

19th Annual Heartland Film Festival Wraps with Record Screening Attendance

The 2010 Heartland Film Festival came to a close with the screening of "The Presence," the announcement of the Audience Choice Award winners and record attendance

INDIANAPOLIS (Oct. 27, 2010) – The 19th annual Heartland Film Festival concluded on the evening of Saturday, Oct. 23 with the screening of *The Presence*, starring Oscar® winner Mira Sorvino and Shane West, sponsored by Teachers Credit Union. Director/writer Tom Provost was on hand for the special event and participated in a question and answer session following the screening. The 2010 Audience Choice Award winners were also announced during the event, which took place at the Indianapolis Museum of Art (IMA).

Chosen from thousands of ballots cast by audience members, the Audience Choice Awards were given to those films that were most enjoyed by Festival attendees. All Award-winning and Official Selection films, with the exception of those within the High School Film Competition Shorts Collection, were eligible for the award in their respective categories. The 2010 winners are:

Audience Choice Award for Best Dramatic Feature: Festival Award winner *Ways to Live Forever*, directed and written by Gustavo Ron.

Audience Choice Award for Best Documentary Feature: Official Selection *For Once in My Life*, directed by Jim Bigham and Mark Moormann.

Audience Choice Award for Best Short Film: Festival Award winner *The Butterfly Circus*, produced, directed and written by Joshua Weigel.

This year's Festival attendees saw a record 102 films that bring out the best in the human spirit, as well as met the filmmakers that made them. Screening attendance for the 2010 Festival grew by 10.4 percent from last year, resulting in 36 sold out screenings and a total screening attendance of 21,586.

"Heartland is thrilled to have reached such an important milestone this year by increasing the Festival's total screening attendance for the 9th year in a row," said Jeffrey L. Sparks, president and CEO of Heartland Truly Moving Pictures. "We're encouraged by the continued growth of Heartland and are already looking forward to what will be in store for the Festival next year as we prepare to celebrate the Heartland Film Festival's 20th anniversary."

The 2010 Heartland Film Festival was kicked off with the screening of *Snowmen* on Thursday, Oct. 14 at the IMA, sponsored by Lacy Foundation and LDI, Ltd. Director/writer Rob Kirbyson, producers John Shepherd and Stephen McEveety, and

actors Bobby Coleman (*Martian Child*, *The Last Song*, *Must Love Dogs*) and Beverly Mitchell (*7th Heaven*) were in attendance for the special event.

Film screenings began the following evening as 17 Award-winning films opened at AMC Castleton Square 14. These and the 69 Official Selection films of the 2010 Festival were selected from more than 832 international independent film submissions for best meeting Heartland's mission and demonstrating excellence in filmmaking.

The festivities continued with all the glitz and glamour of Hollywood during the annual Heartland Film Festival Awards Ceremony on Saturday, Oct. 16 at the Old National Centre in downtown Indianapolis. Indiana native and Emmy® award-winning journalist Catt Sadler emceed as filmmakers and guests from across the globe gathered to honor the visionaries and films of the 2010 Heartland Film Festival. During the program awards and \$150,000 in cash prizes were handed out.

The **\$50,000 Grand Prize Award for Best Dramatic Feature** was presented to producer/director/writer Travis Fine and producer Kristine Fine for *The Space Between*.

The **\$25,000 Award for Best Documentary Feature** was given to director Stanley Earl Nelson, Jr. for *Freedom Riders*. The cash prize award was underwritten by Indianapolis Volkswagen Dealers.

The **\$10,000 Vision Award for Best Short Film** was presented to producer/director/writer Joshua Weigel and producer/writer Rebekah Weigel for *The Butterfly Circus*. The Vision Award was underwritten by KeyBank.

To date, Heartland has awarded more than \$2.3 million to support filmmakers in their quest to create uplifting and inspiring films.

Quinton Aaron (*The Blind Side*) presented this year's Pioneering Spirit Award to **Andrew Kosove** and **Broderick Johnson**, the co-founders and co-CEOs of Alcon Entertainment and producers of *The Blind Side*, *My Dog Skip* and *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* – all Truly Moving Picture Award-winning films.

Additional Festival activities included the Filmmakers' Brunch, sponsored by the Omni Severin Hotel and OneAmerica Financial Partners, Inc., where film buffs had the opportunity to meet and mingle with the filmmakers of the 2010 Festival. Families gathered at the IMA once again to experience Christmas a little early during the Family Movie Event's featured film, *Nativity!*, sponsored by Printing Partners, Panera Bread and Republic Services. Director/writer Debbie Isitt, Producer Nick Jones, and actors Sydney Isitt-Ager and Alexandra Allen were in attendance for the screening and after party. Students of film and filmmaking enthusiasts joined the 2010 Heartland Film Festival Award-winning and Official Selection filmmakers as they broke down their filmmaking process during the Heartland Institute Workshop, which was sponsored by Eli Lilly and

Company Foundation, Inc., Finish Line, IUPUI Campus Center, IHETS, Starbucks Coffee Company and Film Indiana.

During the 10-day Festival, Heartland also showcased two of the latest recipients of Heartland's Truly Moving Picture Award: *Conviction* and *Made in Dagenham*, with special screenings sponsored by Fifth Third Bank, Central Indiana. And, new this year, Heartland Truly Moving Pictures introduced a competition specifically for high school age filmmakers through its Heartland Institute program. Aspiring high school filmmakers were encouraged to create a 10-minute film that embodied the 2010 theme: HOPE. Each of the Award-winning and Official Selection high school student filmmakers had their film screened at the 2010 Heartland Film Festival as part of the first annual Heartland High School Film Competition Shorts Collection.

Heartland Truly Moving Pictures™, a national, independent, non-profit arts organization, was established in 1991 to recognize and honor filmmakers whose work explores the human journey by artistically expressing hope and respect for the positive values of life. Its flagship event, the Heartland Film Festival®, launched in 1991 and runs each October in Indianapolis, screening independent films from around the world. Each year, the Festival awards \$150,000 in cash prizes and presents its Crystal Heart Awards to the top-judged submissions. Heartland has awarded more than \$2.3 million to support filmmakers during the last 19 years. The organization's Truly Moving Picture Award was created to honor films released theatrically that align with Heartland's mission. By bestowing a watermark to honored films, the award allows studios and distributors to inform audiences of a film's uplifting message and appeal. Heartland is also dedicated to its relationship with the National Collaboration for Youth and its expanding F.I.L.M., "Finding Inspiration in Literature & Movies," Project. For more information, visit TrulyMovingPictures.org.

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