HALLMARK CHANNEL’S TOP-RATED, HOLIDAY PROGRAMMING EXTRAVAGANZA

‘COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS’ RETURNS WITH MOST AMBITIOUS, ROUND-THE-CLOCK SCHEDULE EVER BEGINNING OCTOBER 28

Unprecedented 19 New, Original World Premiere Movies Including:
Five Consecutive Nights of Original World Premiere Movies Thanksgiving Week;
New Original Hallmark Hall of Fame Special, “Christmas Angel”;
Christmas Day Premiere of “When Calls the Heart” Holiday Special Event

STUDIO CITY, CA, August 2 – An unprecedented 19 new, original world premiere movies will highlight Hallmark Channel’s “Countdown to Christmas,” the network’s top-rated, beloved, annual extravaganza of 64 days (this year) of round-the-clock holiday programming. The annual American holiday TV tradition begins Friday, October 28 (10 p.m. ET/PT) and concludes Sunday, January 1, 2017. The announcement was made to a semi-annual gathering of the Television Critics Association in Beverly Hills.

Cementing its status as the leading yuletide TV viewing destination (attracting more than 80 million viewers in 2015) this year’s non-stop holiday programming schedule includes a two-hour “When Calls the Heart” holiday special event based on the network’s popular series premiering Christmas Day (9 p.m. ET/PT) and a new, original Hallmark Hall of Fame movie presentation, “Christmas Angel” (wt), which is currently in development.

Thanksgiving holiday week on Hallmark Channel will again feature a feast of five consecutive nights of new, original world premiere movies (Wednesday, November 23 – Sunday, November 27), culminating with “The Nutcracker” and the all-new original, Hallmark Hall of Fame movie presentation.

In 2015, Hallmark Channel’s Thanksgiving multi-movie event was the network’s highest-ever rated week among HH and in all key demos and made Hallmark Channel the #1 rated cable network of the entire week among HH, W25-54 and W25-54.*

Stars of new, original movies in the holiday line-up include Danica McKellar (“The Wonder Years”), Lacey Chabert (“All of My Heart,” Mean Girls), Lori Loughlin (“Fuller House,” “90210”), Jill Wagner (“Wipeout”), Jaime King (“Hart of Dixie,” Pearl Harbor) and Jessica Lowndes (“90210”). Additional talent to be announced.

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As the 2016 Christmas holiday season draws to a close, Hallmark Channel is proud to televise the “128th Tournament of Roses Parade” on Monday, January 2, 2017. Live coverage begins with “Countdown to the 128th Tournament of Roses Parade” (10 a.m. ET/7 a.m. PT) followed by the ever-popular “128th Tournament of Roses Parade (11 a.m. ET/8 a.m. PT). The festivities will be co-hosted by Mark Steines from the network’s popular weekday lifestyle series, “Home & Family,” and Emmy Award winning talk show host Leeza Gibbons.

The following is a chronological listing of original movies and specials currently scheduled during Hallmark Channel’s 2016 “Countdown to Christmas.”

‘A WISH FOR CHRISTMAS’ – Saturday, November 5 (9 p.m. ET/PT)
Stars: Lacey Chabert (“Party of Five,” Mean Girls), Paul Greene (“A Christmas Detour”)

Sara Shaw (Chabert) is the type of woman who prefers to sit on the sidelines at work, but when her big idea for a Christmas initiative is stolen, she makes a wish to Santa that she’ll finally have the courage to stand up for herself. Santa grants her wish, but only gives her 48 hours. As the clock ticks, Sara will discover how to channel the Christmas magic and speak her mind all on her own.

‘MISTLETOE PROMISE’ – Sunday, November 6 (9 p.m. ET/PT)

A chance meeting between two strangers who share a disdain for Christmas results in The Mistletoe Promise, a pact to help them navigate their holiday complications – together. But as they spend more time with each other and experience the magic of Christmas the phony couple discovers there may be more to their contract than business. Based on the bestselling novel by Richard Paul Adams.

