

# Local Roots Bring Movie

**'Christmas with Felicity' is set in the fictional town of Grove, its businesses and**

The classic story of; 'small town girl moves to big city, then loses in love and business, only to move back to said smalltown, where she meets the man of her dreams and finds a new lease on life and livelihood' - unfolded this spring in a movie filmed in downtown Long Grove. Area residents and visitors may have seen a glimpse or even a full shot of the movie trucks, cameras, lights or action in front of Paddy's on the Square/The Irish Boutique, the covered bridge, The Village Tavern and many other downtown spots. The movie, 'Christmas with Felicity', is set during Christmastime, and includes some good old-fashioned nostalgia with a strong helping of a renewed holiday spirit for its star character, Felicity.



So how did the movie's producers happen upon Long Grove in the first place? The two have ties to the area that acquainted them with the charms of downtown Long Grove, which made it the absolute ideal spot for this Hallmark-esque movie - set in the fictional town of Aspen Grove, Wisconsin.

John W. Boshier and Chris Charles of Throughline Films are the producers behind this holiday-feature; Charles was born in Arlington Heights, while Boshier was raised in Hoffman Estates. The two met in 2005 while attending Columbia College in Chicago and began working together on a variety of film projects; Throughline Films was founded in 2012. Together the men have seen several successes over the last decade, including producing the mafia thriller 'Chicago Overcoat' - which was sold to Showtime, 20th Century Fox, and Netflix - as well as 'We Are Columbine', a documentary purchased by Hulu about four survivors of the infamous school shooting who return to the campus 20 years later. A crime drama, 'The Cleaner', starring Shelley Long, Eden Brolin, James Paxton, Shiloh Fernandez,



Luke Wilson and Lynda Carter, is scheduled to premiere later this year.

After college is when downtown Long Grove came into Boshier's sights. His wife Jessica opened In Motion Dance in 2013, and the couple's engagement pictures happen to have been taken in the movie's 'town square' where a significant portion of the production was set - right outside Paddy's on the Square.

"The short answer to why we chose Long Grove is: it's perfect," Boshier said. Being familiar with the Village and many of the businesses through his wife, according to Boshier, helped the production to gain immediate momentum and local support. More than a dozen Long Grove businesses were involved in many ways, starting when production crews descended upon the downtown area in April.



"I have to say that the Village of Long Grove, as well as the Historic Downtown Long Grove Business Association (HDLGBA) were amazing to work with," Boshier said.

Mike Okun, the owner of Chatterbox, joined the production team and served as an executive producer for the movie. According to Charles and Boshier, Okun provided a wide variety of supports, including providing ongoing catering for the cast and crew, in addition to renting office space to the production team.

Parking on Archer Road was sporadically closed to accommodate filming over the more than two-month production period, where residents walking in the downtown would oftentimes happen upon the movie sets and inquire about what was going on.

"People always kept a respectful distance and when we could

# Production to Long Grove

## Aspen Grove, Wisconsin and features downtown Long Grove all the Village's charms.

(when not in the middle of a shot or scene) we shared what we were doing, and we were always met with a positive comment and enthusiasm," Boshier said.

Crew members commented that the downtown area felt like a ready-made Hollywood studio backlot.

One of the shots in the movie was to include the covered bridge in the background, and it was set for the Tuesday after the April 9 accident where a large U-Haul damaged the bridge. "Fortunately, our shots were filmed on the opposite side (of the bridge) from where the accident occurred, so none of the damage was visible in the movie," Boshier said.

Shooting locations (in addition to those listed above) included Ma and Pa's Candy, Country House, Arboria of Long Grove, The Covered Bridge Creamery, White Oak Gourmet, Twin Orchard Country Club, Associated Dental Specialists of Long Grove, the Ryan Messner Insurance Agency and a private residence in downtown Long Grove.

Members of the production crew also contributed to the local economy by frequenting Long Grove businesses for items they needed daily, such as duct tape, ladders, light bulbs and other supplies at Menards or CVS Pharmacy, groceries at Sunset Foods and dozens of cups of coffee from Starbucks and Dunkin'.

Restaurants and food service businesses, such as the White Oak Gourmet, Enzo and Lucia, Joanie's, The Covered Bridge Creamery and Chatterbox provided COVID-19 safe packaged food for the crews and actors at a time when social distancing and masks were still required.

While the pandemic remained a concern in the spring, it caused some challenges for the production – according to Charles – though none were insurmountable. "We did have to get the crew and actors regularly tested (for COVID-19) and ensure each had a safe social distance from others while performing their work - and make sure to get our needed shots. All crew members were face-covered at all times, while actors took them off only to film."



Other businesses and locations also contributed to the production in different ways. Staff from the Village Tavern served as extras, a holiday dance recital to Deck the Halls was filmed at Palatine's Cutting Hall and performed by In Motion Dance students - while their parents were extras. Twin Orchard Country Club provided overnight secured parking for the movie trucks that had been scattered throughout the downtown while shooting was taking place.

In all, it really did take a village - residents, business owners, employees, customers and clients, property owners, the HDLGBA and the Village itself - to make this production happen.

A synopsis of Christmas with Felicity is provided below, from Throughline Films:

*Felicity Olson is in no mood for the holidays. Her new bakery has failed, she's out of money, and her engagement has fallen apart. At her sister Grace's urging, a downtrodden Felicity accepts an office temp job back in her hometown of Aspen Grove, Wisconsin. Living with her overtly romantic parents, Felicity finds herself depressed, missing her ex-fiancé, and loathing Christmas. But when she meets James, a handsome dairy farmer (who loves Christmas, annoyingly enough), she decides to quit the temp job and try baking for the local community. Felicity hires her artistic yet shy 13-year-old niece, Madison, who creates the social media account "Christmas with Felicity" to promote and sell the holiday treats. Her baked goods are a huge success. And from run-ins at the farmers' market, school talent show, and a near kiss under the mistletoe, James challenges Felicity to find her Christmas spirit once again.*

Filming ended in early June, and the movie is now in the final editing phase. It is planned to premiere this fall for the 2021 holiday cycle. The Village will provide additional information on when the movie will come out in subsequent communications.