

## **Critics at Work: Children Get Behind the Reins of Prestigious Children's Film Festival**

**26<sup>th</sup> Annual International Film Festival hosts Children's Jury**

CHICAGO, IL – AUGUST 4-14, 2009 – Every year, over 900 entries to the Chicago International Children's Film Festival (CICFF) are narrowed down to a program of about 200 elite films which compete for the festival's top prizes. The CICFF Children's Jury, held at Facets Multi-Media, Inc., 1517 W. Fullerton Avenue, plays a critical role in judging submissions from over forty different countries around the world. Graduates of the CICFF's highly-regarded Young Chicago Critics program act as jurors, viewing and critiquing films in competition for the annual film festival, now in its 26<sup>th</sup> year.

For the first two weeks in August, young jurors ranging in age from seven to fourteen will view over seventy films in consideration for the festival, which runs from October 22 – November 1, 2009 at Facets Multi-Media in West Lincoln Park, as well as at several select theatres throughout the north side of Chicago. The young critics are asked to rate each film based on dialogue, cinematography, acting, screenwriting and other criteria for high quality cinema.

According to Nicole Dreiske, Executive Director of the Festival, "It's unusual for a world class event to give children the power to award their own prizes, but for a festival dedicated to children's film it's absolutely essential. These young people are targeted by media as a market but here, they're stepping outside their traditional roles as consumers. Given the opportunity to interact with films in new ways, children are uniquely insightful and perceptive."

Jury members who complete the eight-day judging process contribute to the selection of the festival's most prestigious awards, including Best Live Action Feature Film and Best Child-Produced Film. The awards ceremony will take place on the CICFF American Airlines Closing Night Gala on November 1 at the Film Row Cinema, 1104 S. Wabash Avenue.

The Chicago International Children's Film Festival Children's Jury will run August 4-14, 2009. For more information about The CICFF Children's Jury, the Young Chicago Critics Program, or the CICFF, please contact Kathleen Beckman at 773-281-9075 or visit the official CICFF website at <http://www.cicff.org>.

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