

FROM PAUL HOWARD THE DIRECTOR OF ANN ASKS

A PEBBLE IN THE POND



WHAT'S THE ALTERNATIVE? PRODUCTION PRESENTS A PEBBLE IN THE POND FEATURING ANN BENSON WITH KARIS CAMPBELL DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY MARC WIERCIOCH
EDITED BY GARETH FIEN ORIGINAL MUSIC BY ERICK SCHRODER ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS CARLA COMBS MARK DELFIN AND INGRID GOODWIN PRODUCERS ANN BENSON
GARETH FIEN MARC WIERCIOCH AND ETTORE ZUCCARELLI WRITTEN, DIRECTED, & EXECUTIVE PRODUCED BY PAUL HOWARD

www.APebbleinthePondfilm.com



A PEBBLE IN THE POND

Logline

A feel-good documentary film that spotlights a non-profit, founded by an innovative woman, that has been helping children and changing lives for over 125 years.



Synopsis

A PEBBLE IN THE POND is a timely, timeless look at a modern story with deep roots. In the 1890's, a dynamic and innovative woman named Anne Banning founded the Assistance League and did local charitable work that focused on children. Our documentary tells Anne's story and traces the history of the Assistance League: from its humble beginnings to a call to action following the 1906 San Francisco earthquake; through Red Cross innovations and two World Wars, Old Hollywood connections, and a dramatic reemergence; to world changing innovations by women pioneers still being used today!

The film explores their signature program, Operation School Bell, which provides clothing, backpacks, books, and basic necessities to children who are a part of the foster system, low income, or even homeless. We showcase amazing people quietly donating their time (sometimes decades!) and talents to help others, and we also spotlight those who were once helped and now themselves give back! Today, the Assistance League's 120 chapters across the country continue to change the lives of children and adults, and shows that in a still pond, even the smallest pebble can create huge and far reaching ripples.



TO TELL A REALLY **GREAT** STORY

YOU HAVE TO GO BACK TO THE **BEGINNING,**

THE ORIGINS

TO **FULLY** UNDERSTAND.



NEW IDEAS ABOUND!

A PEBBLE IN THE POND

Director's Statement

by: Paul Howard

In 2016, frustrated by our political system and the seeming lack of positivity or good news in media and entertainment, I set out to spread a bit of my optimism in the best way I know how—through film!

My docu-series, ANN ASKS, was born from this intention. Ann Benson (the star of Ann Asks and my partner in spreading good) and I quickly discovered phenomenal good being done all around us! Very quickly we created four episodes featuring various groups and organizations that were doing good—often thankless—work in Los Angeles.

In November of 2017, Ann and I were introduced to “Operation School Bell” (OSB), the signature program of the Assistance League, a national nonprofit. We were invited

to observe an OSB event, this one just outside the gates of Universal Studios, and I can say that by the time I left the event that day, I had already begun imagining a longer format project featuring this amazing program! In fact, this event would directly lead to *A Pebble in the Pond*, my very first feature documentary film, being created!

What I witnessed at this OSB event, and what audiences will experience through *A Pebble in the Pond*, is children, many of whom are homeless or within the foster system, receiving brand new school clothes, backpacks, books, and shoes.

With tears in my eyes I watched children with worn out shoes, some with actual holes in them, be given brand new shoes that they picked out. I watched them select a book, for

most the very first they'd ever owned, and try on jackets that fit them properly and would keep them warm.

The experience was profound for me: seeing so many children who live where I live and who lack so many basic necessities transformed by this act of generosity, and then seeing the smiles on their faces and sparkle in their eyes.

I couldn't believe that I had never heard of the Assistance League and thus began discovery after discovery of what this amazing organization is doing today, but also its unbelievable origins and inspirational journey through earthquakes, Red Cross connections, two World Wars, and the Golden Age of Hollywood!

The hours I spent searching the internet, old newspapers, and eventually the downtown Los

Angeles library would become the script for the animated sequences of the film, which recount the history of Anne Banning and the Assistance League's founding over 125 years ago. It's with great pride that I tell this American pioneer's story and illuminate her work and life. I'm also proud to highlight individuals who are, today, changing lives and making the world a better place.

Long before this project, I believed in the idea that one pebble, even a small pebble, can create huge and far reaching ripples.

A Pebble in the Pond is the physical representation of this belief. I hope that with this film, we'll help to inspire more and more ripples of change.



APEBBLE POND IN THE POND

Cast and Crew



Paul Howard

Director and Screenwriter

Paul Howard has always been interested in entertaining people and in telling stories. His professional career started as an actor when he went to the audition based two year theatre training program at San Joaquin Delta College. Later he transferred to UC Irvine where he received a B.A. in Drama. Paul's interests in the theatre and in film started much earlier though.

