

Quotes from past participants...

Katia Canciani, Cultural Agent
École Rose-des-Vents, Greenwood, NS

The School Rose-des-Vents had the immense privilege of receiving the visit of the Festival in a Van. The movies chosen were well adapted to the kids age and curriculum. They made them think, and triggered a lot of interest. The short movies made by kids amazed our students as they realized those movies were made by young people their age! Not only did the students learn a lot (organization skills, team work, staying focused on a task) but they wanted to pursue what they had learned, at home.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Sponsors for allowing this great project to come to our School. Being a small School with limited budget for special activities, the visit of Festival in a Van was a true gift to us.

Nona MacDermind, Filmmaker / Producer
Sydney Mines, NS

I asked if I could enter a team of youth who would create a Gaelic film in the 48-hour film challenge. To my surprise and delight, Julie supported my idea and created an amazing string of events that culminated in Festival in a Van going around Cape Breton and bringing the Gaelic film to youth in Cape Breton who may never have had any exposure to the whole world of opportunity in film and media. When I saw the email that Julie sent to summarize all that they achieved - I actually cried. That makes me really passionate about trying to contribute where I can to create opportunities.

Student discussing screening of 'Hannah's Story'
Holy Heart High, St. John's, NL

We watched a film yesterday about Hannah and The Ladybug Foundation and I think you have changed the minds of students. I know you have changed mine. I've never really paid attention to the homeless. Your film really touched me, and changed the way I look at these people. I don't only look at these people as being just homeless now. I think of these people as being People. People who just need a little bit of help and a little bit of love. And in every way are the same as us.

Sam Fisher, Parent to Aven Fisher
Halifax, NS

The Animation Challenge was a watershed in Aven's life. Before Bruno won the award, Aven didn't even believe his work was any good at all, if you can believe that. What the animation challenge did for Aven was to define him as an artist and give him a confidence that most artists never find until much later in life. Since then Aven's film has won awards in Ottawa and New York and he's now being invited to screen at festivals all over the world, in Europe and Australia. A simple thank you would not be enough. The main message of the challenge is "you can do it" and the kids get that. That's a very powerful and important message to give to kids which goes far beyond the confines of the competition. Many, many thanks.

Charlotte Riley, Department Head, French and Spanish
CineClub Faculty Adviser
Sacred Heart School for Girls, Halifax, Nova Scotia

This was such a positive experience for our CineClub girls. In our case, three 17-year old girls went on to write, produce, edit, cast and screen their film, several times. They also planned a premiere party and were interviewed on several occasions. They appeared on television, in person and in print. They represented their school with enthusiasm each time and made their parents and their school community so proud. I cannot think of a more all-encompassing educational experience than the Pitch for Production. Many thanks to Julie Glaser and the entire gang at Viewfinders for getting this event right!

I was tremendously impressed with the school administrators who provided the venue and set aside two-hour blocks of time for full school assemblies for the screenings. This does not happen every day and demonstrated the very high level of trust with educators throughout the province that has been developed by View Finder's Director Julie Glaser and her team. It was a great pleasure for me to have been involved in this is a creative and much needed program.

Juanita Peters, Filmmaker - Hannah's Story
Halifax, NS

I just wanted to tell you how extremely valuable ViewFinders and Festival in A Van has been for me as a filmmaker. One of the hardships of filmmaking in this country of course is funding, the second is getting the film to viewers. From your efforts alone, in just a few short months "Hannah's Story" was before thousands of students, educators and interested viewers. Not only did the public get to see the film, but they also had an amazing opportunity to engage with me, the filmmaker, and with the subject of the film, Hannah Taylor. The response has been so overwhelming, that we have to thank your efforts and hard work for a job well done. Thanks you so very much and I hope we can continue work together on future projects.

Ann Verrall, Filmmaker – The Wait
Shortworks Productions, Halifax, NS

I was very pleased and honoured to be invited to take part in the Atlantic Film Festival's Festival in a Van program. Having me - the writer, director, producer – present, allowed for discussions with students and workshops to take place. Most importantly it encouraged young people to explore their own ideas and value their own experiences as content for stories. I was also able to show video clips of the workshop process I used to create the script for The Wait and talk about the experience of working with the teens in this way. I believe very strongly that engaging with youth in this way is fundamental to the healthy development of them and society as a whole. We need to provide practical information, direct contact with creative professionals and exposure to the varied career options that exist in the field of film. And we especially need to do these things in rural locals. Thankfully Festival in a Van is doing all this and doing it very well.

