

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOCUS **FILM FESTIVAL**
exploring the complexities of the human experience

FOCUS Film Festival is pleased to announce the winners of the Third Annual Short Film Competition: **FOCUS on Living with a Disability**. The winning entries will be screened on October 14, at the Bell Memorial Union Auditorium in Chico. Meet the winning directors at a reception following the screening.

And the winners are...

Best of Festival: MOTHERSBANE (USA 2010, 11:30 minutes)

Writer-director, Producer: Jason Jakaitis

A personal documentary that explores the filmmaker's ambivalent relationship to his mother's physical disabilities and chronicles his attempts to be at peace with her suffering and disfigurement. The film draws upon a variety of poetic evocations, including Super 8 re-creations of childhood memories, to express the love and anxiety, and the protectiveness and dread, that has defined Jason's relationship with his mother.

(\$500 award sponsored by We Care A Lot Foundation)

Award of Excellence: A DIFFERENT COLOR BLUE (USA 2008, 3:59 minutes)

Editor, Director, Cinematographer: Melanie Levy

In a dusty art studio tucked away in San Francisco's Tenderloin district, artist Charles Curtis Blackwell pours over works of beauty and remarkable spirit. The film explores the redemptive power of art, an ability to find hope in the most unlikely of places, and the courage of an artist who refuses to turn away from the thing he loves most.

(\$300 award sponsored by Union Bank)

Merit Award: MY NAME IS SYDNEY (USA 2009, 16:53 minutes)

Editor, Director, Cinematographer: Melanie Levy; Original Music: Joel Bravo

Sydney Edmond is a sixteen-year-old girl living with Autism. Although she lives without the ability to speak, her lyrical writing invites us into a world where senses react differently, light flickers brilliantly, and music offers a gateway to connect with the people around us.

(\$200 sponsored by Parent Infant Programs)

Spirit of the Festival: WHEN I'M NOT ALONE (USA 2009, 21 minutes)

Director/Producer: Rhianon Gutierrez; Editor: Zara Ahmed; Composer: Shohan Cagle

The story of Sam Durbin, who was born female but raised as a male, experienced unspeakable abuse, never learned to read or write, and drifted in and out of institutions. Today, Sam is a published author and nationwide advocate for people with disabilities.

(\$300 sponsored by Richard C. Robertson in memory of Deborah L. Rowell)

Audience Pick: To be announced at the reception.

(\$100 award sponsored by Far Northern Regional Center)

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About the Judges



Jason Cassidy: A musician, writer and arts promoter for over 20 years in Chico, where he lives with his wife Connie. He's served on the board of 1078 Gallery, and has, for the past seven years, been the Arts Editor for the Chico News & Review, Chico's weekly newspaper.



Lorraine Dechter: Video Producer/Director for KIXE-TV and current News Director and Morning Edition host for Northstate Public Radio. She is a USC/Annenberg Health Journalism Fellow, with experience in print radio, television, and multimedia. Lorraine loves to teach media production, especially to teens— perhaps because she started producing radio programs at age 14. In 2009, she co-directed the Greendance Film Festival.



Ron Harrington: A Telecommunications and Film major from San Diego State University where he won student film of the year. He was a judge for Redding's first Sundial Film Festival in 2009. Currently, he is part owner-publisher of After Five Magazine and two weekly newspapers in the north state.



Lainie Turner: Served as a judge and former director of the da Vinci Film Festival in Corvallis, Oregon and as board president of da Vinci Days, Corvallis' signature summer festival. She and her husband, Paul Turner, own and operate the Corvallis art house theater Darkside Cinema. Lainie is a career technology project manager who also writes technical marketing materials for Fortune 100 companies.

Theatre-in-the-Now: The Theatre-in-the-Now Troupe from the 7th Street Centre of the Arts judged "The Spirit of the Festival" award. Their decision was based on the film's relevance and impact on people with disabilities and/or those whose lives are affected by individuals with disabilities, and how the film educates or illuminates the topic for the general public.

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