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MSU FILM ALUMNI RECRUITED FOR FEATURE DOCUMENTARY IN CHINA THROUGH HATCH

Graduates Excited About Film Opportunity Of A Lifetime

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Four Montana State University film school Alumni have been recruited to form the core of the crew for ELEVATION, a feature documentary. Connected through the mentorship of the annual HATCHfest (HATCHfest.org, Sept 22-25), Royce Gorsuch, Colin Arndt, Matt O'Conner, and Zack Kahl, will accompany Producer and Director Alison Watson, to the western Sichuan Province in China. The experience will be a once-in-a-lifetime journey. More information about the project can be found on www.foursistersfilm.com.

ELEVATION, a Four Sisters Productions, will start shooting a feature length documentary in the Four Sisters region this fall. The story will follow the epic adventure of two world-renowned climbers, Toby Grohne and Jesse Huey, as they train for a first ascent of the Northwest ridge of the famed Mount Siguniang. The athletes will also spend months in Rilong, a Tibetan village, helping the locals learn guiding techniques and recovering from the 2008 Sichuan earthquake.

“ELEVATION is a story that looks at courage and determination with these elite athletes, the people in Rilong rebuilding their homes and the beautiful mix of Tibetans, Chinese and Americans working together. It is a story about the human spirit and it's ability to love, fear, support, and overcome.” states Director and Producer Alison Watson.

The climbers learned about the Four Sisters region from a dear friend, Dylan Johnson, after his first ascent of a route on Siguniang in 2008, having endured days without food, water and sleep during a whiteout. Dylan lost 30 pounds over the course of the 10-day ascent. ELEVATION will follow the men as they meet with the Ma Family, who have spent their entire lives in Rilong, in the shadow of the “Great Protector.” The mountain lived up to its Tibetan name in 2008 deflecting the most lethal blows of a massive earthquake. According to Mr. Ma, not a single person was killed in the small town of Rilong during the earthquake.

Toby and Jesse will take offerings for the “Great Protector” and deliver it to the summit for the people of Rilong and the Ma Family. Before leaving on their adventure, the climbers and the Ma Family really connect while learning to build an eco-tourism industry for the condemned village. The Ma Family, made up of a Buddhist matriarch and her Muslim husband, warmly welcome the Americans and their Chinese liaisons into their makeshift hut since the quake and become quick friends.

The heart of their expedition is to develop a sustainable alpine school in Rilong, where they will spend months preparing for their ascent. With the help of Dylan, they train the locals in

avalanche rescue and guiding techniques and working with children and families through outdoor workshops. The Four Sisters region is a growing Chinese outdoor tourist destination.

“Since my MSU days, I have been preparing for a moment like this. This incredible film has the element of adventure, art, culture, and most importantly, the inspiring power of friendship. I am excited for the road ahead and for the opportunity to create something amazing, thanks to HATCHfest in Bozeman,” said MSU Alumni Royce Gorsuch.

After the theatre and DVD release, Four Sisters Productions will launch an innovative educational tour accompanying the film promoting community service for youth and others while incorporating their passions. The program will exhibit the film, present celebrity and local speakers, and provide a template for teachers to implement service-learning strategies. To learn more about the film or how to support the school and outreach tour, please contact info@foursistersfilm.com.

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