Deanna Mohamed, Student Support Worker
North Nova Education Centre, New Glasgow, NS

Students here shared with me that they absolutely loved the music video and enjoyed seeing the youth involved in something so cool. With Sylvia's film [The Little Black School House], the students said that it was very informative and eye-opening, because many of them did not know that segregated schools existed in Nova Scotia.. It was also very inspiring as it invoked a sense of necessity for teachers to recognize the emotional/psychological impact that they have on African Canadian students and they should always critically assess and reflect upon whether or not they have high expectations for them and truly encourage them to be all they can be. Thanks so much for bringing these films to our school. We are much better for it!

Stephen Blum, Principal
Amherst Regional High School, Amherst, NS

I was delighted with the Festival in a Van presentations. Arranging the visits of community resource people, guest speakers and so on involves some effort on the part of a teacher. Festival in a Van was more than worth it! My thanks to Julie Glaser and Courtenay Kyle for making it a lot easier. They showed a real appreciation for the realities schools face. Likewise, Sylvia Hamilton was not only generous and professional in sharing her film with us, but also a very gracious guest. Dr. Hamilton's Little Black School House and the North Preston Music Video were perfectly suited to my English 12 African Heritage course. They were an excellent way of getting students to start thinking about ways of representing ideas and feelings.. In addition, all of the students were impressed and encouraged by the samples they saw of student submissions to the Atlantic Film Festival/Viewfinders - the work of students their own age and younger. Thanks again!

Teresa MacInnes, Filmmaker - Generation XXL
Boutilier's Point, NS

I want to thank you two so much for putting on a wonderful festival. All the youth I was involved with had a wonderful experience! I found the screening and discussion of Generation XXL also very powerful. To see all those kids up on the stage and speak with such confidence was so amazing to me. Some of those girls would not say a word during the sessions at the camp and several were very shy in front of the camera! It just reinforces for me that what we all do is worth it! Thanks again and hope to see you soon!

Vicki Trainor, Parent

My son, Daniel has recently returned from the Film Academy program at the Ross Creek Centre for the Arts - an opportunity which he won through the Viewfinders Film Festival for Youth. According to Daniel, it was "...the best experience of my life!" We both want to thank you and Viewfinders once again for the rare opportunity the program provided Daniel. This was a life-defining experience for Daniel. His own artistic nature was encouraged and validated, and he was thrilled to meet "...people who were just like me." We are very grateful to Viewfinders for making this possible.

Kathy MacGillivray, Mother of Logan MacGillivray
Bedford, NS

I wanted to write to you to let you know the tremendous impact and experience [March Break camp on animation] was for our son. Shaun and his team from Toronto along with Julie and Mark offered him an opportunity that surpassed any expectations we could have imagined. We had no idea this was just the beginning of yet another fantastic experience for Logan. As their PSA was entered in the Viewfinders program we participated by attending three films and two awards functions. The program offered at Viewfinders was exceptional and educational. Julie and her team did an outstanding job in providing a wonderful program. Viewfinders was a highlight of Logan's school year and he is determined to get his class on board for next year's Viewfinders. Congratulations to Atlantic Film for developing and executing an outstanding and educational children's program with the animation camp and Viewfinders!\

Sylvia Hamilton, Filmmaker - Little Black School House
Grand Pre, NS

The experience of visiting junior and senior high schools as part of the Atlantic Film Festival ViewFinders "Festival in a Van" tour was an exhilarating experience for me as filmmaker. It is an all too rare opportunity, and therefore one very deserving of support. I was able to concentrate on the discussion and interaction with the students and school staff because the ViewFinders staff took care of logistics, technical considerations and communications. And I must add they did so with professionalism and good humour.

Liam Gareau
2007 ViewFinders Youth Jury
2007 Festival in a Van/Ross Creek Camper

Ross Creek was quite honestly the best experience for my life. I was surrounded by so many amazingly talented, experienced, lovely people who were all about helping their students and supporting us all the way. Over the course of two weeks I've met people who hope to continue to remain friends with for the rest of my life. And I'm almost hesitant to go back next year simply because there is no way that my next experience at Ross Creek could ever possibly top my first experience there. The bar has been set very, very, VERY high. And on like, my first day I found that I was in the Festival in a Van! Who knew!?! That was a lovely surprise. And it was great, great to see you. I'm looking forward to working with the festival and I hope to be in contact with you soon.