

# Lifestyles

Thursday, November 15, 2007

Page 6

## Nonprofit organization crafts short films to inspire others

By Courtney Willis

Two strangers living miles apart shared recurring dreams they identified as visions of how to help humanity. Today, Debra Roberts and Linda McLean execute these visions through Little Pearls, their nonprofit organization.

"I had a strong nighttime dream that gave me very specific guidance on creating 30-second television spots," said Roberts, founder of Little Pearls. "It gave me a theme, style, content and technical pointers. It was quite a night. This resulted in the founding of Little Pearls, a nonprofit that creates tiny films that open hearts and minds."

Little Pearls creates and distributes short films. The films consist of people, animals, relationships, current events and inspiring ideas that are meant to touch people's hearts.

McLean, executive director, said the idea is for one to see a film and get inspired. The inspiration can help that person do better or feel compassion for someone or something to which they might not normally pay attention.

After Roberts and McLean met each other through mutual friends, they discovered their love for helping others.

"I recall meeting her for the first time in my living room. As she introduced herself and her interest in Little Pearls, my heart burst wide open," Roberts said. "I realized in that first meeting that someone with a similar vision had come into my life, someone who was probably going to stay. We walked into the partnership slowly but surely."

Little Pearls depends on dona-



Pinkey, an orphaned baby owl, was brought to Clyde Hollifield for rehabilitation in the spring of 2005. Pinkey is filmed both while in rehab and after his release. He now lives in the wild, as is meant.

tions to pay its technical workers, such as the cameramen and editors. McLean said a lot of places give them discounts because it is for a good cause.

So far the organization has produced several films, and one film, "Wild and Free: A Screech Owl Named Pinkey," appeared in the Asheville Film Festival.

The documentary focused on Clyde Hollifield, 63, a certified pet therapist who rehabilitates birds of prey, like raptors. Hollifield rescued Pinkey, a screech owl, and taught him how to survive on his own. He eventually set Pinkey free along with another screech owl.

"The film covered a period of two years of raptor rehab even though it is only a 30-second tiny pearl of a film," Hollifield said.

Hollifield is also involved in the Read to a Dog program for children. The first film Hollifield did with Little Pearls was "Dr. Willie," in which Hollifield did the voice-over about Dr. Willie, a three-legged handicapped dog.

Hollifield ends his film by saying, "If a little three-legged dog can help others, well, maybe we all can. There was Lassie, Rin-Tin-Tin and now Dr. Willie."

The short film was made to show people the possibilities of life and

the importance of helping others, even if challenges stand in the way.

"If you care about Willie and see what he can do, then you may see the amazing possibilities for the animals you encounter or have in your life," McLean said.

"Reaching for the Stars" is another inspiring short film about a 17-year-old girl named Amanda who is wheelchair-bound. As an infant, Amanda suffered a brain injury, leaving her challenged but extremely determined in life, according to Patty Levesque, her mother.

Roberts said the idea for Amanda's pearl came to her in a



Above, "Great Katie" Latimore turned 105 in November of 2005. She mostly spoke of God, love and her family. Left, Willie was hit by a truck and left for dead. He was found, rehabilitated and now works as a pet therapist for the Delta Society, despite the fact he has only three legs.

dream. Amanda is focused and inspiring, and she pursues her dreams with a passion, Roberts said. Amanda graduated from UNC Greensboro and now has her own apartment in Asheville.

"I am very proud of her, and it meant a lot to the both of us to see the finished pearl," Levesque said.

The video consisted of Amanda riding in her wheelchair on the stage of her high school. Because Little Pearls is nonprofit and has a strict budget, Amanda's friend did her voice-over for free. The high school also let them use the stage for free.

and volunteers to help keep the business going.

"Several things made me want to volunteer. The first was meeting Linda and sensing something very special about her. She just radiates good energy," Dana Hoffman said. "When she told me about Little Pearls, I really liked the concept of positive media clips. Then when I saw how beautifully they were done, I knew I wanted to support these projects. The media really needs more of this sort of thing."

For more information, visit [www.littlepearls.org](http://www.littlepearls.org)

## WALKING ARTWORK



## Come Support your Bulldog Ballers!

UNC Asheville vs. East Tennessee State

Saturday, Nov. 24 at 4:30 p.m.

