



*"Beautiful and harrowing. And filled with love." ~ Jamie Lee Curtis*

## HAYDEN & HER FAMILY PRESS KIT

A film by May May Tchao

Website: [www.haydenandherfamily.com](http://www.haydenandherfamily.com)

Facebook: @haydenandherfamily

Twitter: @HaydenProject

Instagram: @haydenproject

Tchao Films LLC | 625 Clinton Place | Evanston, IL 60201-1767  
Inquiry: 847 864-6385 | Mobile: 847 567--6385 | [mtchao@comcast.net](mailto:mtchao@comcast.net)

# HAYDEN & HER FAMILY LOGLINE & SYNOPSIS

A Film by May May Tchao



## **Logline** (60 words)

What drives the Currys to adopt five special-needs children from overseas while having seven healthy ones themselves? This film follows the Currys' adoption journey to make a case for their humanity. By exploring themes of power of family love, alternative parenting, challenges of special needs adoption and ambitious altruism, it gives voice to the adoptive parents who are rarely represented.

## **Synopsis** (210 words)

The Currys are raising twelve children, five of whom are adopted from overseas and have special needs. In cinema vérité style, viewers are invited into the Currys' home to observe their intimate domestic life and learn about the challenges of each special needs child who comes with physical, cognitive and emotional issues. Hayden, their third adoptee from China suffers cranial facial deformity from Linear Nevus Sebaceous Syndrome. She becomes the thread of this story as we follow their adoption journey and watch the various transformations, both with Hayden and her family throughout the years.

This film makes a case for the humanity of the Currys and renders a compassionate and nuanced essay on the themes of alternative parenting, power of family love, challenges of special needs adoption and the motivations that drove the Currys to adopt. Rarely represented, this story allows the adoptive parents speak their mind and reveals an honest look and practical insights to the complex issues of adoption without simple conclusions and skeptical judgment. By exploring the moral universe the Currys inhabit, we delve deeper to understanding why some people are compelled to do so much good in their altruistic endeavors, and opens our eyes to see how moral ideals often conflict with human self-interest and sacrifices.

Run time: 70 minutes

## HAYDEN & HER FAMILY DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

A Film by May May Tchao



Family is one of the most basic and profound human experiences we all share. Adoption is changing the way families are created as well as how society perceives them. One out of 25 U.S. families with children have an adopted child through foster care, open or international adoptions. We are the largest receiving country in overseas adoption with more than 250,000 adoptions in the past 15 years.

Parenting is a daunting task under the best of circumstances, let alone adoption. The fact is after the euphoria of “having found my child,” both parent and child face challenges as they are called to adapt their attitudes in loving, parenting and the development of trust to move forward. Traditional parenting methods may not work. It takes tremendous patience, humility and resourcefulness for parents to transform these children’s lives; and in so doing, transform their own.

**HAYDEN & HER FAMILY** presents the parents’ perspective in their struggles to meet their obligations, challenging our preconceptions in a few ways:

- It debunks adoption as being “charity cases” and peels away the “adoption fantasy” of “living happily ever after.”
- It asks parents to evaluate their parenting goals - whether to raise children in traditional standards of success, or nurture them with empathy and purposefulness?
- It suggests the best parenting practices do not follow a script.
- It combats skepticism towards the motivations behind acts of exceptional altruism.

As we need more compassion and kindness in this age of social injustice and self absorption, this film appeals to our capacity to answer a higher calling — whether in helping refugees who are fleeing wars, resettling the homeless, caring for the disabled, or as in our film, changing lives of abandoned children. This film gives a timely and poignant perspective on what it means to be family.

## HAYDEN & HER FAMILY Director Bio

### May May Tchao, Director and Producer



May May transfers her skill from TV commercial production to documentary filmmaking after a career in the Chicago's advertising business. A passionate and resourceful director and producer, she takes her projects from concept to finish often wearing many hats to manage production details. A firm believer in "learning by doing," she honed her craft by collaborating and consulting with filmmakers at Kartemquin Films for production, post-production and outreach. Her directorial debut SPILLED WATER has won awards in national and international film festivals.

It was broadcast at PBS stations WTTW/Chicago and KQED/San Francisco. It's now in distribution to the education market. HAYDEN & HER FAMILY is her second feature and is supported by funding from Kartemquin Films, DEW Foundation, Fields Foundation and the Long family Foundation.

*(Short version 125 words)*

May May Tchao transfers her skill from TV commercial production to documentary filmmaking after a career in the Chicago's advertising business. She takes her projects from concept to finish often wearing many hats to manage production details. Self-taught and a firm believer in "learning by doing," she honed her craft by collaborating and consulting with filmmakers at Kartemquin Films for production, post-production and outreach.

Her directorial debut SPILLED WATER is about the shifting rights and status of women in contemporary China inspired by her curiosity of what her own life would have been if she's remained in China. The film was an amazing personal journey and has won awards at national and international film festivals. It was broadcast at PBS stations WTTW/Chicago and KQED/San Francisco and is now in distribution to the education market.

