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## **Women In Film PSA Focuses on ending Domestic Violence**

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Women In Film PSA Focuses on ending Domestic Violence.

By Julie Nicholson

Photos by Julie Nicholson,

Anthony Ferranti Jr. and

Dana Schwarz



"Canvas", a Public Service Announcement produced by Women In Film for the charity "A Window Between Worlds" wrapped principle photography on Sunday, March 19, 2006, at Metropolitan State Mental Hospital, (yes mental hospital), in Norwalk California.

"A Window Between Worlds" is a non-profit organization dedicated to using the transformative healing powers of art to help end domestic violence. Since 1991 AWBW has used creative expression as a healing tool to over 20,000 battered women and their children in crisis shelters, outreach centers and transitional homes throughout the United States. Many of these shelters have found the AWBW program to be among one of the most effective tools in the healing process providing survivors of domestic violence a safe environment along with the hope and education they need to change their lives.

The figures were staggering to us. Every 9 seconds a women is battered somewhere in the United States. We read quotes from some of these women and their children about how this program had changed their lives. The quotes from the children were most heart wrenching.

"Did you know that my Dad hit me and it hurt? I learned in Windows that is was OK for me to tell you that." - RJ, age 3

From the moment Executive Producer, Judith Parker Harris, Producer, Erika Gardner, Director Arlene Bogna, and writer, Julie Nicholson, (me), entered into the sunny, white, lofty space of the AWBW headquarters in Venice we were overwhelmed with the loving feelings of their environment. Cathy Salser, the Director of the charity, and the women she works with not only gave us a window into the charity but they gave us a window into the souls of the women and children survivors whose art work adorned the walls around us. Their generosity in sharing their stories, feelings and emotions was more than we could have hoped for. And as the writer of the PSA they made my job a joy.





"When the mission of a charity, (AWBW), comes together with the vision of a Director, (Arlene Bogna), and the right creative team materializes - magic happens. I saw it right before my eyes, and truly that is why the PSA Program began and continues to thrive for 12 years and counting." - Judith Parker Harris, Founding Chair of the PSA Program and AWWB Executive Producer.

Judith provided us with our objectives. In 30 seconds we needed to express; a clear understanding that this is a healing program for women and their children, a clear concept of what the charity does and who they are, and a clear call to action for the viewing audience.

Arlene's artistic vision was a combination of deep somber emotion and hopeful revelations. Actress Giselle Tongi beautifully portrayed a mom survivor who can visit the pains of her abusive past while living in the new world she has created for herself and her son, played by Manuel Jimenez Jr. Actor Anthony Ferranti Jr. left us all speechless with his chilling portrayal of the abusive man from her past.

"I'm very interested in complex female characters. The challenge on this project was to show an empowered, deep woman and mother, a hero, if you will, who protected herself and her child. We began with the idea that art can heal, and we discovered that the true message is that the soul is beyond abuse." - Arlene Bogna, Director

The shoot day was warm outside and cold and creepy inside. (Remember abandoned State Mental Hospital). We shivered all day not quite certain if it was because the building was old and abandoned or just plain haunted.

Every location has its unique challenges and at Metropolitan State Hospital it was the large eerie day room reminiscent of a scene out of *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*. Production Designer Peggy Wang, who recently completed work on the feature film *Phat Girlz*, and her crew, magically transformed the institutional space into a lovely home. The set design included beautiful modern expressionist paintings painted by Arlene, our multi talented director.

Crafts Services, led by Kara Luiz, kept us well fed and had plenty of hot drinks on hand to warm us up but some of us couldn't quite let go of the idea that the cold breezes blowing past had something to do with the locked rooms of the abandoned corridors with the little square windows that still gave off the vision of some poor souls nose pressed against it screaming to get out. Ok, maybe that was just me and my writer's imagination. It didn't help any that the Hospital monitor had plenty of eerie stories he was willing to share of other film shoots. He claimed that after "The Ring" wrapped they could not get an old wall phone to stop ringing and when they called the phone company for help they were told there wasn't even a line connected! Oh go ahead, let your imagination run wild!

Since my job as writer was already complete I had the privilege to observe and document the day in photographs and stand in awe of the amazing job Producer Erika Gardner and her AP Claudia Zalokar did at keeping it all organized. As Arlene orchestrated her creative vision her pre-production hard work was evident in every shot as Randy Paik, the Director of Photography, caught her vision on film. With each shot Arlene's storyboard came to life spilling over with artistic emotion. We all knew our goals were accomplished.



And as the sun set on Metropolitan State Hospital, (yes, it got spookier in the dark), another successful Women In Film PSA shoot wrapped!

"It was an honor to work with Paul Hirsch on this project." - Arlene Bogna, Director

Postproduction was blessed as the incredibly talented and acclaimed Film Editor Paul Hirsch, editor of the award winning film "Ray", edited this project. The music was beautifully composed by the gifted Rob Simonsen.

WIF and the entire "A Window Between Worlds" PSA team would like to thank everyone involved in this labor of love for their time, energy and hard work. The production team, technical team, grips, electric crew, sound, casting, talent, vendors, equipment providers, postproduction, and location and everyone not previously mentioned. Gerri Wormser, Craig Wells, Kristen Wagner, Pauline Gray, Madelynn Amalfitano, Laura Brody, Jacklynn Carl, Alpha Blair, Monica Daniel, Larry Fellows, Warren Koga, Peter Schlanser, Krystian Czajkowski, Gina Levy, Dimitri Khramov, Chris Antonini, Edward Turner, Lynn Reines, Karen Barry and Kate Christensen.

We thank our awesome Executive Producer, Judith Parker Harris and the amazing Roxanne Lane, WIF PSA Program Coordinator and the extraordinary charity, "A Window Between Worlds" for allowing us the privilege to be involved in this important program.

"It was an amazing experience to work with WIF and such a talented team of women. When we first saw the storyboards and heard the words we were all so moved we cried. We are so excited to have this new tool that will enable us to reach so many more women and children. When I saw the piece I was amazed that so much of what we wanted to say could be communicated in only 15 seconds. It has been such a special and wonderful experience. Thank you all so much!" - Cathy Salsar, Director, A Window Between Worlds

And to those vendors that went above and beyond, we so appreciate you! Marrick Production Services, Chainsaw, Jeff Hoffman, Gus, John, Ben, Caleb, and Ryan. Encore, Jackie, Tim and Johnnie. Modern Video Film, Ken, Julie, Kim and Howard. Private Island Audio, Michael, Robyn, Sam, Andrew, Ian and Brigitte. Deluxe, Gail Sanchez at Kodak, Clairmont Camera, Chapman & Leonard, Rosco, Graphaids, Galpin Motors, Universal Property Dept., Atomic Production Supplies, and the CA Film Commission. And my daughter Dana for being a fabulous stand in.


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