



# FILM IN FOCUS

## **Green and Greener: New Projects from Universal, NBC and Focus Features**

By Scott Macaulay On November 15, 2009



### **Meryl Streep and Alec Baldwin in *It's Complicated***

When we last reported on green filmmaking at FilmInFocus, the Focus Features' release *Away We Go* had just released an environmental impact report that executive producer Mari-Jo Winkler called "the most detailed carbon footprint measurement anyone has ever done on a film." Documenting not only the strategies the filmmakers used to curb waste and promote environmentally friendly filmmaking practices, the report, in an industry first, also documented the movie's carbon emissions and environmental impact across the whole range of production activities.

Now, on the occasion of Green is Universal Week, we checked in with Meredith Bergmann of Green Media Solutions, the company that works with Universal to devise and help implement green filmmaking practices, to learn about the latest efforts. Among the recent Universal features Bergmann's company worked on was Nancy Meyers' holiday comedy, *It's Complicated*.

"The goal with *It's Complicated* was to try to apply sustainable filmmaking practices to a major motion picture and to figure out what the obstacles are," says Bergmann. The difference in scale between *Away We Go* and *It's Complicated* brought into relief a whole set of different issues that the

filmmakers, Universal and Green Media Solutions attempted to address. For example, comments Bergmann, “We started to realize how important the role of set dressing was when the production used one ton of produce in order to recreate a farmers market. Normally a portion of the produce would be given away, but, however, most would be discarded and would end up as landfill. So, instead, over one ton of fruits and vegetables used during the Santa Barbara farmer’s market scene were donated to a local soup kitchen. The donation was coordinated for NBC Universal through **Green Media Solutions** and **Rock and Wrap it Up!**, and the produce was donated to Casa Esperanza, a local soup kitchen in Santa Barbara. That ton of food fed 500 people for a week. Our obstacle, then, was to get the food off set as soon as possible because we had to be out of the location. Our goal was to find a vendor that offered a turnkey solution, and the solution is what **Rock and Wrap it Up!** provided.”

“As a result of this experience,” she continues, “NBC Universal has established an ongoing relationship with **Rock and Wrap it Up!**, who, going forward, will find beneficiaries for all edible leftover food from NBCU productions. This initiative will: fight poverty by helping to reduce hunger; improve our environment by diverting waste from landfills; and reduce the production’s bottom line by reducing waste disposal costs.”

Wrote Susan Kirshner of Casa Esparza to the production, “Bringing all that food back to our shelter did a lot for the morale of our members. We got members to help, who generally do not help out. Our chef used those beautiful red, orange and yellow peppers to make a delicious rice dish. Our green salads were full of tomatoes, broccoli, peppers, and cauliflower, which is much more than we usually have. Our fruit salads were filled with fresh apples, pears, grapefruit, oranges and bananas. We have a number of satellite programs who got extra special meals today.”