Boston Film Festival Honors Clare Staples with Humanitarian Award for *Blue Zeus*

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Boston, MA – September 22nd, 2025 – The 2025 Boston Film Festival proudly announces Clare Staples, founder of Skydog Sanctuary and star of the feature documentary *Blue Zeus*, as the recipient of its prestigious **Humanitarian Award**. Staples is recognized for her extraordinary dedication and tireless efforts to rescue and protect America's wild mustangs and burros. Emmy and Critics Choice Award–winning Welsh actor **Matthew Rhys** dedicated a tribute video to Clare Staples, honoring her achievement in receiving the award and recognizing her ongoing efforts to raise awareness about the urgent need to rescue and protect mustangs from abuse.

Rhys was quoted as saying, "It truly was an honor to executive produce this very special film and help bring such a dear subject to my heart to a wider audience, and hopefully around the world. More importantly, it has been extraordinary to watch you make these wild horses your life's purpose and passion. The love and care you give to the horses you rescue brings immense peace and joy—not only to them, but also to the people who follow your work and find their own sense of sanctuary in this slice of heaven that is SkyDog."

The award was presented during the **New England Premiere** of *Blue Zeus*, which has been selected as a **Centerpiece Film** of the festival. Directed by Rocky Romano and Miranda Winters, and produced by Jamie Baldanza, Analís Martin, Nicholas McCarthy, Mathew Rhys, and Daryl Hannah, the documentary has already garnered critical acclaim and multiple top honors, including **Best Documentary Feature, Best Cinematography, Best Narration, Best Music, and Best of Festival** at the EQUUS International Film Festival in Montana.

Blue Zeus features the poignant true story of Clare Staples' mission to rescue Blue Zeus, a wild mustang captured along with his family by the U.S. government. After months of relentless advocacy, Staples successfully saves Blue Zeus but must then navigate an overcrowded and flawed system to reunite him with his family. With unparalleled access to government employees, helicopter contractors, and even a whistle-blower, the film blends hard-hitting investigative journalism with a deeply emotional narrative.

The film is narrated by Gerard Butler and features Arielle Kebbel, alongside Staples, whose passion and advocacy anchor the story.

Following the screening, a **special panel discussion** took place with Clare Staples, Jamie Baldanza, Grace Kuhn, Rocky Romano, Ross McPhee, and Peggy Keyser, offering audiences further insight into the making of the film and the urgent issues facing America's wild horses. The Boston Film Festival is honored to spotlight *Blue Zeus* and celebrate Staples' impactful work with the Humanitarian Award, further underscoring the festival's tradition of honoring artists who use cinema to advance meaningful social change.

ABOUT THE BOSTON FILM FESTIVAL:
The Boston Film Festival is one of America's longest-running and industry-recognized events for film. Celebrating its 41st program in September 2025, the festival showcases cutting edge indie films, top documentaries, shorts, animated, fall release studio films, sports films and more. Launched in Boston, Massachusetts in 1984, the renowned festival has premiered notable films including *Greenbook, Don't Worry Darling, Jo Jo Rabbit, Wild*, *The Last Kiss, North Country, It's Kind of a Funny Story, Catching Hell, Earth Days, Common Ground, Requiem for a Dream,* and more. The festival has also hosted and honored iconic talent including Sam Rockwell, George Clooney, Aaron Eckhart, Melissa Leo, Bob Yari, Alex Gibney, Andy Garcia, Leslie Bibb, Greg Kinnear, Shane Black, Suzanne Todd, Uma Thurman, Sir Ridley Scott, Sam Mendes, Tony Goldwyn, Chris Evans, Al Pacino, Vanessa Redgrave, Annette Bening, Ellen Burstyn, Jeff Bridges, Steve Martin, and many others. https://bostonfilmfestival.org

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(Left: Robin Dawson, Executive Director)
(Right: Clare Staples, recipient of the Humanitarian Award)
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