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**Social Justice Film Festival announces 2014 awards—
Seattle filmmakers win two**

Seattle—The Social Justice Film Festival announced the winners of its third annual festival held last month. The two-week festival screened 52 films from around the world.

Two award-winners are local

Return of the River—winner of the Gold Jury Prize for Feature Film—tells the story of the Port Angeles, Wash., community that made the controversial decision to remove the Elwha River dam and restore the river’s ecosystem. At the screening last month, the audience raved about the movie’s cinematography and story of the biggest dam-removal project in history.

“Whenever social justice issues are debated, one question always comes up: Is there any hope? *Return of the River* gives us the confidence to say yes,” says Festival Director Anne Paxton. “When we see this film, we know there is never an excuse for giving up and saying ‘what’s done is done.’”

Riffing on the Dream—winner of the Gold Jury Prize for Youth Visions—is a documentary by students at Chief Sealth International High School in West Seattle. In the film, students from the Black Student Union answered unscripted questions from classmates to prompt racial dialogue within their school.

“The Black Student Union at Chief Sealth made a courageous film to give some answers on what racism really is, especially as it relates to traps of language like ‘ghetto,’ ‘nigga,’ and ‘ratchet.’ We are brought face-to-face with young people who honestly tell their experiences with harmful stereotypes and labels. The film exemplifies the goal of our Youth Visions competition: to reveal the often-overlooked youth experience,” says Paxton.

Director’s Choice film humanizes the struggle for citizenship

The festival also awarded its Director’s Choice Award to the feature-length documentary *The Vigil*. In the film, Gina, an undocumented single mother, risks arrest and deportation when she joins a vigil on the Arizona State Capitol lawn to stop America’s most controversial immigration law, “Papers Please,” from going into effect.

“The Vigil is about the American dream, a dream of a better life for one's children, and how a woman of deep character fought for it. To see Gina's serene conviction that she will overcome all obstacles to change America's harsh immigration policy is deeply inspiring. We loved *The Vigil*; it's a powerful film that shows the sheer moral force of a human being who appeals to everyone's better nature,” says Paxton.

2014 Awards

Director's Choice Award

The Vigil, directed by Jenny Alexander (USA)

Gold Jury Prize – Feature

Return of the River, directed by John Gussman and Jessica Plumb (USA)

Silver Jury Prize - Feature

War Against Women, directed by Hernán Zin (Spain)

Bronze Jury Prize - Feature

Prison Terminal, directed by Edgar Barnes (USA)

Gold Jury Prize – Short

Mestizo, directed by Talon Gonzalas (USA)

Silver Jury Prize - Short

L'Effect Aleatori (The Random Effect), directed by Nofre Moyà (Spain)

Bronze Jury Prize - Short

Tears, directed by Yahya Ghobadi (Kurdistan)

Gold Jury Prize – Youth Visions

Riffing on the Dream, directed by Chief Sealth International High School students (USA)

Silver Jury Prize - Youth Visions

Out of Focus, directed by Adrián Arce and Antonio Ziri6n (Mexico)

Bronze Jury Prize – Youth Visions

Lie, directed by Lisa Jiang (USA)

Prisoner Justice Prize

Natural Life, directed by Tirtza Even (USA)

Worker Justice Prize

Wisconsin Rising directed by Sam Mayfield (USA)

Best Narrative Film Prize

Paper Crane, directed by Yu Shibuya (Japan)

Best Animation Prize

The Box, directed by Michael Schiller (USA)

To learn more about these films, visit socialjusticefilmfestival.org.

ABOUT THE FESTIVAL

Based in Seattle, Washington, the Social Justice Film Festival showcases bold and creative films on social issues that shape our humanity.