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"The Search for Santa Paws"

A Family Holiday Experience on Blu-Ray and DVD



By Francine Brokaw

This prequel to last year's "Santa Buddies" shows the birth of Santa Paws and his relationship with Santa Claus. Actually, this is two stories in one. The first revolves around Santa and Santa Paws as they take their first trip together to the city. Due to an accident, Santa loses his memory and little Paws goes in search of his best friend.

The second part of this story revolves around an orphanage for young girls, and one little girl in particular. Quinn (Kaitlyn Maher) is newly orphaned and sent to live with the other girls. On the outside this looks like a caring, loving place. But there are shades of "Annie," as the woman in charge is strict, ruthless and uncaring. Quinn is a kind-hearted little girl whose innocence gets her through this difficult time.

Kaitlyn Maher (who turns 7 in January) is a talented little singer, and the youngest contestant to reach the top 10 on "America's Got Talent." Last year she provided the voice of Tiny, the sweet little puppy in "Santa Buddies." This year she is in front of the camera and stealing the hearts of audiences.

In an exclusive interview, director Robert Vince told me, "I saw her initially a number of years ago on 'America's Got Talent' and she was singing and I just couldn't believe it. She is really an uber-talent. This child has Shirley Temple qualities." He adores Kaitlyn. "I have to admit [this movie] probably wouldn't have been a musical if it weren't for Kaitlyn. I wouldn't have thought of 'Annie' if it weren't for her."

Vince is responsible for the "Buddy" films, and although the adage in Hollywood is to avoid working with kids and animals, he wouldn't have it any other way. "Working with the animals is the function of the trainers. I don't consider them to be a problem at all." About working with kids

he adds, "They come to set and they're happy and they're having the greatest time of their lives. Adult actors aren't always like that. They consider it to be their job. When you're working with children it's a pretty happy set, and when you have animals and puppies, all those elements are great to be around in general, let alone a work environment."

Vince's two children were his inspiration to make the original "Air Bud" movie, and since then he has devoted his career to making family films. He would like to create annual Christmas films, like last year's "Santa Buddies" and this year's "The Search for Santa Paws." As he explained, "There aren't really any strong Christmas movies that parents can count on coming out every year and I would love to do that."

This movie is filled with music, fun and family values. "What we hoped we'd do in this movie," said Vince, "was to give parents an explanation for why there are so many Santas out there. We explain in the movie that they're all ambassadors for the Santa Cause, so we hope parents catch onto that. There's only one Santa Claus but there are many ambassadors for the Santa Cause." The next time your kids ask why there is a Santa on every corner, you will have the answer!

The holiday season is special for Robert Vince. "Christmas is absolutely a time of year when family is always together." He cherishes his time with his family and is a family man who has devoted his career to making good family films.

"So many of the messages of this movie are centered around kindness and hope and generosity and thinking of others rather than thinking of yourself, and to extend that beyond the weeks around Christmas."

"The Search for Santa Paws" is a true family-friendly film that will put everyone in the holiday spirit.



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