



**For Immediate Release
October 27, 2011**

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Heartland Film Festival Wraps with Sellout Screenings, Record Event Attendance and the Announcement of Festival Winners from Around the Globe

(INDIANAPOLIS Oct. 26, 2011) – After ten days, the 20th annual Heartland Film Festival concluded on Saturday. The event saw record attendance at special events and several sellout screenings. Filmmakers from around the globe were in attendance throughout the Festival as 128 American and international films were screened and more than \$150,000 in cash prizes was distributed to award winners. Audiences fell in love with a red dog and a young boy pulling a little red wagon; were inspired to advocate for victims of crime and explore our environmental threat; and followed the journeys and journeys of Gypsies and superheroes. Once again, the annual Heartland Film Festival introduced audiences to transformative independent films from around the world that artistically explore the human journey.

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. The 2011 winners are:

- **Audience Choice Award for Narrative Feature:** *Red Dog*, directed by Kriv Stenders; written by Julie Ryan and Daniel Taplitz; and produced by Nelson Woss and Geoffrey Hall.
- **Audience Choice Award for Documentary Feature:** *Crime After Crime*, directed and produced by Yoav Potash.
- **Audience Choice Award for Short Film:** *Sun City Picture House*, directed by David Darg; produced by Maria Bello, Olivia Wilde and Bryn Mooser

Heartland awarded more than \$150,000 in cash prizes to the films that best embodied Heartland's goal of "promoting positive change in people's lives through the transformative power of film." The \$100,000 grand prize for the Narrative Feature category tops the prize money given at the Sundance, Tribeca and Toronto film festivals. The 2011 winners are:

- **Award-winning Narrative Feature** receiving the Festival's \$100,000 Grand Prize for Best Narrative Feature: Filmmaker Nelson Woss; Film: *Red Dog*.
- **Award-winning Documentary Feature** receiving the Festival's \$25,000 prize for Best Documentary Feature: Filmmaker Yoav Potash; Film: *Crime After Crime*.
- **Award-winning Short Film** receiving the Festival's \$10,000 Vision Award for Best Short: Filmmaker Jullian Higgins; Film: *Thief*.

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Highlights from the 10-day film festival included:

- 127 filmmakers and special guests were on hand for this year's festival. Many of them recognized Indianapolis as one of the best film festivals in the world, crediting the talent of the team, Hoosier hospitality and the passion and commitment of everyone involved.
- More than 60 sponsors contributed to the success and growth of the 20th annual Heartland Film Festival.
- Actor Martin Sheen and actor-director son Emilio Estevez were on hand for the Heartland Film Festival debut of their movie *The Way*.
- Kurt Kuenne, director of the fan favorite *Validation*, returned to Heartland with his feature length film, *Shuffle*. Actor TJ Thyne was at the closing event to interact with moviegoers.
- Well-known directors, such as Angelo Pizzo (*Hoosiers*, *Rudy*) and Corbin Bernsen ("Psych"), were in attendance throughout the festival.
- More than 60 sponsors contributed to the success and growth of the 20th annual Heartland Film Festival.
- The festival raised more than \$20,000, with philanthropic dollars continuing to come in following the event.

Jeff Sparks, President & CEO, closed the festival by reminding audiences that "films do make a difference."

"This festival is about the pure love of film – a love that everyone involved shares," said Sparks. "It's just one of those incredible events the city has embraced; filmmakers get excited about; and audiences celebrate."

About Heartland Truly Moving Pictures

Heartland Truly Moving Pictures, a non-profit arts organization, seeks to promote positive change in people's lives through the transformative power of film. 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 more than \$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 this award seal to honored films, the award allows studios and distributors to inform audiences of a film's transformative power and appeal. Heartland is also dedicated to cultivating youth, and thus created the Heartland Institute to provide innovative educational and outreach programs that enrich the minds and lives of youth and aspiring filmmakers. For more information, visit TrulyMovingPictures.org.

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