“Solo: A Star Wars Story,” Another Movie Credit for Exceptional Minds with Autism

Sherman Oaks, California – June 5, 2018 -- The force is once again with the Exceptional Minds Studio of visual effects professionals on the autism spectrum, which added Solo: A Star Wars Story to its list of movie credits.

This is the second Star Wars movie for Exceptional Minds. In addition to Solo: A Star Wars Story, Exceptional Minds was one of several studios that worked with Industrial Light & Magic (ILM) on visual effects for Star Wars: The Last Jedi released in December. “It doesn’t get much more exciting than Star Wars. You’d think we’d be used to it after doing the first one, but it never gets old. These young artists have worked hard, and they’ve proven themselves in a very competitive industry. They’re an inspiration,” said Exceptional Minds Studio Executive Producer Susan Zwerman.
An estimated 90 percent of the autism population is under- or unemployed, and few training programs exist to prepare young adults with autism for meaningful careers.

Exceptional Minds Studio opened its doors almost four years ago. All artists are graduates of Exceptional Minds, the first nonprofit vocational school of its kind to prepare young men and women on the autism spectrum for careers in visual effects and animation.

Since it opened, Exceptional Minds Studio has done rotoscoping, tracker marker removal, split screen, green screen keying, and compositing, as well as end title credit work and animation for more than 50 major motion pictures and/or television series. The list includes animation for Sesame Street and visual effects for Avengers: Infinity War, Black Panther, and The Good Doctor.

For Solo: A Star Wars Story, the artists at Exceptional Minds Studio were contracted to do VFX cleanup on several shots that involved detailed rotoscope and paint work. “This is very challenging work. Each shot is like a puzzle and these guys just love that challenge of trying to figure out the best way to approach a shot. They don’t give up, they’re kind of obsessive about it,” said Zwerman.

“It feels rewarding, that my hard work paid off,” agreed Tony Saturno, one of the Exceptional Minds artists who worked on this latest Star Wars movie. Tony, along with Nicolas Arredondo, Andrew Dugan, Lloyd Hackl, Eli Katz, Annie Leffe, and Mason Taylor, completed cleanup on 56 shots for Solo: A Star Wars Story -- more than double the 20 shots Exceptional Minds Studio completed for Star Wars: The Last Jedi. In addition, Studio Executive Producer Susan Zwerman, Studio Coordinator Jennifer Giandalone, and visual effects supervisors Immanuel Morris, Kenneth Au, Megan Flood and Josh Dagg provided their expertise and supervision on the project.

About Exceptional Minds (www.exceptionalmindsstudio.org): Exceptional Minds is a nonprofit vocational center and working production studio for young adults on the autism spectrum. Exceptional Minds offers technical proficiency and work-readiness training that prepares students for careers in graphic arts, animation, web design and visual effects.

About “Solo: A Star Wars Story” (www.starwars.com/films/solo): Through a series of daring escapades deep within a dark and dangerous criminal underworld, Han Solo meets his mighty future copilot Chewbacca and encounters the notorious gambler Lando Calrissian, in a journey that will set the course of one of the Star Wars saga’s most unlikely heroes.