his Tree & Sky Media Arts production company.

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.**

[www.thelittleredtruck.com](http://www.thelittleredtruck.com)

Tree & Sky Media Arts [www.treeandsky.com](http://www.treeandsky.com)

1360 Sunflower Drive, Missoula, MT 59802 406.721.5283

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 Whitehair's wife and producing partner, Pam 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.

The film premiered at the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival in Missoula, Montana, on February 16. Following its showing in Hollywood, "The Little Red Truck" plays at the San Luis Obispo International Film Festival on Saturday, March 8 at 1 p.m. at the Palm Theater.

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](http://www.thelittleredtruck.com).

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