

'Finding Faith' Film Taps Liberty Students, Alum

Lynchburg, Va., has become the epicenter for the upcoming faith-based film *Finding Faith*, and Liberty University is right at the heart of the project.

Finding Faith aims to educate families on the importance of Internet safety through a powerful drama based on the real-life story of a girl who was abducted after falling prey to a skillful online predator. It stars Erik Estrada, a Hollywood legend and activist best known for his role on the 1970s and '80s television series *CHiPS*. The film is set to release in early 2013 after a nationwide screening tour later this year.

From shooting to editing and post-production, all stages of production are taking place in Central Virginia with Lynchburg as its hub. Liberty has become a vital source of support for the movie, providing locations, housing and equipment, as well as a deep talent pool from which the movie has drawn much of its cast, crew and support staff.

"We have been tremendously blessed," said Christina Day, co-executive producer and production designer. "The community has really rallied around the film." Day also works at Liberty in Student Accounts.

More than 90 percent of the people involved with the film are affiliated with Liberty in some way (as alumni, students, faculty and staff, etc.), said alumnus Jason Campbell ('93), *Finding Faith's* executive producer and executive director of the Safe Surfin' Foundation, which is backing the film. The movie has 12 volunteer teams involving more than 400 people and a cast and crew of more than 200.

Stephanie Bettcher, a senior worship major at Liberty, landed the role of the film's title character, Faith Garrett.

"I feel very blessed and excited to be a part of this film ... this role is a new and exciting challenge for me," she said.

Bettcher said sex trafficking and Internet predators is a real and widespread problem in our country and she is "thrilled to be a part of a movie that will spread a Christian message and truth that by having faith in Christ, hope and peace can be found even when the world seems like it is crashing down."

The film is spanning generations, uniting the Liberty family for a common cause.

Alumna Kim Miller ('93) fell in love with her husband and the Lord while she was a student at Liberty. Her 12-year-old daughter, Ellie, is playing the role of Faith's sister, Samantha.

"It is really exciting to see Liberty really become such an international presence and just grow and thrive," Kim Miller said. "What I am seeing on the set is (the film's) message resonating with the cast ... It's been pretty inspiring."

On July 12, Estrada visited Liberty President Jerry Falwell Jr. at his office and personally thanked him for all of the support and told him that with all of its resources and facilities, bolstered by its strong values, Liberty has the potential to become the "Christian movie capital."

He also shared his passion for spreading awareness to families about the dangers of Internet predators.

"I enjoyed speaking with Erik and was impressed with his sincerity," Falwell said. "I believe Sheriff Mike Brown and Erik Estrada should be commended for raising awareness about the dangers of the Internet to children."

Falwell discussed with Estrada his excitement for the expansion of Liberty's new film school and its potential to impact Hollywood with filmmakers who have been trained as

Champions for Christ.

The film is inspired by the experiences of Bedford County Sheriff Mike Brown, who headed one of the nation's first Internet Crimes Against Children task forces. Through its gripping narrative and powerful message, the film shows how faith can pull families together through tragedy and celebrates the challenging work and accomplishments of Virginia's law enforcement, especially in regards to Internet crimes.

"The Lynchburg region is blessed to have what I call the world's best sheriff, Mike Brown," Falwell said.

Under Brown's leadership, the ICAC has maintained a 100 percent conviction rate through strict attention to rules and procedure.

"To the sexual predator, we are the wolves," Brown said at a press conference announcing the film in April. "We have in a number of ways set the bar for other task forces, I am very proud of them."

Campbell and the production staff is working hard to ensure the film reaches as many people as possible. They are currently discussing a theatrical release strategy and have already planned a screening tour at churches, beginning with a premier night at TRBC in December. The church is also helping to develop a supplemental youth study guide, "Caught in the Web," that will highlight the film's message incorporating segments of the film.