



See You At The Movies! The Inaugural Waco Family & Faith Film Festival Offers Inspiration for All

Posted by [Kymberlee](#) | Feb 5, 2020 |

Link to article: <https://www.thisgospellife.com/fun/see-you-at-the-movies-the-inaugural-waco-family-faith-film-festival-offers-inspiration-for-all/>



This is a story about the power of vision.

Subsequently, this is also a story about the inaugural Waco Family & Faith Film Festival that taking place February 6 – 8, 2020 in the Central Texas city of Waco.

“This festival is dedicated to empowering the creative spirit, serving with heart, and celebrating all.”

The film festival brings Hollywood to Waco with 60 films from around the world, three major studio releases, professional education workshops and community gatherings throughout the city that uphold the universal themes of family and faith. Designed to be inclusive and welcoming to all, the majority of the festival events are free, and the paid events – primarily the major studio releases that will be shown at Waco’s historic Hippodrome Theater, cost only five dollars.

Highlights of the [Waco Family & Faith Film Festival](#) include the premiere of Wild Fire Film’s *Miracle in East Texas*, produced by Sam Sorbo and directed by her husband Kevin Sorbo. Louis Gosset, Jr. co-stars in this movie based on a true story about two depression era con artists faced with a big decision when their new found faith collides with real oil gold they weren’t expecting to find. *Miracle in East Texas* will be screened on Friday, followed by a Q&A and product signing with the Sorbos. The Sorbos are also the recipients of the festival’s Champion Awards, along with Food Network star Gina Neely and David Littlewood, President and C.E.O. of TFNB Bank.

A staggering 1600 submissions from around the world were reviewed for the festival’s international film competition. “I was blown away by the number of entries,” says event founder and lead producer Dr. Tyrha Lindsey-Warren. “The films that we have chosen are high quality and represent a variety of genres. For instance, we have some gorgeous animated films, and a romantic comedy from the Ukraine that we just learned has already secured distribution for this summer. I really am humbled.”



Dr. Tyrha Lindsey-Warren, Baylor University professor and founder of the Waco Family & Faith Film Festival

Your Gifts Will Make Room for You.

Dr. Tyrha Lindsey-Warren has produced major international film festivals including the MegaFest International Faith and Family Film Festival and, most recently, Cincinatti's Over-the-Rhine International Film Festival. A graduate of Northwestern University, Lindsey-Warren began her entertainment career as an Academy of Arts and Sciences Fellow and went on to work at CAA, Quincy Jones*David Salzman Entertainment, NBC and more. She has "a gift for taking a kernel of an idea and bringing it to fruition successfully."

Two years ago, armed with an earned PhD from Rutgers University, Lindsey-Warren moved to Waco to teach at Baylor University where she is a clinical assistant professor of marketing. During this time, she was also producing the 5-day Over-the-Rhine Festival. Soon after, Lindsey-Warren wondered if all of her experiences producing festivals and events for major platforms around the country were equipping her to start a festival in her new hometown. At the beginning of 2019, she no longer wondered – she knew. "I believed I could bring a film festival here that would unite the community, and I felt like it was something that we needed," she says. "Festivals are typically very filmmaker focused, and perceived as high-brow. After being here a couple of years, I saw that there was room for a community-focused festival that is open to everyone, no matter their walk of life." Lindsey-

Warren is passionate and informed about the power of storytelling (her dissertation was on Empowered Storytelling), so she started the Waco Family and Faith Film Festival with great hope in the possibility that good stories told through film could bring the Waco community together, helping people begin to see one another with more compassion and treat one another with more grace.

“My dissertation examined how consumers could be empowered by a particular story, and illustrated how empowerment is another emotional connection that a storyteller can have. Empowerment is a complement to empathy...which is what motivates action, whether it is buying something, watching something, sharing on social media, etc. The festival is presenting empowered storytelling...with hopes that attendees will be positively changed and transformed, because that is what storytelling can do.”

“God sent me a ram in the bush.”

In April of 2019, Lindsey-Warren began moving forward with “no money, no sponsorship, no nothing.” Her momentum was fueled by vision and faith. She started reaching out to associates, and they came on board to assist. Some actually “just started created things,” like the initial logo and signage. “I knew what I was doing, and I knew God would make a way,” she says.

She soon started pitching potential funders. They didn’t initially understand her vision, and told her no. Her upbeat response to each proposal rejection was “that’s okay, I’ll see you at the movies!” At this point, money was required for deposits and other major expenditures for the festival, so Lindsey-Warren began pulling from personal savings. Her first major sponsorship would come after a chance social meeting with a bank president. She told him about the festival and the challenges she was having raising money. That bank president provided a \$30,000 sponsorship. “It was like God had rewarded my diligence; that was my ram in the bush.” In November, the first arts organization that declined her pitch came on board as a sponsor as well.

One of the first people Lindsey-Walker shared her idea with was her pastor, Jimmy D. Hunter of Toliver Chapel Missionary Baptist Church. His response: “if you have the vision you can make it happen.”

Fueled by vision, faith and purpose, The Waco Family & Faith Film Festival is happening indeed, and is sure to be an uplifting and fun event.

“This is not a black festival and it is not a white festival; it is a humanity festival,” says Lindsey-Warren. “Through this event, we hope to open minds and hearts for the better.”

Go to www.wacofamilyandfaithfilmfestival.com for full schedule.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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I am a born again believer in the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I am also a public relations professional, a writer, and an educator. In each role, I aim to tell the stories that need to be heard, and help others find a way to do the same. ThisGospelLife.com was created to celebrate the Christian lifestyle and provide a counter-narrative to how people of faith are represented in the media.