

Himalaya Film Festival 2010 New York

A HIGHER CALLING

As one of the 40 festival finalists and 212 entries from 24 different countries, Michaelis's film was one of 10 films awarded at the Banff Mountain Film festival. Aside from the People's Choice Award, "A Higher Calling" earned additional honours. The film was selected for the Banff World Tour. Michaelis has made six, short films prior to "A Higher Calling" but his kudos at Banff were the largest credits he's received in his career. The 45-minute piece is about six friends – Michaelis, Donn Pinckney, Jeff Cristol, Josh Weinstein, Judah Kuper and Brett Schreckengost- making their way across western Nepal via paraglider. The crew was in Nepal in the fall of 1999 for five weeks where they laid much of the groundwork, but finishing touches and fine tuning were done through last winter and into last spring.

The film captures the culture of Nepal through spectacular cinematography and interactions with locals along the way. "The intention of the film was not to hype flying although you see us flying and we talk about flying," said Michaelis. "The film is more about being immersed in the culture. The paragliders were just our vehicles for seeing the country and getting lost in it. "In the film, the pilots touch down in one tiny village after another. With each landing they are received with swarms of warm welcomes as the jagged, snow capped peaks of the Annapurna range in the Himalayas tower in the background. The People's Choice Award is as its name suggest – an award voted on by the viewers. Banff had an panel of five judges who decided the other awards but "A Higher Calling" was chosen by the festival-goers.

People's Choice Award Banff Mountain Film Festival, selected for the Banff World Tour

Neal Michaelis
45 min.

