



THE WORLDWIDE LEADER IN *Celebrations*

'CRANBERRY CHRISTMAS' **Cast Bios**

NIKKI DELOACH (Dawn) – Born in a small town in South Georgia, Nikki DeLoach always knew she wanted to be an entertainer. She started dancing at the age of three, eventually adding singing, modeling and acting to her repertoire. All her hard work paid off when at age 12, DeLoach became a member of “The Mickey Mouse Club” alongside Justin Timberlake, Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera and Ryan Gosling. After “MMC,” DeLoach spent several years in Los Angeles pursuing acting and landed a starring role opposite Mark Wahlberg and Bill Paxton in the feature film *Traveller*, and the TV series “Misery Loves Company.” She also played Anthony LaPaglia’s daughter in the television movie “Never Give Up: The Jimmy V Story.” In 1997, DeLoach put her acting career on hold to enter the world of pop music, signing with RCA and BMG Records to become part of the girl group Innosense. When the group disbanded in 2003, DeLoach returned to Hollywood and has gone on to enjoy a successful and diverse acting career.

DeLoach’s recent credits include her starring role on MTV’s critically acclaimed series “Awkward,” where she was considered one of television’s “hottest moms” with her portrayal of Lacey Hamilton. Although she is perhaps best known for her roles on “Awkward” and the iconic “The Mickey Mouse Club,” DeLoach has also guest starred on some of TV’s biggest hit shows, including “NCIS,” “Criminal Minds,” “CSI,” “CSI: NY,” “Cold Case,” “Mad Men” and “Without a Trace,” among many others. She was also a series regular on the popular show “North Shore.” Her films include *Love & Other Drugs*, *Flying Lessons*, opposite Maggie Grace and Hal Holbrook, and the French comedy *Hollywoo*. Hallmark Channel viewers will also recognize DeLoach from her starring roles in the network’s original movies “The Perfect Catch,” “Christmas Land,” “A Dream of Christmas,” “Truly, Madly, Sweetly,” and “Love Takes Flight,” which premiered as a Hallmark Hall of Fame presentation. She also developed, executive produced and starred in “Reunited at Christmas.” In 2019, DeLoach starred in the Hallmark Movies & Mysteries original “Two Turtle Doves,” opposite Michael Rady.

Outside of acting, DeLoach is dedicated to sharing her passions and ideas with others. She co-founded What We Are, a community of women that celebrates their unfiltered selves. She is also a passionate supporter and spokesperson for Children’s Hospital Los Angeles and The Alzheimer’s Association. DeLoach also shares her love for acting by coaching at the renowned Warner Loughlin Studios. She currently resides in Los Angeles with her husband and two young sons, Hudson and Bennett.

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BENJAMIN AYRES (Gabe) – Benjamin Ayres’ career has spanned both television and feature films. On the film side, he was most recently seen opposite Catherine Keener and Matt Craven in Alan Gilstenan’s *Unless*, which premiered at the 2016 Toronto International Film Festival. On the small screen he starred as Dr. Zachary Miller in the highly acclaimed, CTV/NBC medical

drama "Saving Hope," which ran for five seasons. Most recently, Ayres guest-starred in an episode of The CW series "Burden of Truth," and in Hallmark Channel's "Falling for Vermont."

Ayres is widely known for his role as Cancer Cowboy, the chain-smoking sex addict with a morbid death obsession, in the critically acclaimed cult hit CBC series "jPod," based on the Douglas Coupland novel of the same name. The role garnered him a Leo nomination in 2008. After two seasons as a series regular on the CTV hit series "Dan for Mayor," he then landed the role of Eric Blake on HBO Canada's Gemini Award winning series "Less Than Kind," for which he received a Canadian Screen Award nomination.

Ayres has appeared in more than 40 television series and television movies, including the Hallmark Channel original movie "Love by Chance." His other credits include various guest star and recurring roles on SyFy's "Battlestar Galactica," "Bitten" and "Lost Girl," The CW's "The Vampire Diaries," CBS's "Flashpoint," ABC's "Combat Hospital," "Diamonds" and "Impact," and The WB's "Smallville."

During his early 20s, Ayres studied at The Lyric School of Acting under the direct mentorship of studio head Michele Lonsdale Smith. He later collaborated with her as a performer in a wide range of theatrical productions, including multiple mountings of Eric Bogosian's one-man play *Sex, Drugs, Rock & Roll*, Judith Thompson's *Lion in the Streets* and August Strindberg's *Miss Julie*. Ayres became one of Vancouver's most in-demand stage actors and was approached to originate the role of Tench in the world premiere of Raul Inglis's *In the Eyes of God*, and again in Inglis's next original play, *Surveillance*.

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