Throughout High School, and

before that, Paul was constantly writing stories, making films, choreographing routines (some where he danced like Michael Jackson), directing plays, and taking vocal and dance classes.

Paul has always been interested in more than just the one character he was cast to play. The other characters and their motivations, the piece's themes and message, and the audience's experience watching have always, and naturally been a part of Paul's thought-process and consideration. This skill has, in recent years, organically lead Paul to continue to act but to also write and direct more and more projects (which are often self produced).

Just in the last few years he has directed and written numerous short films, music videos, promotional videos/commercials, and political projects. Paul believes that content, truly is king, but only with high quality and a fully committed heart. Paul strives to every day be a better man and in turn, a better artist.



Ann Benson

Performer and Producer

Ann Benson hails from Dallas, Texas. Her background consists of two very different worlds: theater and finance. She studied drama at SMU and the University of Texas, going on to host a children's TV show, Small Fry Varieties, and acting in countless adverts as well as musical comedies and other productions.

In Manhattan, Ann joined Merrill Lynch as a traveling spokesperson and created the industry's first free

Investing and Savings Educational Seminar Program for Women. She traveled cross country publicizing and presenting seminars, for which she was awarded the Public Relations Society of America's highest award, THE SILVER ANVIL, in 1980.

Recently, Ann and her work partner, Paul Howard, have created Ann Asks; a show that aims to inspire! In a time when the world seems to be in disarray, they choose to show people who are making other people's lives better. Premiering at the Performing Arts Studio West and going on to play at the LA Kitchen, their show touches on subjects ranging from disability and poverty to racial adversity, all with a wholly compassionate view. She lives with her husband, writer Jerry Segal, with whom she has two grown children, Shelli Segal and Robby Benson, who have gone on to achieve great things in the fashion and film industry respectively.



Karis Campbell
Performer

Classically trained in London and New York, Karis has spent the past two decades working as an actor on stage, as well as in film and television. Best known for her recurring role on the acclaimed series, *The West Wing*, she has also guest-starred on various other television shows and is currently recurring on the Fox series, *The Resident*. Karis is excited to be embarking on a new path as a director, marked by her debut project, 'Tomorrow', a short film, currently winding down its successful festival run. As a voiceover artist, Karis has worked on several popular video games and also earned a coveted Audie Award nomination for her narration of Catherynne Valente's beloved book, *The Refrigerator Monologues*.



Erick Schroder
Composer

Erick Schroder is a film, theater and video game composer from Los Angeles, California. He attended Point Loma Nazarene University, where he received a B.M. in Music Composition. He went on to attend the prestigious composition program at the University of Southern California, where Erick was taught by Bruce Broughton, Garry Schyman, Frederick Weidmann and Jack Smalley. In 2012, Erick was mentored by Emmy and Grammy winning composer James Newton Howard. He has worked alongside John Debney and Christopher Young in various scoring workshops. In 2013, Erick was one of twelve composers accepted into the world-renowned ASCAP scoring workshop.

A PEBBLE POND IN THE POND

Cast and Crew



Gareth Fient
Editor

Gareth Fient is an award-winning editor from England who specializes in drama, and documentary films. Mostly working on documentaries over the past few years, Gareth has a passion for story-telling and giving the audience an insight into a world they know very little about. With over 10 years experience, and a wealth of films under his belt, Gareth continues to inspire audiences and encourage them to share stories with others through the power of film.



Marc Wiercioch
Director of Photography

Marc Wiercioch is a cameraman who, having done a few production assistance and transportation jobs over a decade ago, fell in love with cinematography and has since never looked back. Marc challenges himself to make the complex look simple and has shown this best through his documentary work.

YOU CAME TO SCHOOL HERE WHEN YOU WERE A KID?
I WAS LIKE, "YEAH. AND THAT'S WHY I REALLY LIKE TO COME BACK.
TO GIVE BACK TO THE PEOPLE WHO GAVE TO ME."



Stills

A PEBBLE POND IN THE POND



FROM THE FILM



FROM THE SET



A PEBBLE IN THE POND

Technical Specifications

total runtime

103 MIN.

aspect ratio

1.85:1
1920 X 1080

exhibition format

24 FPS DCP
25 FPS H264 1080 X 1920

production

USA

shot on

CANON C300, GH4 GH5,
BLACKMAGIC CINEMA,
RED DRAGON, GOPRO,
SAMSUNG NX-1

language

ENGLISH

Contact

director

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