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**Attention Filmmakers, Wannabe Filmmakers,
and Actors Longing to Star on the Big (or Small) Screen:
*Pitch, Fund, Cast is the panel discussion for you!***

WAVERLY, PA (March 7, 2019) – As part of this year’s Northeast Pennsylvania Film Festival, slated for March 22-24, Waverly native and Abington Heights graduate Lisa Marie Stetler, the force behind the animated film *Ferdinand*, will lead a panel discussion, *Pitch, Fund, Cast*, that will include Mountain Top filmmaker Chris Fetchko and New York City casting director Mia Cusumano.

Pitch, Fund, Cast will be held Saturday, March 23, 10:30 a.m., at Posh at the Scranton Club. Tickets are \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door and includes brunch.

“I read the book and I immediately saw it as a movie,” Stetler says of the popular 1936 children’s classic, ‘The Story of Ferdinand,’ by Munro Leaf. Not one to take no for an answer, Stetler pitched her idea to turn the beloved tale of a gentle bull who loved to smell the flowers into a movie to countless industry execs until 20th Century Fox and Blue Sky Studios signed on, releasing the animated film in 2017 with Stetler serving as producer.

During the panel discussion, Stetler will offer insight into “pitching” films and will share her vigilant crusade to bring *Ferdinand*’s anti-bullying message to the big screen, which has certainly paid off. Not only was it a global box office smash, it was nominated for a host of awards, including Golden Globe and Academy Award nominations. “I knew I was supposed to do this,” Stetler says.

A prolific area movie maker, Chris Fetchko (director, writer and producer) is prepping for his fourth feature film project, *Blinded by Ed*, a dark romantic comedy, and a fifth feature film project, *Island People*, his first foray into the horror genre. “I’m excited to get back on set again,” Fetchko says.

Fetchko is following up on the heels on his indie festival darling, *All in Time*, which won numerous awards including Best Director at the Milan International Film Festival (and will be screened Saturday, March 23rd, 9 p.m., at the Ritz Theater in Scranton as part of this year's festival).

Fetchko began his film career by co-writing and producing *Everything's Jake*, starring Ernie Hudson, Debbie Allen, and Phyllis Diller. He then went on to produce *Eavesdrop* with Wendie Malick, Ted McGinley and Anna Chlumsky. During the panel discussion, Fetchko will offer advice on ways to fund film projects from beginning to end.

New York City-based casting director Cusumano, formerly of Old Forge, began her career as the casting coordinator for ABC's Primetime Casting Office and her credits range from primetime television pilots and series to studio feature films. Her most recent film projects include *Lez Bomb*, *My Cousin's Wedding*, *I Feel Pretty*, *Centigrade*, *Bang*, and *Antarctica*.

"We can tell a good actor even if they are green," Cusumano says. "You may just need to study more or audition more or experience more to get seasoned. So we may wait to bring you in, but eventually we'll bring you in," she assures.

In addition to providing insight on casting for filmmakers, Cusumano will offer advice to actors on the auditioning process and will be accepting headshots and resumes from aspiring actors following the panel discussion and brunch.

The Northeast Pennsylvania Film Festival, presented by the Waverly Community House and supported by the F. Lamot Belin Arts Foundation, is dedicated to nurturing emerging and independent filmmakers from Northeast Pennsylvania and around the world. Now in its third year, this year's festival will screen more than 20 films, including features, horror and animated shorts, documentaries, and international films along with an opening night gala, artist tributes, presentations and panel discussions, and the ever-popular Mystery Box Challenge.

A limited number of All-Access Film Festival Passes are available for \$125 in advance and includes admission to the Opening Night Gala, the *Pitch, Fund, Cast Kickoff Brunch*, the Charles Brandt presentation *When Scorsese Calls*, as well as all films and other events. For more information or to purchase All-Access passes, individual tickets or day passes, please visit nepafilmfestival.com.

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ABOUT THE NORTHEAST PENNSYLVANIA FILM FESTIVAL

Established in 2016 by the Waverly Community House, The Northeast Pennsylvania Film Festival is supported by the F. Lamot Belin Arts Foundation and its mission to "build community through the arts." Dedicated to nurturing emerging and independent filmmakers from Northeast Pennsylvania and around the world, the three-day festival correspondingly promotes cultural awareness and appreciation of film as an art form by exposing local audiences to unique and original cinema. For more information or to purchase

tickets for events scheduled March 22 through 24, 2019, visit nepafilmfestival.com. Also follow Northeastern Pennsylvania Film Festival on Facebook and Instagram.

ABOUT OUR SPONSORS

The third annual Northeast Pennsylvania Film Festival, a project of Scranton Tomorrow, is sponsored by The Lackawanna County Council of the Arts, WVIA Public Media, the People's Security Bank and Trust, and ATR Properties.