HAYDEN & HER FAMILY is her second feature. She continues to explore themes of family and parents' influences on their children's lives by making a case for the Curry's humanity. She has received funding from Kartemquin Films, DEW Foundation, Fields Foundation and the Long family Foundation in the making of this film. It is selected to be broadcast nationally on the American ReFramed Program on public television's WORLD Channel Fall, 2021. May May's sincerity and compassion has gained the trust of her subjects and respect from her collaborators.

*(Long version 203 words)*

## HAYDEN & HER FAMILY **Filmmakers**

**Samuel Rong**, *camera person and additional editor*, has a decade of experience in multimedia storytelling in television and film. He is a graduate of Northwestern University and has worked in newsrooms and production houses in Asia, Africa and North America. His work has been shown on Al-Jazeera, CNN, eNews Channel Africa and Chicago's PBS station. He is currently working on a doc series called FIRST HAND, about gun violence in Chicago, with WTTW. He has collaborated with various filmmakers nationally and internationally including May Tchao for her first film, SPILLED WATER.

**Stephanie V. Strauss**, *camera person*, has a wonderful sense of lighting and narrative eye. She uses her camera to discover the nuances of people's lives to tell their stories. Currently, she is a two-time Telly award-winning video producer with [Healthline.com](http://Healthline.com), the #1 health information site in the US. Prior to working at Healthline, Stephanie was a video producer at Condé Nast creating content for brands including Teen Vogue, SELF, GQ, and BRIDES. Stephanie completed a journalism fellowship in Prague after her post-graduate studies at the Salt Institute for Documentary Studies. She earned her BA at the University of Colorado where she graduated summa cum laude. Stephanie has a deep interest in telling stories about health, gender, and what makes people tick.

**Laurie MacMillan**, *editor*, is a seasoned and award-winning documentary editor and story consultant from Canada. Her credits include CROSSING ARIZONA, a 2006 Sundance Film Festival favorite and FOLLOW MY VOICE an official selection of the Tribeca Film Festival. Laurie edited TWO AMERICANS which toured the US as part of the ACLU's national campaign for immigration reform. Laurie's work has been broadcast on PBS, Sundance Channel, NHK and Al Jazeera.

**Craig J. Snider**, *music composer*, is a record producer, composer, remixer, songwriter, & multi-instrumentalist. His work can be heard on productions that have topped Billboard's dance & singles chart's. Recently Craig remixed Lady Gaga's "Stupid Love." Craig also has broad experience as a composer of original music for advertising, television & Film — including shows like THE VOICE, CORPORATE, MADAME SECRETARY. Craig just completed the score and music supervision for Director Writer Nancy Goodman's award winning new Romantic Comedy Feature Film SURPRISE ME on Amazon Prime. Craig has collaborated with May May on her debut documentary SPILLED WATER.

**Sharon Zurek**, *post-production supervisor*, is the owner of Black Cat Productions in Chicago and enjoys working on independent features and social issue documentaries, especially those focusing on strong women and queer content. She co-produced and edited THE G-FORCE, a documentary about grandparents who raise their grandchildren, which premiered at the 2018 Black Harvest Film Festival at the Siskel Film Center. She edited and produced the award winning LGBTQ+ feature, HANNAH FREE and many other independent features and short films. Her documentary, A MIND IN QUICKSAND: LIFE WITH HUNTINTON'S aired nationally on public broadcasting stations from 2015-2019. Sharon is a Professor of Instruction at Columbia College Chicago where she teaches editing and prepares her students for a professional career in the film industry.

## HAYDEN & HER FAMILY Credits

Producer & Director	May May Tchao
Executive producer	May May Tchao Jamie Lee Curtis
Cinematography & Sound	Stephanie V. Strauss Sam Rong
Additional Cinematography	Ines Sommers Joel McGinty Chris Walker May May Tchao
Editor	Laurie MacMillan
Additional Editing	Sam Rong Libi Hake
Trailer & Broadcast edition Editor	Matt Lauterbach
Original Music	Craig J. Snyder
Post Production Supervisor	Sharon Zurek
Colorist	Bob Sliga
Sound Design & Mix	Bryen Hensley, NoiseFloor Ltd.
Animation	Chris Blake
Credit Design & mastering	John Cavallino
China Train Footage	J. P. Sniadecki
"WHO ARE THE DEBOLTS AND WHY DO THEY HAVE 19 KIDS?" Footage	Courtesy of John Korty, Korty Films, Inc.
Drone shot of Evanston	POND 5
Fiscal sponsor	Chicago Filmmakers
This Film is Made Possible by:	Long Family Foundation KQT Films' Emerging Storyteller Fund DEW Foundation Fields Foundation of Illinois The Puffin Foundation, Ltd.