

Rio Vista Universal Films Released A Hallmark Style Film “Rekindling Christmas” For the Holiday Season

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Rio Vista Universal Films released a Hallmark style family friendly film, Rekindling Christmas for the holiday season. The film which was released this week is being heavily promoted by Dish Network and [promises to be a holiday classic](#) based on the novel with the same name, Rekindling Christmas.

The film promises the viewer to experience a variety of emotions, betrayal, forgiveness, love, joy and multiple situations that people deal with on a daily basis. The story centers on a single mom Annika Marshall who, having her high school sweetheart and the love of her life walk out on her for a career in the NFL. Annika marries then gets divorced and now her and her son are trying to cope with the holidays. Only to have everything become more complicated when her first love, Jesse Winchester returns to his hometown as a football super

star. After seeing Annika, Jesse soon realizes he made a serious mistake and that Annika was and is the love of his life, but quickly comes to the reality that winning her and her son will take a miracle.

James Ganiere directed and produced the film from a screenplay by USA Today bestselling author and award winning screenwriter Rebekah R. Ganiere based on her romance novel by the same name. Rebekah states

“Seeing my characters, setting, and story come to life has been one of the hardest and most beautiful things I’ve ever been a part of.”

The film brings together an amazing cast of characters including, Ashley Atwood (Poison Rose with John Travolta and Morgan Freeman) as Annika Marshall along side Jesse Winchester played



by Michael Patrick Lane (CW's *Dynasty*) and Raini Rodriguez (Disney star from *Austin & Ally* and *Paul Blart Mall Cop* films) as Carrie. Rounding out the cast are veteran actors Thomas Hobson (Nickelodeon's *The Fresh Beat Band*), Stella Grubb (Netflix's *Christmas on the Square*), Sal Velez Jr. (*The Way Back* with Ben Afflack, Netflix's *Black Summer* and Netflix's *On the Verge*) and veteran child star Christian Ganiere as TJ Marshal is most recently seen on his reoccurring role on ABC's *Grey's Anatomy* as autistic Gus Carter.

Michael Patrick Lane says, "Each day was fast, fun and filled with optimism!

Coming into the project was an easy decision because the script Rebekah crafted was so nuanced and easy to read! Jesse was such a fun character to

play! He's got so many redeemable qualities to him that were so fun to explore."

What I loved was finding a way to overcome his darker side with director, James Ganiere, while staying in the genre of Christmas film. It was fun watching James direct in real time! ...to watch it all work out

the way he had envisioned it in his head was such a gift. I think the script is wonderful and it was a real treat to dive into the life of a retired NFL star who's looking to start over and find a piece of himself he lost along the way.

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I believe that *Rekindling Christmas* is a movie that people from all kinds of backgrounds and all walks of life can relate to."

*Executive Producer and
Director James Ganiere*

Ashley Atwood declares, "I am so blessed to have been able to bring the role of Annika to life. I feel like my life parallels with Annika's experience very closely and my heart was able to heal and reconnect to the meaning of Christmas at the same time.

People always ask for favorite moments from set, and I have to say that this whole film was a collection of moments that created its magic. Every twinkle of laughter, every challenge overcome, every hug, every late-night rehearsal, and every early morning call time created a family that will never be replaced. That's part of what we call movie magic. It's a family that's created in such a short period of time by working together tirelessly to create a story we can watch every Christmas for years to come.

Raini Rodriguez shares, "I am so excited for people to see *Rekindling Christmas*! You will instantly



Michael Patrick Lane

fall in love with the characters and the setting of my hometown Bryan, Texas. Our film has so much heart and it's the perfect movie to watch with your loved ones to get into the holiday spirit!"

Sal Velez Jr. said, "Every Performer should have an experience to tell a Christmas Story in their career. Nostalgic holiday magic is what America grew up on and this film is magical. Through Rekindling Christmas, Rebekah Ganiere reminds us that love and romance still exist, even in today's world.

I've enjoyed knowing director James Ganiere for quite some time, and I am honored to bring stories like Rekindling Christmas to life. It is such a pleasure to watch young Christian Ganiere grow into a wonderful young man and an exceptional actor, that audiences will enjoy for years to come.

Dean Sanborn sees the future in Bryan, Texas, and with endless optimism he spreads Christmas Spirit into every person he crosses path with and is a Latino Santa Claus" .lol...

Staying true to Rebekah Ganiere's writing, Michael and Ashley do outstanding performances, supported by a wonderful cast and crew and extraordinary cinematography by Larry McKee. Thank you to Bryan, Texas for being supportive and loving everyday of filming..."