‘CHRISTMAS MAKEOVER’ – Saturday, November 12 (9 p.m. ET/PT)
Stars: Lori Loughlin (“When Calls the Heart,” “Fuller House”), Colin Ferguson (“Debbie Macomber’s Cedar Cove,” “Eureka”), Willie Aames (“Charles in Charge”)

A TV personality (Loughlin) has an on-air snafu and admits she hates Christmas. Following the debacle, she is invited to the Most Christmas-y town in America to try and repair her image. Forced to work with her ex-boyfriend Jack (Ferguson), the show’s producer, the magic of Christmas and this special town will change the way she views Christmas and her life.

‘CHRISTMAS COOKIES’ – Sunday, November 13 (9 p.m. ET/PT)

Aunt Sally’s Christmas Cookie Company is sold to a large conglomerate and executive Hannah (Wagner) must seal the deal and shut down the factory, which is the small town of Cookie Jar’s lifeblood. What was supposed to be a simple assignment for Hannah becomes complicated when she meets Jake (Brown), the factory owner who’s determined to keep the factory in town. Despite not being a fan of the holiday, the Christmas spirit in this small town is infectious and she gets swept up in the joy of the season while also falling in love with Jake.

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‘SUDDENLY SANTA’ – Saturday, November 19 (9 p.m. ET/PT)
Stars: Danica McKellar (“Wonder Years”), David Haydn-Jones (“A Cookie Cutter Christmas”), (Deidre Hall (“Days of Our Lives”)

Christina Masters (McKellar), the manager of McDougal’s flagship department store, is determined to land the manager position for their new Paris location. She sets out to impress Victoria (Hall), the store’s owner, by creating the best holiday window display in McDougal’s history. Fresh out of inspiration despite assuring Victoria otherwise, Christina turns to a recently-fired store employee (Haydn-Jones) who also happens to be a talented artist and single dad to his young son. As they work side-by-side, the business relationship becomes personal and she finds herself falling in love. Will the allure of her dream be too strong or will she choose to follow her heart?

‘A DECEMBER BRIDE’ – Sunday, November 20, (9 p.m. ET/PT)
Stars: Jessica Lowndes (“90210”), (Daniel Lissing, “When Calls the Heart”)

Aspiring interior designer Layla O’Reilly (Lowndes) is dreading the Christmastime wedding of her cousin who’s marrying Layla’s ex-fiancé. Although Seth Murphy (Lissing) is the one responsible for introducing the bride and groom, she begrudgingly accepts his offer to be her date as she’s out of options. Seth gets carried away at the reception and announces they’re engaged, forcing a mortified Layla to keep up the pretense. But as the faux couple spends more time together they find themselves feeling something very real. Based on the book by bestselling author Denise Hunter.

‘CHRISTMAS BUCKET LIST’ – Friday, November 25 (9 p.m. ET/PT)
Isobel Gray plans a storybook Christmas with her boyfriend, including a snow-covered cottage in the Northwest, and a carefully composed bucket list of classic holiday traditions. But when the boyfriend goes AWOL, the list proves challenging and a tempting new romance turns her life upside down. Will Isobel have a White Christmas ending under the mistletoe?

‘CHRISTMAS EXPECTATIONS’ – Saturday, December 10 (9 p.m. ET/PT)
A hopeless romantic who never seems to give a guy a fair chance starts receiving each gift from the song “The 12 Days of Christmas” compliments of an anonymous benefactor. She tries to solve the mystery with the help of her inner circle, including her sister who’s about to have a Christmas wedding, to see if there’s a suitor on the other end that will finally live up to her expectations.

‘WHEN CALLS THE HEART’ – Sunday, December 25 (9 p.m. ET/PT)

Although the residents of Hope Valley have been busily preparing for the most festive Christmas the town has ever had, bad weather gets in the way of their plans. Not to be discouraged, the townspeople come together to create a special holiday celebration – complete with a Nativity presentation by the schoolchildren – that will infuse everyone with the true spirit of the season.

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‘ROSE PARADE NEW YEAR’ – Sunday, January 1, 2017 (9 p.m. ET/PT)
A career setback prompts a woman to move back home to Pasadena at Christmas. She finds renewed purpose volunteering to help build a Rose Parade Float, only to discover she has to work side-by-side her ex-fiancé who is heading the float’s construction.

The following new, original movies are currently in development for Hallmark Channel’s 2016 “Countdown to Christmas.”

