



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **5<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL SANTA MONICA TEEN FILM FESTIVAL WINNERS**

*Santa Monica, California* – The results are in!! The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Santa Monica Teen Film Festival was a tremendous success. This year, the festival received over 180 submissions from across the country and Canada. Thirty three films were screened over two days, and awards were given out on Sunday, June 20 at the Santa Monica Public Library, Main Library screening.

Top honors, and the winner of several awards, went to *Batman Starts* by Harry Keenan and Max Groel from Pacific Palisades, CA. This humorous film is a parody on the Batman series and the true crime that occurs in the Pacific Palisades. It won “Best of the Fest, 1<sup>st</sup> Place,” “Best Live Action,” and “Audience Choice, Sunday.” *Chicken Little* by Richard Mattox from Tallahassee, FL won both “Best of the Fest, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place” and “Best Experimental/Music Video”. The film is a music video for an original song written and sung by Richard Mattox (the director).

The festival screened quite a few documentaries this year including the “Best Documentary, 1<sup>st</sup> Place” award winner Drew Morton Goldsmith from Middleton, WI, for *No Pity*, an eye-opening documentary about the depiction of people with disabilities. The “Best Documentary, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place” award went to an international submission, *Enza and Thom* by Jesse Bostick from Ontario, Canada. This film followed the relationship between a deaf woman and a hearing man, their challenges, and their joys.

We had several local Santa Monica winners at this year's festival. Our "Audience Choice" award for Saturday went to Adam Morina from Crossroads High School for his film *First Time*, which is about two teens who share an intimate encounter for the first time, along with the awkwardness and embarrassment that follows. Sergei Acuna from Santa Monica High School won the "Best Animation" award for *Evolution of Scissors*, a clever short film about scissors that come together to form new life and are destroyed by a meteor. The Santa Monica Budding Filmmaker Award—the award given each year to a local teen who displays the talent and passion for a future filmmaking career—was awarded to Nicole Andrews from Santa Monica High School. Two of Ms. Andrews' films were screened at this year's festival: *Tap*, a short experimental film that illustrates lyrics from Billie Holiday's "Fire and Mellow" through images of a dripping faucet, and *Going Up Crazy*, a live action film that follows a businessman who must endure the daily annoyances of using a public elevator on the way to work.

Category winners of the Santa Monica Teen Film Festival were decided by a panel of industry professional judges and teen judges. The Audience Choice Award winners were decided by popular vote from the audience at each screening. Congratulations to all of the winners and filmmakers for their hard work, dedication, and creativity!

The Santa Monica Teen Film Festival is an interdepartmental initiative between the Santa Monica Cultural Affairs Division, the Santa Monica Public Library, and the Virginia Avenue Park Teen Center. Its purpose is to provide an outlet for, and to showcase, the creative talents of teen filmmakers, as well as encourage youth to use the art of filmmaking as a form of creative expression and commentary on the world in which they live.

List of Awards:

Best of the Fest, 1<sup>st</sup> place – *Batman Starts* by Harry Keenan and Max Groel

Best of the Fest, 2<sup>nd</sup> place – *Chicken Little* by Richard Mattox

Best Documentary, 1<sup>st</sup> place – *No Pity* by Drew Morton Goldsmith

Best Documentary, 2<sup>nd</sup> place – *Enza and Thom* by Jesse Bostick

Best Animation – *Evolution of Scissors* by Sergei Acuna

Best Experimental/Music Video – *Chicken Little* by Richard Mattox

Audience Choice Award, Saturday – *First Time* by Adam Morina

Audience Choice Award, Sunday – *Batman Starts* by Harry Keenan and Max Groel

Santa Monica Budding Filmmaker Award – Nicole Andrews

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