



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***Sticks and Stones* is the 2009 Shaw Rocket Prize Winner!**

***This heart-warming family movie wins \$50,000 prize for best Canadian children's program***

Toronto, ON – May 6, 2009 – At an industry event held at The Carlu in Toronto, the **5<sup>th</sup> annual Shaw Rocket Prize** recognized and celebrated Canada's top four programs of 2009 targeted to youth (13-17) and families. *Fred's Head*, *How She Move*, *Instant Star*, and ***Sticks and Stones*** all contended for the **\$50,000 prize**.

*"All of our 2009 finalists were exceptionally innovative and positive in their tackling of the complex issues facing young people and their families today. We congratulate these truly aspirational and inspiring productions and the talented people from our production industry who made them possible!"*

- **Annabel Slaight**, Chair, Shaw Rocket Fund

The Shaw Rocket Prize is pleased to announce that the **winner** of the 2009 Rocket Prize is ***Sticks and Stones***!

*"It is a great honour to receive the Shaw Rocket Prize. **Sticks and Stones** sends an important message to all ages, especially the younger generations. Therefore, this award is especially meaningful to us, because it is granted by a jury of young viewers."*

- **Josée Vallée**, Producer, *Sticks and Stones*

The Shaw Rocket Prize is unique in that Canadian children pick the winner. Over 700 Grade 6, 7 and 8 students from schools across Canada participating in the Royal Conservatory of Music's innovative Learning Through The Arts Program (LTTA) voted ***Sticks and Stones*** this year's best program for Canadian youth and families.

*"**Sticks and Stones** had deep emotion, a great script, good camera work and the most connections. I love how there was conflict, emotions and I just couldn't stop watching. This movie had me hooked. It is truly one of a kind."*

- **Scarlett**, Student Juror, Richmond, BC

Produced by **Josée Vallée**, **André Béraud** and **Richard Speer** of Cirrus Communications, Québec, and **Timothy M. Hogan** and **Rick LeGuerrier** of Dream Street Pictures, New Brunswick, ***Sticks and Stones*** tells the real-life story

of courageous Canadian pee wee hockey players who work to build lasting bonds of friendship and reconciliation with their American counterparts during the politically turbulent time of the Iraq War.

**Sticks and Stones** has also won “Best Foreign Feature Drama” at the International Family Film Festival (IFFF) in 2008 and has received Gemini and CFTPA Indie Award nominations.

The international jury of industry experts who selected the finalists for the 2009 Shaw Rocket Prize was composed of **Deirdre Brennan** (Director of Programming, Nickelodeon Australia), **Geoffrey Goodwin** (Head of BBC Switch), **Bob Higgins** (Head of Creative, W!LDBRAIN), and **Adina Pitt** (VP, Content Acquisitions and Co-Productions, Cartoon Network and Boomerang).

*“Sticks and Stones is a wonderful story for the entire family. I was so impressed by the fact that this one boy felt so empowered to make a change ... I think it’s a very uplifting story but grounded in reality ... Very powerful, very entertaining.”*

- **Deirdre Brennan**, International Juror, Director of Programming, Nickelodeon Australia

#### **About Shaw Rocket Prize**

Established in 2005, as the largest award of its kind in Canada, the Shaw Rocket Prize is open to all independent, Canadian producers of children’s programming. Now in its fifth year, the Prize is designed to fuel the Canadian children’s production industry by supporting and celebrating the country’s best kids programming.

#### **The Shaw Rocket Fund**

The Shaw Rocket Fund is a permanent, independently governed, not-for-profit corporation that is dedicated to supporting the production of high quality Canadian children’s, youth and family television programming. Since 1998, the Shaw Rocket Fund has proudly invested \$77 million towards this important genre. Contributors to the Fund are Shaw Communications, Shaw Pay Per View Ltd., Shaw Direct, EastLink Cablesystems, and Delta Cable Communications Ltd.

For more information about the Shaw Rocket Fund and the 2009 Shaw Rocket Prize – its finalists, its winner, and its selection process - visit [www.rocketfund.ca](http://www.rocketfund.ca).