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Why do Christmas Books Make Great Movies?

CEDARVILLE, OHIO – In a society where families are seemingly pulled apart on a daily basis, it's encouraging to read stories of healthy family relationships. Perhaps, there's no better time to hear of these stories than at Christmas.

So, when New York Times and USA Today best-selling author Donna VanLiere began work on her latest book, "The Christmas Town," bringing family back into Christmas was her obvious theme. Especially since five of her holiday books, "The Christmas Shoes," "The Christmas Blessing," "The Christmas Hope," "The Christmas Secret," and "The Christmas Note" all became best-sellers and made into high-profile movies.

"The Christmas Town" was released October 18 by St. Martin's Press and in it, VanLiere weaves messages of love, hope and family into the heart-warming story — perfect storylines for the holiday season.

"Christmas is not a season of joy for many people, and those people can sometimes view Christmas as being for those who have it all together, whose lives are picture-perfect," said VanLiere, describing why she has focused on writing Christmas-themed books. "Christmas is for the broken and the brokenhearted. It's for the prodigal, the lonely, the desperate and the hopeless, and I try to write about real-life situations that are infused with hope and grace."

VanLiere believes her books can be a way for people to see hope and grace exists, even if a person's life doesn't appear to be "all together."

"Grace is always within reach; our problem is that we often don't recognize it or reach out for it," said VanLiere. "My goal [in writing books] is to help the reader identify with characters and circumstances that the characters find themselves in. I always want to present real-life situations, stories that prove that life is hard but also prove that hope is alive!"

In "The Christmas Town," VanLiere tells the story of Lauren Gabriel, who spent much of her childhood living in foster homes. Even after more than a decade apart from her mother, Lauren never loses her desire to be reunited with family. Being home at Christmas would be the perfect gift for her.

"Although Lauren has been with some good families along the way, she has never felt part of a family," VanLiere said of the main character in the book. "As the story unfolds, it's my desire for the reader to know that long after we've given up, God is still working in our lives." This young girl who has struggled all her life for that place of belonging will feel a love she's never experienced before. The sense of belonging and being loved is what so many are desperate for today."

VanLiere will speak in chapel at Cedarville University on November 14. At this event, which is open to the public, VanLiere will share her experiences, including her love of sharing hope to people through her writing.

About Donna VanLiere

Donna VanLiere graduated from Cedarville University in 1989 with a degree in communication. She is a New York Times and USA Today best-selling author and gifted conference speaker who has published 10 titles including "The Christmas Shoes" and "The Christmas Blessing," both of which were adapted into movies (starring Rob Lowe, Kimberly Williams-Paisley and Neil Patrick Harris) and garnered big ratings for CBS

television. Lifetime Television adapted "The Christmas Hope" (starring Madeline Stowe) and premiered it December 2009. Donna's non-seasonal novel, "The Angels of Morgan Hill," has captured the same warmth as her Christmas books and continues to please loyal and new fans alike.

VanLiere is the recipient of a Retailer's Choice Award for Fiction, a Dove Award, a Silver Angel Award, an Audie Award for best inspirational fiction, a nominee for a Gold Medallion Book of the Year and was inducted into the Ohio Foundation of Independent Colleges Hall of Excellence, joining such luminaries as Coretta Scott King, Hugh Downs, Gen. Loren Reno and Senator John Glenn. VanLiere is an in-demand conference speaker having appeared at countless women's and family events, including select Women of Faith conferences.