



MEDIA ALERT

ELLIE LAKS HONORED FOR LIFETIME OF ANIMAL ADVOCACY

The Gentle Barn's: *Maybelle's Story* Included in Animals Rock Film Fest

SANTA CLARITA, CA (October 7, 2016) - On October 15th 2016, the Awareness Film Festival will be honoring **Ellie Laks, Founder of The Gentle Barn**, for a life time of animal advocacy and mentoring youth programs and will include the most recent Gentle Barn documentary in the "Animals Rock" afternoon program. The festival will begin with a screening of four short films from 3:00pm to 4:00pm, including **Maybelle's Story** by The Gentle Barn. The films will be followed by a panel discussion, featuring animal activists and filmmakers exploring the connection between animal rights and mass media. Moderated by Kate Neligan, the panel includes:

– **Ellie Laks – Founder of The Gentle Barn**

– Kerry David – Filmmaker and Creator of Over & Above Africa

– Julia Huffman – Filmmaker from Medicine of the Wolf

– Steve Murray – Director of Living Promises

– Kate Neligan – Equine-Assisted Life Coach and Founder of Synergy TV (moderator)

The screenings and panels take place at **LA Live Regal Cinemas**.

Media Availability: Gentle Barn Founders Ellie Laks and Jay Weiner will be available for interviews.

ABOUT THE GENTLE BARN

The Gentle Barn (www.gentlebarn.org) is a national nonprofit organization, founded in 1999 as a safe haven and place of recovery for severely abused animals. The Gentle Barn offers their unique philosophy of rehabilitating animals and connecting their stories of survival and healing to the personal experiences of inner city, at-risk and special needs children who have suffered physical, mental or emotional trauma. By interacting with The Gentle Barn's approximate one hundred and eighty animals and taking a hands-on role in their welfare, those who participate in the programs at The Gentle Barn learn empathy, trust and forgiveness. The Gentle Barn is run by Founder Ellie Laks and her husband and Co-founder Jay Weiner, both of whom were healed and supported by animals as children. The Gentle Barn's mission is simple: "Teaching People Kindness and Compassion to Animals, Each Other and Our Planet."

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