

north shore news

When Calls the Heart series brings family together

Young cast play big part in the success of new TV production

[Anne Watson](#) / North Shore News

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Fourteen-year-old Rachel Pawluk (a Grade 9 student at Seycove secondary), Mamie Laverock, 9, (a Richmond elementary school student with West Vancouver family roots) and Lizzie Boys, 13, (in Grade 8 at Rockridge secondary) pose with Erin Krakow ("Miss Thatcher") while working on the set of When Calls the Heart in Langley. The new series begins airing on Super Channel in Canada on April 16. Scan image with Layar app to view series trailer. Photograph by: Supplied

When Calls the Heart, broadcast Saturdays at 9 p.m. on the Hallmark Channel and starting April 16 on Super Channel in Canada.

When asked to describe her newest show, When Calls the Heart, Erin Krakow wants to emphasize one thing above all others.

"When Calls the Heart is a beautiful, family-friendly show," says Krakow. "We're working on a program that is quite possibly the only show on television right now that is family friendly in a way that satisfies every age group."

When Calls the Heart, a new series on the Hallmark Channel, takes place in a 1910 coal-mining town aptly named Coal Valley. Krakow plays Elizabeth Thatcher, a teacher from a fairly affluent family and a newcomer to a town that has just undergone a terrible mining disaster.

"She's very much a fish out of water," says Krakow. "She's trying to help these kids and teach them and really make a difference."

The women in town must now cope not only with the loss of brothers, husbands and sons, but also work at rebuilding their lives in the very mine that took their loved ones to keep food on the table.

The series also stars Lori Loughlin, of Full House fame, and Daniel Lissing, as well as featuring several young North Shore actors.

When it comes to her costars, Erin Krakow has nothing but praise, especially for some of the youngest members of the cast.

"These kids bring such an incredible energy, they have such positive attitudes and the kind of acting that they're doing is just so organic and so real," says Krakow. "It's really been such an honour to get to work with them and get to know them. I'm really just so impressed with the work that they're doing and they bring a smile to my face every day."

Krakow says many aspects of the show drew her to the project, including the character of Elizabeth Thatcher.

"Getting to play a woman who is so passionate about what she does, she stands up for what she believes in, she has a great love for children, as do I," she says. "(And) getting to work with Michael Landon Jr. and Brian Bird, the creators of our show who just have such a passion for this story and they've really given us something beautiful to work on."

Krakow says it has not been difficult getting into the mindset of a woman in the early 20th century.

"We've got a very, very talented crew, we have an amazing wardrobe department that really just send me right back to 1910, hair and makeup, the sets they build, it just helps so much to be able to walk on set and feel like I'm already a part of that world," she says. "Probably the biggest challenge is, well wearing the corset is not always easy, though it does help with body language and whatnot."

Krakow says she prepared for the role through extensive reading on the time period and drew from her own life experiences.

"I spent a lot of time with kids; I used to be a nanny, a camp counsellor and I taught drama, so that really helped me with the process," she says.

Krakow is also a graduate of the Juilliard School in New York City. She has played a string of leading ladies onstage, including Helena in A Midsummer Night's Dream and Yelena in Black Russian. Krakow says she's been very lucky to work in both mediums and each one presents its own set of challenges.

"When you're doing a play, a lot of times you're doing the same show every night for months at a time, some people years at a time, and you're performing for a live audience which can be an interesting challenge," she says. "Working onscreen you're having to do the same scene over and over again, for sometimes hours at a time and making sure you keep that fresh for every performance is really important, as it is in theatre."

Krakow says for this role in particular, she drew inspiration from her former teachers among others.

"I've had some really special teachers in my life who have inspired me, who have been so passionate about what they do," she says. "I think a lot about my parents and the kind of morals they instilled in me growing up and how they may have just led by their example and using that with the kids."

The show began filming in B.C. in September 2013 and working in Canada was a first for Krakow.

"It's been really wonderful getting to film in Canada," she says. "Everyone was so lovely, really warm and welcoming. It's such a beautiful, beautiful place to film."

Krakow says the energy on set has been very positive and loving.

"I really love what I do and I'm lucky in that I show up to work every day and I'm surrounded by people who also love what they do," she says.

When Calls the Heart will air in Canada on Super Channel starting in April. For upcoming showtimes visit superchannel.ca/series/view/59073956/When-Calls-the-Heart. Krakow says audiences should look forward to plenty of adventure, romance and "heart-warming moments."

"It's going to bring the family together, which I think is so important and that has probably been the most special part of it," she says. "I can't imagine an audience that wouldn't like it."

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