Angelina Jolie and Matt Damon on the set of The Good Shepherd

...and Dedicated Mom; Angelina Jolie in her new blockbuster, The Good Shepherd

By Adrienne Papp

Hollywood is often thought of as a place where all is about money and popularity and life is just one big soap opera after another. Every once-in-a-while, however, someone rises out of the celluloid to walk their talk and truly make a difference in the world. Angelina Jolie is one such person. A warrior on and off screen, Jolie has mounted a campaign to change the world, while maintaining a quality family life and an amazing career to boot!

In her new book (albeit a published journal) Notes from My Travels, Angelina writes, “I am on a plane to Africa... This is the beginning of my trip and this journal. I do not know who I am writing to... I honestly want to help. I don’t know why I like to believe that if we were in a bad situation we all want justice and equality. We all want a chance for a life with meaning. All of us would follow someone who is saying that charitable work is ‘the greatest thing in my life.’”

Jolie has dedicated one third of her income to a higher cause. Jane Goodall, founder of the Jane Goodall Institute and UN Messenger of Peace has said, “Angelina is living proof of what a person can do with a very small amount of money.”

And, that is what characterizes Angelina. She has disproved the century-old axiom, “having children equals giving up one’s career and mobility.” Angelina is a true inspiration to the rest of us juggling motherhood, careers and relationships, not to mention, being a jet-setting humanitarian 24/7. Still, she somehow manages to put family first!

As if all of the above were not enough, her new movie, The Good Shepherd, is premiering on December 22 in theaters nationwide. The untold story of the birth of the CIA—viewed through the life of a man who believed in America and would sacrifice everything he loved to protect it—is told in this epic drama in which she stars with Academy Award winners Matt Damon and Robert De Niro. The film is directed by Robert De Niro and is being released by Universal. Joining Damon, Angelina and De Niro in the all-star cast are actors Alec Baldwin, Billy Crudup, Michael Gambon, John Turturro and William Hurt.

“Her access to her emotions is unbelievable to watch and be around. She is a very emotional actress and she gives a lot,” said once co-star, Winona Rider about Angelina’s performance. And, that is what characterizes Angelina. She does not do one part or the other. She does it all and she has it all.

Whatever happens next, Angelina continues to evolve from Golden Globe- and Oscar-winning actress to loving mother and Goodwill Ambassador.

“I am very honest and open and do good things with my life,” says Angelina. And good things she does. And she does them well.