



The air was thick with excitement, and maybe a whiff of anxiety, on Monday, June 2nd at the Epping location of O'neil Cinemas. This was because local middle and high school filmmakers from Newmarket, Epping, Raymond, Dover and Portsmouth found themselves in the unique position to see their short films come alive on the silver screen for friends and family at the 2nd annual Granite Youth Film Festival, presented by O'neil Cinemas and The United Way of the Greater Seacoast.

It was a night these young people won't soon forget as 150 of their closest friends and family filled the theater on June 2nd for a private showing to see the results of all of their hard work, and the results were incredible. The 6 short films, ranging in content from drug and alcohol abuse to corporate greed in marketing, were nothing short of thought provoking and impressive. The films showcased that these inspiring young people certainly have their priorities straight when it comes to social responsibility and increasing awareness.

Of course, this wasn't the end of the cinematic adventure for these inspirational filmmakers. The real test for any film comes from a public showing, and on June 8th, once again, the films didn't disappoint. The theater was more than half filled with 120 paying customers, with 100% of tickets proceeds donated back to United Way youth work, and these 6 short films brought the public to applause.

After each film, a group of the filmmakers were given a few minutes in front of the audience to talk about their films and answer questions as well as hand out raffle prizes supplied by the generous sponsors: McDonald's, Dunkin' Donuts, Captain's Cove Adventure Golf, The Mill Fudge Factory, York's Wild Kingdom, P&V Cleaners, The Seacoast Mavericks and Strikers East Bowling Center. The audience loved every minute, and through ticket sales to the public, O'neil Cinemas raised nearly \$600.00 for the United Way of the Greater Seacoast. Everyone walked away a hero that night. O'neil Cinemas is looking forward to continuing to work on initiatives with the United Way of the Greater Seacoast and the Granite Youth Alliance, and will be honored to host the third annual youth film festival event next year.

By Corey Sawyer, Assistant Manager/Supervisor/ O'neil Cinemas-Epping