

Actress Candace Cameron Bure Finds “The Heart of Christmas” in Washington, Ill.

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By Kathy Deters



Fans of Candace Cameron Bure watched her grow up as D.J. Tanner on the hit sitcom “Full House.” Now Bure has her own full house, with three children: Natasha, 13; Lev, 11; and Maksim, 9. Candace and her husband, former hockey player Valeri Bure, live in Los Angeles. (Remember the name? Bure played for the St. Louis Blues in 2003). The busy mom is also a published author and star of ABC Family’s “Make It Or Break It.”

St. Louis Sprout caught up with Candace to discuss her new holiday movie, “The Heart of Christmas,” which premieres at 7 p.m. Sunday,

Dec. 4 on GMC.

You have a new movie premiering on GMC, “The Heart of Christmas,” which is set in a town that’s just three hours from St. Louis. Can you tell us a little about it?

It’s based on a true story. It’s quite inspiring how this entire town [Washington, Ill.] and community came together to give this little boy Dax one last Christmas because he had a very rare form of leukemia. His doctors didn’t give him long to live. He loved Christmas, so in October, they came together to put out Christmas lights, went caroling ... everything to give this little boy one last Christmas. While it’s sad because Dax did pass away, it does show us what the heart of Christmas really is about. But bring a box of Kleenex because it is a tear-jerker.

What attracted you to this script?

It was the story itself. A friend had given me the script and told me, there’s no money in this script, so we shot it in 16 days. But it’s the most incredible story. I had watched a YouTube video of the story, the actual news footage of what happened. After watching the news story, I was sobbing, and I knew I was going to do it. It was beautiful. It was everything I want to do in my films and my work. I like inspiring stories and things that are uplifting. As a film it had all the elements that I believe in and look for and value in a script. [Learn more about Dax and his family’s foundation, and watch a trailer of the movie at www.daxlocke.com.]

How has this movie influenced your relationship with your own family?

It confirms that what we try to do within our own family is what we should be doing, and that is putting our family first. We have to keep each other on track. My husband has to keep me on track—I get busy with work, but it comes down to my children, the legacy that I'm instilling in them. The movie just confirms everything. The movie's a great reminder of that.

You recently published a New York Times' bestseller, "Reshaping It All," about blending physical and spiritual fitness. The book focuses on the importance of taking care of ourselves so that we can feel good and lead healthy lives. Do you have any advice for passing those values down to our children?



"The Heart of Christmas" is based on the experiences of the Locke family. From left: Austin, Dax and Julie Locke.

We place a very high priority on fitness in our family. Some people might think it's a bit much, but I have three kids who have very different body types. We have to train our kids to know their body types and how to take care of themselves. It's different for each of them, and some parents don't train their kids that way. It stinks to be the parent that says, "Lev can have a second dessert, but you can't." But when we teach things like that, there's always a reason behind it. It's never about the size; we're certainly not more important, or more important in God's eyes [based on our size]. It's about taking care of your own body. We stress: Eat and enjoy what you want to eat, but sweets in moderation, and exercise. My boys play sports. My daughter doesn't like to play sports, so she has to do a 15-minute run five times a week. It's the mindset of understanding how important fitness is ... reinforcing all of those principles over and over again. Our value isn't found in our body or weight, but that it's important to feed it well, so you can be the best that you can be.

You've also shared with fans the importance of a healthy, organic lifestyle. What are your favorite quick, healthy, kid-friendly snacks when you're on the go?

Fruit is a big one. A lot of times I pick up my boys, and we go straight to hockey. So I always have to have a snack for them. I usually have fruit cut up for them. I know not all kids like it, but we love sushi, so I'll pick up a tuna roll. It has protein, and if you can get it with brown rice, even better. There's also the regulars: trail mix, wheat toast with peanut butter. I'll keep boxes of granola bars in my car, so there's always something.

In addition to "Make It Or Break It," the new movie and the book, you've also launched your own website, Roomag.com. How has being a mother made you better at all of these other things that you do?

I don't think that I would have had the patience for all of this if I weren't a mom. That's my biggest lesson as a mom: learning to be patient. Because I'm a mom, I'm not as self-centered; it's about my children, about my family. You do have to juggle a lot of people, with my husband, with my kids, and it's helped me in life and business in general. And learning to multi-task ... I'm not good at multi-tasking! For me it becomes about prioritizing.

What makes for the perfect Christmas in your house? Are there unique traditions that you enjoy living in California, or customs that your husband has shared from growing up in Russia?

They do Christmas differently in Russia. Being the woman, I probably won on this one, so we use more of my traditions than his. I love decorating the Christmas tree, some years with the kids. In Russia, the kids go to sleep on New Year's Eve, and the parents decorate the tree. The kids wake up with the tree decorated and presents under it. That one didn't work for me, but the one that has become a tradition is that the Russian Christmas is Jan. 7. That's the day that they celebrate the birth of Christ, so the tree stays up until then in our house. My kids always write Santa a letter, and we have a little fun with that. And we usually make cookies and put out carrots for the reindeer. On Christmas morning we also read the story of the birth of Christ before we open any presents, and we sing "Happy Birthday" to Christ, so we really center on the importance of the holiday. Then we open gifts, but we do it in a very orderly manner, taking turns as we go around the room. We've found that it's a much better way to enjoy the morning and not go into overload.

At St. Louis Sprout, we celebrate events and activities families can do outside of the house. What are some of your family's favorite activities?

These days, pretty much hockey games. I really feel like that's all our extracurricular activities consist of, hockey games in cold arenas. But any parent knows that if you have kids in sports, that's all you do. You don't have much free time. In the summer, when we're not in hockey, we live close to the beach, so we're total beach bums. We love the outdoors no matter what. We try to spend as much time outdoors as possible, bicycling, playing beach volleyball ... anything outdoors.

And finally ... you probably get asked this a lot: Do your kids watch "Full House"?

We don't watch a lot of television -- I have most of the channels blocked -- but yes, they've totally watched it. They think I'm a complete and total dork, especially my 13-year-old daughter. She can't believe people actually liked the way I dressed! I actually tried to get her to go as D.J. Tanner for Halloween.

Link: <http://www.stlsprout.com/articles/people/item/1026-actress-candace-cameron-bure-finds-the-heart-of-christmas-in-washington-ill>