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Imaginations Run Wild! Kidsfest Kicks Off 10 Monster Days of Screenings!

Chicago, IL – The CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL (**Thursday, October 19-Sunday, October 29**), the largest and longest running festival in the U.S. showcasing the best culturally diverse, non-violent, value affirming children's films, releases its 23rd year to Chicago audiences. Wildly imaginative films from 44 countries, including over 200 international films and 125 premieres bring the 2006 Festival to the forefront as the largest multicultural family event in Chicago!

New for 2006 -- The CICFF adds new screening times and locations! Kidsfest now presents special 9:30 a.m. screenings at Facets, catering to their youngest 2-5 year old "My First Movies" audiences! In addition, the Fest joins the north and south sides of the city, delivering a diverse array of the best children's films from around the world to its new theater partners, located in Wilmette and Beverly. With the Wilmette Theater (1122 Central Ave.) to the north and the Beverly Arts Center (2407 W. 111th St) to the south, these international films are sure to attract audiences from every neighborhood in Chicago. The DuSable Museum (740 E. 56th Place), a community institution dedicated to serving cultural and educational needs, lends its location for two special screenings.

On Thursday, October 19th, CICFF's Opening Night Gala, hosted by Radio Disney AM 1300's Patty Kan, known as **PK, The Cosmic DJ**, kicks off 10 monster days of screenings, hands-on workshops and fun-filled events. Opening night is sure to please the wildest imaginations as CICFF releases a special sneak preview of the Festival's award-winning short film offerings including two family-friendly films, "**First Flight**" by DreamWorks (their first "original character" short), and a beautifully animated rendition of "**The Little Match Girl**" by Disney.

The CICFF cinematic celebration continues with movie screenings on weekends - October 21st-22nd and October 28th -29th featuring films from 44 countries, 32 World Premieres, 33 North American Premieres, and 23 U.S. Premieres of the best children's movies in the world! Family films from Germany and France feature "**Kirikou and the Wild Beasts**", a brilliantly animated story set in Africa about a magical child who needs to outwit the jungle animals to save his village; "**The Wild Soccer Bunch**", a high energy adventure featuring a group of kids who have created their own soccer stadium and must fight to keep it open; and "**Little Polar Bear - The Mysterious Island**", a charming film for children 3-8, about two young polar bears and their good friend, Caruso, a baby penguin, who end up on a tropical island and have to find their way home. "With over 200 films from 44 countries representing the best of their craft from around the globe, it is my hope that Chicago audiences will come away from these screenings feeling enlightened, touched and inspired." states CICFF Programmer Deidre Searcy.

Festival screenings will be held at 4 separate locations over two weekends– October 21st-22nd and October 28th -29th. Facets Multi-Media (1517 W. Fullerton Ave., Chicago); Beverly Arts Center (2407 W. 111th St., Chicago); Wilmette Theater (1122 Central Ave., Wilmette). In addition to these three locations, two special screenings will be offered at the DuSable Museum (740 East 56th Place, Chicago).

Admission to film screenings is \$6 for children and \$8 for adults. Early Group discounts are available. Advance ticket sales for Facets, Wilmette, and DuSable Museum only are available online approximately October 1st via Ticketweb at www.cicff.org or by phone 1-866-468-3401 (Regular admission prices only. Additional fees will apply.) Advance ticket sales are available for the Beverly Arts Center at www.beverlyartcenter.org or by phone (773)-445-3838. A complete schedule is available on-line at www.cicff.org or for more information call Marita Blanken at (773)281-9075.

CICFF 23rd Anniversary Festival Highlights include:

- **Opening Night Gala featuring the Radio Disney AM 1300 Party Patrol with PK, The Cosmic DJ** is on Thursday, October 19th at the Thorne Auditorium on the downtown campus of Northwestern University, 375 East Chicago Avenue. The reception starts at 6 p.m. followed by 7:15 opening remarks and a special screening of the top short films in the Festival starting at 7:45 p.m. Admission is \$50 for adults, \$25 for children. For more information, call Kidsfest at (773)281-9075.
- **New Chicago area locations over two entertaining weekends** - October 21st-22nd and October 28th -29th to be held at Facets Multi-Media (1517 W. Fullerton Ave., Chicago); Beverly Arts Center (2407 W. 111th St., Chicago); Wilmette Theater (1122 Central Ave., Wilmette). In addition to these three locations, two special screenings will be offered at the DuSable Museum (740 East 56th Place, Chicago).
- **DuSable Museum** collaborates with CICFF to present two collections of shorts, featuring “*Proud to be Me: Stories of Africa*”, a thought provoking collection reflecting on the lives and experiences of African children, and “*Preacher Features*”, an engaging, thought-provoking collection respectful of children and sure to encourage genuine discussion.
- **Take One! Festival Workshops** These popular festival workshops, sponsored by the Hot Topic Foundation include intensive master classes in animation, sound production and acting led by industry professionals. 2006 Take One! Workshops include “*Casting Call! - Audition Workshop for Kids*”, led by Robert Latte of Chicago’s own REM Studios; “*So You Think You’re FUNNY?*” a comedy acting workshop led by Nathan Sears; and “*Speakin’ Out with Shadoe Stevens*” a workshop to train young people for voiceover work. On the movie-making side, the CICFF will offer two top-notch animation workshops, “*Dream Screen II*” and “*Get It Moving!*”, and a sound design workshop led by Lou Mallozzi of Experimental Sound Studio. Workshops are for kids aged 7 – 14 and are scheduled on both Festival weekends. Registration is required and fees range from \$20 - \$75 per participant. To register, call Kidsfest at (773) 281-9075.

- **My First Movie viewings** - For 2006, CICFF will screen “My First Movies” program nine times throughout the 10 days of the fest. This enormously popular series engages young children as active viewers in five captivating programs sure to involve a child’s wildest imagination! The “My First Movies” programs are indicated by a special icon.
- **Reel Kids – Top Kid Flicks** Created by kids for kids! Facets Cinema (1517 W. Fullerton Ave) is the featured location for these high energy live action and animated short films on Sunday, October 22nd at 5:00 p.m. and Sunday, October 29th at 1 p.m. This program of short films features the latest and greatest by young filmmakers under the age of 15 in Chicago and from around the world. Based on audience response this year several of these films will be selected to be part of an online streaming festival for young people.
- **Closing Ceremony**, A fest that opens must also close! Famed Radio/TV personality and children’s book author Shadove Stevens (*America’s Top 40; Hollywood Squares*) will host the 23rd Annual American Airlines Awards Presentation. Filmmakers, celebrities and friends will view the some of Fest’s best offerings as they applaud the big winners. A Gala Party follows immediately for autographs and food.
- **The 5th Annual 2006 Facets Screen Gems Gala** will honor Mr. and Mrs. Martin Koldyke with its *Facets Legend Award*, Thursday, September 28th at The Four Seasons Hotel, 120 East Delaware Place, in their Grand Ballroom, 8th floor. Cocktail Reception and Silent Auction starts at 6 p.m., followed by a Film and Honoree Presentation at 7 p.m. and Dinner, Music and Live Auction at 7:45 p.m. Benefactor, Patron, and Donor level tables and tickets are available. Call (773) 281-9075 for more information.

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