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Frameline sends LGBT films to CA schools

Audiences attending the annual San Francisco LGBT film festival often wonder if the films they are seeing will receive wider distribution.

The answer, at least for a few films shown at Frameline, is that they will be distributed for free to hundreds of schools throughout California for teachers and LGBT student groups to screen.

The program, known as Youth in Motion, launched in 2008 and has released eight DVDs ? five of which are compilations of shorter films ? that come with curriculum and action guides that provide suggestions for how to teach or discuss the films.

"We try to be very mindful and pick films that are representing a lot of different types of stories and balance culture," explained Alexis Whitham, Frameline's educational programming and acquisitions manager. "We are trying to talk to teachers and students to see what they want and need."

One of two selections in 2010 was Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin, a 2002 film about the out gay black man who was a close confidante of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and helped organize the 1963 civil rights march on Washington, D.C.

[excerpt]

"I'm extremely grateful for your program, the films, and the curriculum and action guides, which were particularly helpful in discussing the meaning of gender before viewing," stated Speller, identified as a gay-straight alliance adviser at El Camino High School in South San Francisco. "Film is a powerful resource in the classroom, and students' media literacy is more developed and astute than many adults realize. These shorts make a topic that would be tricky to discuss so much more accessible through the narratives and media."

A joint project between Frameline and the Gay-Straight Alliance Network, the two organizations are now rolling out the program nationwide. In July a new collection of short films, likely eight total, will be selected for the next Youth in Motion DVD release that will be sent to schools outside of California for the first time.

Until now, said Whitham, "We have had trouble figuring out how to do it nationally."

A private funder has stepped up to help pay for the national rollout, and the plan is to send a copy of the DVD to every school with a GSA.

"We find that teachers need resources and development. We are trying to create resources and be a clearinghouse that teachers can use," GSA Network research manager Hilary Burdge said earlier this year at a program about LGBT films in schools hosted by the San Francisco Library.

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