

# Youths bringing real to reel

## FILM FESTIVAL:

Local and international students showcase what they saw with the camera's eye

PETER RUSLAND  
News Leader Pictorial

Teens' blueprints for building a better world one town at a time unravel in Duncan Thursday during the Reel Youth Film Festival.

Two-dozen flicks — between one and eight minutes — by teens age 19 and younger probe issues spanning bullying to bigotry at the second-annual filmfest.

Six films from Cowichan teens join 18 pictures chosen from 300 worldwide submissions.

Three of the six local flicks — *Together*, *Push* and *Victims* — are part of the Cowichan Intercultural Society's Anti-Discrimination First-Aid film series.

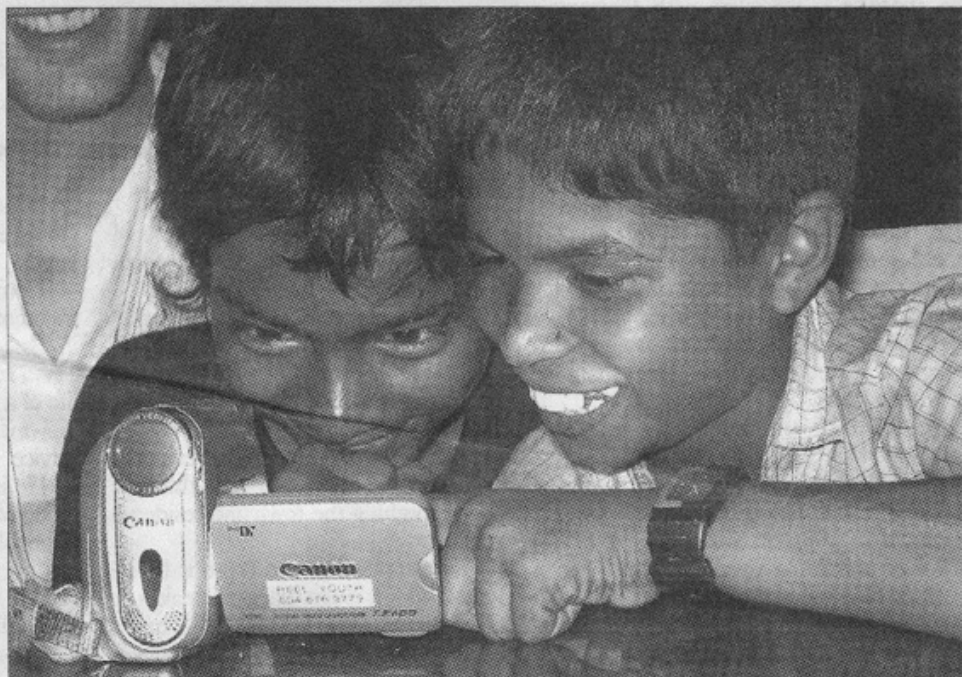
It earned a heritage and culture award in the spring's Cowichan Aboriginal Film Festival.

Those three will be screened Thursday with local movies *Classroom Dress*, *Second-Hand Smoke Chokes*, and *Bullets Don't Save Lives*.

Jenni Capps, 15, helped make *Together* last year at Mount Prevost middle school amid the society's aim to educate, build trust and boost respect for cultural diversity.

"Those in our movie were from all over, including Taiwan and China," the Cowichan secondary Grade 10 student said.

Minute-long *Together* depicts students "interpreting that we're all people, and race shouldn't be a factor,"



courtesy Mark Vonesch

One of the features of this week's Reel Youth film festival is *Goonda*, made with street kids in India.

said Capps.

"It's beautiful when all races are together."

That bond is symbolized by the students holding a string that's eventually interwoven.

Duncanite Capps reports a minority of youths "have a really low appreciation of racial diversity."

"I have no idea why but these films are a good way to get people to appreciate those from different countries."

"We should celebrate our differences, not look down on them."

Amen says mom, Donae.

"I love seeing Jenni's involved and isn't afraid to speak out to her friends if they're being discriminatory."

But discrimination involves more than race.

The brutality of bullying someone who is different is displayed in *Victims*, starring Rae Sinclair, 18.

"I'm the victim being beat up by others and someone defends me and rescues

me," she said.

The silent movie is backed by the song *Ghost Girl*, Sinclair says of the three-minute movie also shot at Prevost school last year for the society.

Like most entries, *Victims* was shot with digital gear.

"The plot's about anti-discrimination and how to stop it if we help each other and be stronger," the CSS Grade 12 pupil said.

Sinclair sees art such as film as a medium appealing to children.

Hallelujah, hints the society's Linda Hill.

"Film's one of the most effective diversity education tools," she says, cheering festival films exploring issues raised by youths from many races and religions.

Those messages are depicted through acting, as documentaries or using ani-

mation.

"Many were made as school or community projects about an issue," Hill said, proud of films from the society's 2006 First-Aid project now on its antidiscrimination DVD shown around B.C.

"The festival's big goal is to connect adults with youths so we're really hoping adults come out."

She also said she hopes to see Mark Vonesch's film *Goonda* made with street kids in Mysore, India.

"We want Valley adults and youths to be aware of issues raised by youths around Canada and the world."

Filmmakers will field questions and the audience can vote for the best films in various categories including the prize-filled people's choice award.

## Your ticket

- ▶ **What:** Reel Youth Film Festival
- ▶ **When:** Nov. 15, 6 to 9 p.m.
- ▶ **Where:** Cowichan Theatre
- ▶ **Tickets:** by donation