

Movie tells the story of a family coping with Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD)

By Russ Pankonin

The Imperial Republican

Jerry Heydenberk's claim to screen fame came and went quickly when he appeared as an umpire in a scene from the movie, "The Boarder."

The film made its Kearney debut last weekend, with Heydenberk in attendance.

The film, directed by Jane Ryan of Grand Island, depicts the family struggles of raising an adopted young man with Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD).

Ryan, the mother of two adopted children with RAD, made the movie to bring more awareness to the disorder.

A big share of the movie was filmed three years ago in Ravenna. Heydenberk's wife, Valera, was serving as pastor of the United Methodist Church at the time.

While writing a book, Ryan stayed at the Printed Page Bed & Breakfast in Ravenna.

She thought the house would serve as an ideal setting for her movie. She got the support of the community leaders and volunteers to film the movie in Ravenna.

Heydenberk said the Methodist Church served as the headquarters during the filming and helped provide meals throughout.

He noted that Valera served as a spiritual mentor for Ryan during filming and thereafter.

The movie made its Kearney debut last weekend at the renovated World Theater with shows on Friday, Saturday nights and Sunday afternoon.

What is RAD?

Following each showing, Ryan held a question-and-answer session on the disorder.

RAD occurs in children up to 33 months old who form no bond with their mother, whether by abandonment, adoption or neglect.

After these children are adopted, they develop a growing sense of anger and pain toward their adopted mother. This is due to the detachment they suffered from their birth mother.

These feelings intensify as the child grows older and often leads to violence, typically against the adopted mother.

Ryan experienced that raising two adopted children, a son and a daughter. Her son has been in and out of prison most of his adult life and has trouble coping in the real world.

Her daughter had to be institutionalized in her teen years after acting out against Ryan.

Today, the daughter lives in Australia. Ryan has limited contact with her.

A child affected by RAD typically believes everyone around them is conspiring against them. Rather than realizing they have a problem, they see all the others as the people with problems.

Neurotherapy of the brain can be used for treatment in some cases. Some cases are simply untreatable.

During the Q&A Sunday, parents raising RAD children expressed their appreciation to Ryan for trying to bring more attention to the disorder.

Andy Scott Harris, the young man who played the character affected by RAD was also present

at the Sunday showing.

In researching for the movie and subsequent book, she travelled across the country meeting with parents like herself who had children affected by RAD.

Ryan also filmed a documentary on RAD to be used as training for teachers, counselors, clergy and others who may deal with a family dealing with RAD.

The title of the movie, "The Boarder," symbolizes that when child with RAD joins a family, it's more as a "boarder" because they rarely become attached as a "family member."

More information on the movie can be found online at www.theboardermovie.com.