

The Second Annual Youth Voices Film Showcase celebrates the creativity, perspectives, and lived experiences of young people through the power of film and storytelling. Young people have important stories to tell, and their voices deserve to be heard, valued, and included in the conversations that shape our communities and our future. Creative arts provide young people with a powerful way to express themselves, share their experiences, explore the issues that matter to them, and invite others to see the world through their eyes.

Today, we celebrate the young filmmakers who took the time, courage, and creativity to share their stories with us. We also recognize the organizations, mentors, educators, families, and communities that helped create space for young people to develop their talents and bring their ideas to life. Thank you to every young person who submitted a film. Your stories, perspectives, and creativity remind us why youth voice matters.

OUR JUDGES

We are grateful to our distinguished judges for sharing their time, film and expertise, and perspective to help recognize this year's young filmmakers. **Samson Styles, Xochitl Torres, Jlove Calderon, and Cameron Carr**

FIRST PLACE



Washington Park: Beyond The Court

JaMiracle White

Atlanta, Georgia

JaMiracle White is a novelist, screenwriter, and director based in Atlanta, Georgia. Her short films explore themes of community, love, and connection. Her directorial debut, *Washington Park: Beyond The Court*, was made possible through The Alliance for Media Arts + Culture and NBCUniversal.

“Youth Voice is important to me because we are the future and deserve to be heard.”

SECOND PLACE

Is the American Dream Still Attainable?

Imani Laird

Newton, Massachusetts

Imani Laird is a student filmmaker at Hampton University whose documentaries explore history, democracy, and social change. Her work has earned national recognition from organizations including Oscar-winning filmmaker Ken Burns's The Better Angels Society, the Lincoln Presidential Foundation, and Constituting America.

Her films combine archival research with compelling visual storytelling to bring overlooked histories and civic issues to life.

Imani's work challenges us to consider the future young people are inheriting—and the importance of making sure they have a voice in shaping it.

“We, the youth, are the ones who will have to live in this future. It's up to us to improve the present and make sure our voices are heard to create the future we want to live in.”



THIRD PLACE

Perseverance

Devontay Brown

Lansing, Michigan

My name is Devontay Brown. I am a man with a past, but I am also a man with a future. I've made mistakes, but my mistakes do not define me. What defines me is my perseverance, my growth, and my determination to become better. I was given a second chance, and I refuse to waste it. By sharing my story, I hope to help others see that their setbacks don't have to be the end of their story. If I didn't quit on myself, I hope others won't quit on themselves either.



If my story could reach a lawmaker or policy leader, I would want them to understand that many young people who end up in the justice system are carrying trauma long before they ever make a bad decision. Too often, we see the behavior, but we don't see the abuse, dysfunction, neglect, or lack of opportunity behind it.

I would want them to invest more in prevention, mentorship, workforce development, mental health support, and programs that give young people a real chance to succeed.

“I am proof that when someone believes in you and provides opportunities, lives can change.”

HONORABLE MENTIONS

We are proud to recognize the following filmmakers whose films were among the top submissions for their creativity, storytelling, and commitment to sharing their perspectives:

Old Souls

Angelica Pelaez

Tucson, Arizona

Grief

Ellie Jackson

Salt Lake City, Utah

UNSEEN, BUT HERE

Ahmed Almarfadi

Seattle, Washington

Bulletproof

William Jones

Lansing, Michigan

For Those Who Care

Anthony St.Clair

East Orange, New Jersey

The Golden Fleece

Samarah Bently

New Orleans, Louisiana

The Last Hit

Jeriah McMillan

Louisville, Kentucky

Thank you to every young filmmaker who shared their story with us. Your creativity, perspective, and courage remind us of the power of youth voice and the hope for change through youth action.