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Windsor High student film awarded

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‘These Are The Walls That Speak’ wins statewide competition

A film created by Windsor High School students to highlight the importance of arts education has tied for first place in a statewide competition put together by California Alliance for Arts Education as part of their Student Voices campaign. The film will be screened, and honored, on April 29 at the Student Voices Summit and Screening in Los Angeles.

The film features a variety of images from around the county, as well as of Windsor students, while a voice over describes the importance of arts in education in a spoken-word style.

According to a release from CAAE, one of the judge's comments about this film summed up its power.

“This is the kind of video that resonates long after the last frame.,” the judge said. “I found it to be powerful, cohesive and timely. It brought together the magic of dramatic spoken word poetry, dazzling visual images and a message that felt raw and true. This is the kind of video that I want to forward to my friends and say - now here is the power of the arts! Bravo.”

The film was directed by Aliezah Hulett, a 17-year-old senior at WHS, though she headed a team of about 15 to create the film. As such, she feels her rolls was more of facilitator than creative genius.

“I brought together a group of creative people and combined the ideas that came out of brainstorming session,” she said. “I don't consider myself creative, but I brought special people together and we got some beautiful art.”

According to a statement from CAAE, students representing eight California counties participated. Videos were judged on the persuasiveness of the message, technical components of the video and the creative approach. Students were asked how they would make their school a better place with the campaign slogan, “Your Voice. Your Vision. Your School.” Videos and messages were shared with school board members in each district.

Hulett was amazed to learn that her group had made the top-14 cut, let alone that they had tied for first place.

“When I found out we were in the top 14 I was shocked and threw a party, because I didn't think it could any better than that,” she said.

Unfortunately, she found out they won while on the four-day break for Easter, so no big celebration could take place. “I was shocked and amazed,” she said.

Hulett thinks the success of her video is in the collaboration between the team members, who have now taken their advocacy work one step further.

“It was really special,” she said. “You ask someone to do what seems like a little job, and then in the end product you see how important it was. We worked well together because we were all considered equals.

“We live art everyday,” she continued. “And because of our experience, the project to make the film has turned in to an arts advocacy club.”

“The Student Voices Campaign is a creative way for young people to make their voices heard in their school district and share their vision for their schools,” said California Alliance for Arts Education Director of Communications Sibyl O’Malley in a statement. “It also teaches the power of advocacy and civic engagement. Through these videos, students were able to share their concerns about what needed to be improved. They expressed creatively what they were passionate about and shared a plea for change.”

According to O’Malley, in California, students are guaranteed a voice in planning and budgeting for their school district. The Local Control Funding Formula, or LCFF, requires that districts consult with students, parents, teachers and community members to create an official plan for the coming years.

Hulett’s film tied for first place with “Art in Education” from Bear River High School in Grass Valley.

“These are the Walls that Speak” can be viewed on YouTube at https://youtu.be/YCH5_gX7Fhk

The Student Voices Summit and Screening will take place on Saturday, April 29 at the Plaza De la Raza Cultural Center for the Arts and Education in East Los Angeles. In addition to the screening of student films, there will be workshops with people like the animation team from SpongeBob SquarePants and the production designer for Beyonce’s Lemonade, a creative career panel including actors, designers, engineers and fashion industry personnel, and student advocacy success stories. More information can be found at studentvoicescampaign.org. Registration is available at studentvoicessummit2017.eventbrite.com.

The California Alliance for Arts Education advocates for high quality arts education for all students by providing policy expertise and by mobilizing a statewide network of advocates and allied partners. More information can be found at artsed411.org.