

Tween Actress and Dancer Ella Grace Helton Stirs the Pot in 'Chosen Family' Film

Young Starlet Brings Charm and Mischief in Her First Leading Role, Opposite Heather Graham and John Brotherton

ATLANTA, GA, UNITED STATES, October 11, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- TV and film actress Ella Grace Helton, 11, keeps things lively in the feature film "Chosen Family," releasing Friday, Oct. 11 in limited theaters nationwide and streaming on video-on-demand platforms, including Amazon and [Apple TV+](#), plus all major cable providers. Audiences familiar with Helton's sweet take on Katie Townsend in the hit Netflix show "Sweet Magnolias" will be in for a treat as she brings a feisty Lily to life in her first feature film lead role.

Known for her comedic timing and quick wit, Helton made her feature film debut opposite Adam Sandler as Jessa Phillips/mini Harley Quinn in the endearing holiday favorite "Hubie Halloween" at the age of 6. That same year, she starred as series regular Emily Ryan in the ABC/Sony Pictures Television sitcom "United We Fall," opposite Will Sasso, Emmy winner Jane Curtin and Christina Vidal.

Helton's Lily presents some interesting situations for Anne, the "Chosen Family" protagonist played by the illustrious Heather Graham, who also is the film's writer and director. Lily is the daughter of Anne's love interest, Steve, played by John Brotherton ("Fuller House," "The Conjuring"). Helton said it was fun to call upon her love of dance for some of her most memorable moments in the film — a freeform dance-off with Anne, which is partially [featured in the trailer](#), and another scene that puts a spin on Helton's ballroom dancing skills.

"Ella Grace is a wonderful actress. I feel lucky to have worked with her," Graham said. "She is so talented in so many different ways. She's also a lovely human being and very hard-working. She



Heather Graham and Ella Grace Helton and

is great at comedy and also powerful and poignant in the dramatic moments. She is wise beyond her years, very professional and a fun person to be around. I know she's going to have an amazing career."

"It was hard to be mean (as Lily) to Heather because she is so nice and I've never been mischievous," said Helton, who also got to live out a dream by acting as Brotherton's daughter, as she is a huge fan of his show "Fuller House."

"He's an icon and I love him," Helton said. "When I found out I was going to be working with him, my jaw dropped all the way to the floor. I was really happy."

Helton's comedic genes meant she fit right in alongside the seasoned cast, which also includes Julia Stiles ("10 Things I Hate About You," "Save the Last Dance," "The Bourne Identity"), Thomas Lennon ("Reno 911!," "Night at the Museum"), Andrea Savage ("Tulsa King," "Veep"), Michael Gross ("Family Ties," "Tremors"), Odessa Rae (Oscar-winning producer of "Navalny") and Julie Halston ("Addams Family Values," "Sex in the City.")

Helton saw the film with three theater audiences before its wide release: She traveled to the "Chosen Family" world premiere at the Santa Barbara International Film Festival in February; to its April screening at the San Luis Obispo International Film Festival, where Graham was awarded the King Vidor Award for Excellence in Filmmaking; and to a September SAG-AFTRA Foundation screening in NYC.

"I had some great laughs in the theater from the audience, which made me feel good, and I hope audiences at home will laugh out loud, too," Helton said. "This is a fun one!"

Helton can next be seen as Katie Townsend in season 4 of "Sweet Magnolias" on Netflix in 2025. A release date hasn't been announced. Also a budding filmmaker, Helton follows this up by kicking off a busy festival season for the third short film she wrote and directed. "The Towel" will screen at three festivals the third weekend of October.

About Chosen Family:

Yoga teacher Anne is trying to find inner peace despite having a manic family, a miserable dating life, and an inability to say no that keeps her busy trying to fix everyone else's problems. Anne's friends set her up with Steve, who has an adorable daughter, Lily. But Anne soon finds herself in a battle with this 7-year-old for Steve's attention.

How to watch:

Apple TV+

Amazon

Fandango at Home

YouTube

All major cable and satellite providers

Theaters, showing daily Oct. 11-17:
Lumiere Cinema: Los Angeles, CA
Bel Air Cinema: Detroit, MI
Fieldstone 6: Hiawassee, GA
Cannonball 6: Lexington, MO
St. Michael Cinema: St. Michael, MN
CWTheaters Lincoln Mall 16: Lincoln, RI

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