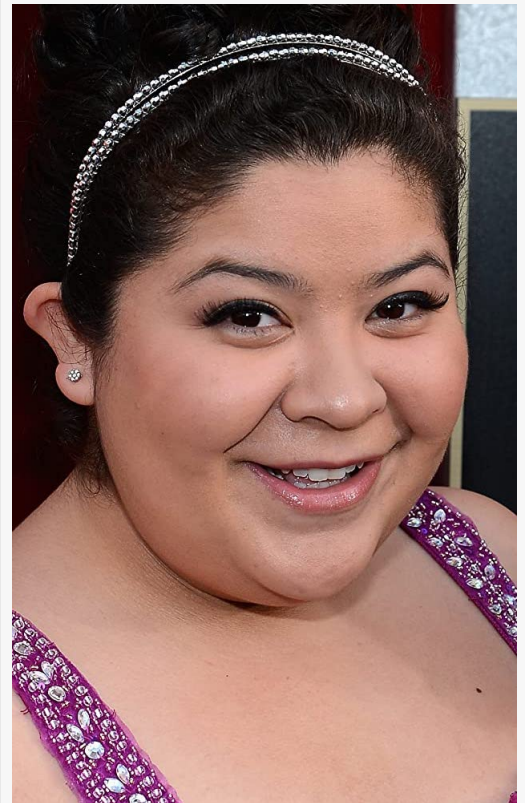
Christian Ganiere shares, "I loved playing TJ. He was such a funny and great character. Getting to work with so many talented and amazing actors was also a lot of fun."

Priscilla Presley states, "Congratulations James and Rebekah the film is so well done, such a touching feel good Christmas story. You have a very talented family. I am sure that Rekindling Christmas is a film that everyone will want to see. God knows we need these types of films during these very stressful times."

David Bartlett (The Next Karate Kids, Speed, Eyes of An Angel, Fresh, Total Recall) shares his feelings about working on the film, "Working on Rekindling Christmas was very enjoyable for me.



Ashley Atwood



Raini Rodriguez

It is not often you get to work on a project that not only makes you feel good watching it, it also makes you feel good while you are working on it. From producer/director James Ganiere on down, every person I had the pleasure to working with was nice to be around, friendly, smart, talented, and sensitive to the needs of the film. I hope I have the pleasure of working with all of them again one day.

[There is a lot to be said about Rekindling Christmas.](#)

It is a Christmas movie, so it needs to be a feel-good movie. It is a love story so we need to see the passion win out over the many obstacles that a couple can experience, and we do see that in beautiful detail. It shows how determination and keeping your eye on the prize, the real prize, will lead to you winning out in life. It takes a look at family, stardom, loss, down to earth values, pain, love and so many other aspects of life that we sometimes take for granted. Watching the film is less like observing an entertainment as it is about a life experience. It is truly heartwarming.



Christian Ganiere

According the Executive Producer and Director James Ganiere “I believe that Rekindling Christmas is a movie that people from all kinds of backgrounds and all walks of life can relate to.” I wanted to create a film where the family would sit down together watch the movie and enjoy the experience. Families would place it in their video libraries and every holiday season [it would be a tradition to watch Rekindling Christmas.](#) What makes this film unique is that it is a family friendly film, written, produced and directed by a family for families.

Thomas Hobson gives an inside look, “The cast and crew were exceptional! It was a joy filled and happy set. The director, James and the writer, Rebekah are dear friends of mine. I've had the good fortune of working with their son, and the lead of this film, Christian, several times and it's always a fun reunion. I can't wait to do it again. Plus the city of Bryan was so welcoming to us. I made a lot of new friends.”

Bryan Mayor, Andrew Nelson remarked, “We are so delighted with the movie Rekindling Christmas, which was filmed entirely in the City of Bryan and features our beautiful historic downtown. And the icing on the Christmas cake is that three of the main characters in the film call Bryan their home: Ashley Atwood, Michael Patrick Lane and Raini Rodriguez. We were honored to have Rio Vista Universal film this future classic Christmas movie in Bryan.” In addition to the actor so many other call Bryan home like Miranda Dodson whose has 4 incredible

Christmas song in the sound track.

"It's always challenging blazing a new trail and doing something that has never been done before and pushing a genre convention. It's important to have an exceptional team as we do to trust your vision especially when they only hint of it. The best part is when everyone is finally able to see what was previously trapped in my head, after all the hard work and hear how much people thoroughly enjoy it." stated director James Ganiere

James Ganiere is an executive producer in the Producers Guild of America, a Television Executive at the TV Academy and a judge for the Emmys. He heads several entities, Rio Vista Universal, a film and television development, production and distribution company based in Hollywood, CA. since 2014.

People can watch the trailer for Rekindling Christmas at:

<https://vimeo.com/ondemand/rekindlingchristmas> and then proceed to buy or rent the movie

For information about Rio Vista Universal Films and the upcoming release Rekindling Christmas go to:

www.riovistauniversal.com

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