

FACETS NEWS

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Facets Develops Film Programs to Help Schools Tackle School Bullying Issues

Chicago, IL - NO BULLIES, PLEASE! - three film programs of award-winning films selected from the Chicago International Children's Film Festival and curated around the issues of bullying - begin screening for groups of school students starting March 1, 2011. Screenings are both at Facets Multi-Media, 1517 West Fullerton Avenue, Chicago, and on-site in specific Chicago area schools.

Facets selected the films for age-specific audiences (elementary and middle school students). Each program consists of short films and runs 90 minutes. The programs present situations and stories designed to spark lively and constructive dialogue about issues of bullying, and include pre- and post-screening discussions by Facets' Media Educators.

The NO BULLIES, PLEASE! program builds on Facets' 28-year track record of using film to help teachers raise issues of importance to their students. Each year, the Chicago International Children's Film Festival brings hundreds of diverse, non-violent films for children to Chicago each October, curating collections of films that address a variety of themes. In 2010, over 10,000 students from 93 schools attended Festival film programs on field trips. Long a trusted "filter" for teachers, Facets is now responding to the call to provide access to these film programs beyond the annual ten-day Festival.

The first of the programs, "Sticks and Stones" is targeted for first through third graders. The films show characters who find strength in themselves or others they can rely on - for instance, in the story of a young boy who knows he can turn to his stylish sister when others make fun of his "long-john" stocking cap. For fourth and fifth graders, "Actions Speak Louder" addresses the results of making assumptions about people who are "different," whether it's boys versus girls or the new kid in school. And for middle schoolers, "Teasing Texts: Don't Hit Send!" covers the too-familiar scenarios of text bullying and unwisely-sent emails.

Festival Program Director Ann Vikstrom explains, "We bring together films that provide a window or present a situation where our media educator can start the conversation. The goal of the pre- and post-screening discussions is to help students think things through more actively. Whom can they rely on in a tricky situation? How can they understand each other's differences?"

"By breaking down familiar situations and reuniting children with positive images, we help educators and students construct a road map with familiar signs, and develop the tools to recognize the symbols," Vikstrom continues. "Every class has its 'Mean Girls.' We're helping teachers to open up a dialogue about what actions we infer are acceptable among our group."

In addition to pre- and post-screening discussions and contextualization led by Facets' Media Educators, curriculum aligned with Illinois State Board of Education Learning Standards is also provided to teachers prior to the day of screening

Field trips or in-school screenings are arranged to fit a group or school's schedule through Group Sales Coordinator Anne Bustamante, who can be reached at fldtrips@facets.org or (773) 281-9075 ext. 3009.

Founded in 1975, Facets Multi-Media is a Chicago-based non-profit media arts organization dedicated to making film accessible to all through cinema education, distribution, presentation, and preservation, with an emphasis on the best in classic, world, and independent cinema.

For more information, contact:

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