

**syracuse.com**

## Liverpool native Dominic Ianno talks about premiere of 'Soul Surfer,' based on Bethany Hamilton

Published: Saturday, April 02, 2011, 5:00 AM Updated: Saturday, April 02, 2011, 11:11 AM



**Mark Bialczak/The Post-Standard**

By



For 10 years now, Dominic Ianno has been jetting between coasts in what he calls "My Crazy Life."

The Liverpool native has worked hard in Los Angeles and New York City, the way he was taught watching father Victor Ianno, the president of Skaneateles Lakeside Printing, and mother Cecile Ianno, a tireless contributor to St. Joseph's Auxiliary and fabulous maker of the family pasta.

On Monday, he comes back to his hometown to share a very big career moment.



The founder and CEO of **Indomitable Entertainment** has spent three years as executive producer of the film "Soul Surfer." The biography is based on the life of **Bethany Hamilton**, the teen surfer who overcame the trauma of losing her arm to a shark in 2003 in Hawaii.

Ianno thinks the film — which stars veteran Dennis Quaid and Helen Hunt, AnnaSophia Robb as Hamilton, and country star Carrie Underwood in her feature debut — carries an important message of inspiration.

"It's a beautiful story, and it ends with a story of hope," Ianno said Friday during a phone interview. "The steel determination of this little girl to continue her life on her terms is so compelling.

"Soul Surfer," opens nationwide Friday.

First it will be screened as the centerpiece of a benefit for Make-A-Wish, Tuesday night at the Palace Theatre on James Street. Ianno's business partner, David Tice, will address questions with Ianno after the screening.

## The details

**What:** Premiere of "Soul Surfer," the true story of teen surfer Bethany Hamilton, with Central New York native Dominic Ianno, an executive producer of the film.

**When:** 6:30 p.m. Tuesday.

**Where:** Palace Theatre, 2384 James St., Syracuse.

**Tickets:** The event that benefits Central New York Make-A-Wish is sold out. If you'd like to make a donation, call Make-A-Wish at 475-9474 or go to **www.cny.wish.org**. Ianno spoke Friday from Dallas, Tice's hometown, where there will be a friends-and-family viewing this weekend.

The Syracuse screening started off as a small affair as well. Heck, Ianno says, he's got 100 cousins who live here so he wouldn't have a problem filling the theater.

But his uncle, Syracuse attorney Lynn Smith, suggested Ianno meet with Diane Kuppermann, president and chief executive officer of the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Central New York.



FilmDistrict and TriStar

In a scene from the movie "Soul Surfer" are (from left) Dennis Quaid, Helen Hunt and AnnaSophia Robb.

The connection between film and the foundation that helps fulfill wishes of ill children was immediate.

"There's a moment in the movie where — not to give anything away — where she basically decides there's more to life than her, and her quest to surf," he says. "What happened to her can help others, and she learned the valuable lesson to help others."

Kuppermann told Ianno of one child's wish.

"My company, and David Tice, decided to contribute," says Ianno, 42. "We sponsored the event and make it a tough ticket and in the process, make a lot of money for Make-A-Wish."

Ianno says he's proud that the first major movie he decided to help raise money for — that's what an executive producer does — is a tale this striking.

"I had a chance to be involved with other projects that were shoot-'em-up, crash-'em-up," he recalls.

He passed.

"We are so proud of this movie. It will make grown men cry. That's my prediction," he says. "I got a chance to touch the world here. ... It makes me proud that the first big thing I'm affiliated with is so true and so real and so good."

Mark Bialczak can be reached at 470-2175 or mbialczak@syracuse.com. He posts frequently at [www.syracuse.com/entertainment](http://www.syracuse.com/entertainment).

© 2011 syracuse.com. All rights reserved.