

# the little red truck

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## **The Little Film That Could**

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

### **Hollywood Schoolhouse a Featured School**

(February 19, 2008) Missoula, Montana — “The Little Red Truck,” a documentary film chronicling the world’s largest touring children’s theater and the youth it impacts, rolls into Hollywood via 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. **Featured in the film is Hollywood’s own Hollywood Schoolhouse and approximately 60 of its students.**

Tagged “Spellbound” meets “Waiting for Guffman” by one newspaper, “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 the missing element: 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.

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.

www.thelittleredtruck.com  
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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.

According to MCT CEO and Co-Founder Jim Caron, the tour is often the only exposure to the performing arts these kids have all year. “So many of these children have never seen a play, let alone participated in one,” says Caron. “Our hope is that audiences will see the positive impact the arts have on youth and begin to reassess the unfortunate trend of slashing arts budgets.”

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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