‘A CHRISTMAS BROADCAST’
Two rival reporters get caught up in a competition to see who can report the most newsworthy holiday story. The real breaking news they discover is the truth about the meaning of Christmas – it really is better to give than to receive. But unfolding before their very eyes may be the best holiday story of all – two fierce competitors were able to put aside their differences and fall in love.

‘A PRINCE FOR CHRISTMAS’
Maggie Marks faces a tough career decision and flees to Europe for some soul searching and sightseeing with a friend over the holidays. There she encounters a handsome European playboy prince and lands herself in a world she has never known where she finds a new direction in life, while teaching him to be a better prince along the way.

‘A WORTHWHILE LIFE’
Isabelle’s quest to locate the handsome owner of a lost necklace prompts her to launch a search via social media. As she meets the mystery man’s friends and learns more about him she discovers what an extraordinary person he is and begins to fall in love.

‘CHRISTMAS ANGEL’ (wt) – HALLMARK HALL OF FAME
Upon her untimely death, a workaholic finds herself in training to be a Christmas Angel in Heaven. Despite being the worst recruit in the history of Christmas, she’s assigned a hard luck case. As she’s forced to help solve his problems, she’ll start to discover the meaning of Christmas and maybe even fall in love along the way.

‘CURVEBALL CHRISTMAS’
A horrible break-up with the man she thought she was destined to marry sends Fiona Williams on a trip to her parents’ inn for Christmas. When Fiona’s ex checks in to the inn with a new woman on his arm she tries to save face by making the inn’s opinionated and care-free cook her new “boyfriend” in hopes of making her ex jealous.

‘JOY TO THE WORLD’
Joy Edwards, host of a wildly successful cooking show “Joy to the World,” must scramble to assemble a fake family when the network insists on doing a live Christmas episode from her house. Before long, she realizes her fake family is the Christmas gift she always wanted.

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‘THE NUTCRACKER’
Lilly James’ lifelong devotion lands her the lead role of Clara in the New York City Ballet’s production of The Nutcracker. Grief-stricken and distracted after learning about her mother’s death, Lily suffers an injury and is removed from the show by Mark, her boyfriend and dance partner. Heartbroken and betrayed, Lily vows never to dance again. Years later, her daughter lands the role of Clara in the prestigious Philadelphia Nutcracker Ballet and finds that the Ballet Director is Mark, who betrayed Lilly years ago. Faced with the truth about her past and Lilly has a chance to dance and to find love again.

‘RUNAWAY SLEIGH’
Recently divorced, Pauline struggles to get into the holiday spirit while heading up her hometown Christmas parade. With the help of a Christmas sleigh and a handsome woodworker, Pauline is destined to turn her luck around, rekindle her holiday spirit and even find time for love.

‘THE SOUND OF CHRISTMAS’
During the Christmas season a high school music teacher is hired by a handsome widower to give music lessons to his teenage daughters. Their lives are turned around for the better as the family grows closer and learns the importance of love, friendship and the meaning of Christmas.

*Source: Nielsen Company, 10/31/15 – 1/1/16

ABOUT HALLMARK CHANNEL

Hallmark Channel is Crown Media Family Networks’ flagship 24-hour cable television network, distributed nationwide in high definition (HD) and standard definition (SD) to 89 million homes. The country’s leading destination for quality family entertainment, Hallmark Channel delivers on the 100-year legacy of the Hallmark brand. In addition to its signature original movies, the network features an ambitious lineup of other original content, including scripted primetime series, such as “Good Witch” and “When Calls the Heart”; annual specials like “Kitten Bowl” and “Hero Dog Awards”; and a daily, two-hour lifestyle show, “Home & Family.” Additionally, in November 2014, Hallmark Channel became the exclusive home to world premiere presentations of the acclaimed Hallmark Hall of Fame franchise. Dedicated to helping viewers celebrate life’s special moments, Hallmark Channel also offers such annual holiday programming events as “Countdown to Christmas” and “Countdown to Valentine’s Day.” Rounding out the network’s diverse slate are television’s most beloved sitcoms and series, including “The Golden Girls,” “The Middle,” “Last Man Standing,” “Little House on the Prairie” and “Frasier.”

Hallmark Cards, Inc. owns and operates Crown Media Family Networks.

For more information, please visit www.crownmediapress.com
Hallmark Channel on Social Media: Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube

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