

# HOST A LOCAL HERO FEST

Celebrate the best of your community!



STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE ▶

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Celebrate people of all ages doing important work in your community!

# HOST A LOCAL HERO FEST!



The crowd outside the Eileen Norris Cinema Theatre starts to form for the 5th Annual MY HERO Short Film Festival

A Hero Fest is a fun and vibrant way to celebrate the best of your community. It is a great opportunity to honor and pay tribute to special, but often overlooked, citizens who make your community a better place. Some hero stories are best told as powerful, illustrated essays; others as original works of art; and some stories are truly best told through film.

Hero Fests educate young people about using media in positive ways and inspire them to make a difference in their communities by spotlighting unsung heroes. Creating and showcasing short films and artwork about those making a positive difference in the world is also an effective way to connect an all-ages audience of students, parents, teachers, community artists, and volunteers.

The Hero Fest can take place on a single evening, or as a series of events. It should begin and end with a community reception where students, parents, teachers, local heroes, artists, filmmakers and community leaders have the opportunity to connect and share their appreciation of each other's work. The learning experience can be enriched by screening additional films from MY HERO's Best of Fest DVD, which features award-winning shorts about heroes from around the world.

Once you decide how you envision your local event, use the following guidelines to produce your own Hero Fest.



## The MY HERO Project

is an online media arts portal celebrating the best of humanity around the world. This guide was created to help community leaders, citizens, educators and students host their own local multimedia Hero Fest. The guide is based on the successful model used by our partners in Laguna Beach, California and Dakar, Senegal. Local filmmakers are invited to submit their award-winning films to the [MY HERO International Film Festival](http://www.myhero.com) and to share their stories with the global community in our [online screening room](http://www.myhero.com).

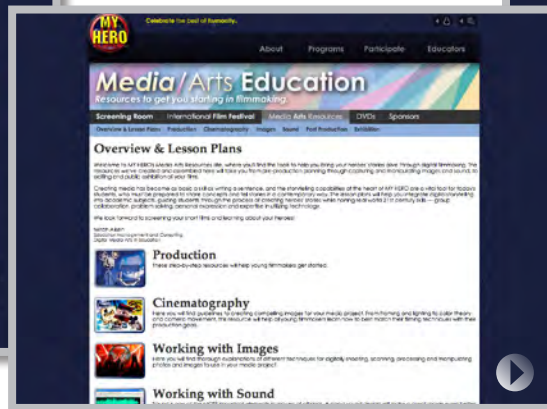
# GETTING STARTED

## 1. LEARN about The MY HERO Project

- Explore the MY HERO website <https://myhero.com> and view examples of short films, art and stories made by professionals and students from around the world.
- Discover free resources, including lesson plans for those interested in making short films and hero artwork. <https://myhero.com/mediaartseducation>
- Get a sense of what it means to create a short hero film or piece of art, and what criteria is important to follow in order to fit with the hero theme.
- Contact The MY HERO Project team and staff with any questions.



[www.myhero.com](http://www.myhero.com)



[www.myhero.com/mediaarts](http://www.myhero.com/mediaarts)



[www.myhero.com/film](http://www.myhero.com/film)

## 2. BUILD a creative administrative team

- Start by reaching out to your local community to build a team for organizing a local Hero Fest. People to contact include:
  - Students
  - Teachers
  - Parents
  - Volunteer groups
  - School board members
  - Parent-teacher associations
  - Local library staff
  - City council members
  - Local newspaper editors
  - Activists
  - Artists

### 3. SEARCH for funding and donations

- Put together a budget for your Hero Fest, whether it takes place over one evening, or over the course of several days.
- Research grants that may be available to you for this type of event, such as:

- City grants
- State grants
- Foundation grants
- Support from other arts agencies

*(\*\*Please note that support from The MY HERO Project is limited to materials and resources.)*

- Reach out to local businesses for product donations and/or sponsorships. Offer to display their logo in your program and flyers in exchange for funding or other support.

### 4. FIND a multi-media venue

- The venue for your Hero Fest should include:
  - Video projection
  - An excellent sound system
  - Comfortable seating
  - Ease of parking and transportation
  - An area for art and sponsorship display (signs, banners, canvasses, etc.)
- Check with a variety of different possible venues and ask to use their facilities for free, or for a reduced rate, including:
  - Libraries
  - Clubs
  - Multi-media art centers
  - Schools
  - Local colleges and/or universities



### 5. SPREAD the word about the Hero Fest

- Create and distribute a flyer to invite the public at large to submit short films and artwork featuring local heroes. Be sure to specify the following:
  - Length of entries (usually ten minutes or under)
  - Deadlines
  - Appropriate content
  - Rights and clearances (appearances, music, etc.)
- Notify local papers with a call for submissions, either in the form of a press release, or as a calendar submission. Make sure your logistics are correct (deadlines, etc.).



# FINDING CONTENT FOR YOUR HERO FEST



Media Arts Director Wendy Milette and Ben, a student from TOW Elementary School. Credit: Pam Sachse



Emily and Chantele at work on their film about TOW Principal Mr. LaMotte. Credit: Pam Sachse



## 1. FIND content through community partnerships

- Identify founders and leaders of local community not-for-profit organizations, and invite them to be part of the project. They may be able to use this opportunity to work with their membership to create a short film about their work that can be shown at the Hero Fest.
- Contact principals of local public and private schools, elementary and middle schools, high schools, and local colleges. Provide them with a flyer, and ask for their help introducing the program to students in your community.
- Reach out to professional filmmakers in your community and to students studying video or film at local colleges and universities. Invite them to take part in the project to help produce short films and refine works created by younger students.
- Approach teachers to encourage students to develop and produce short films honoring local heroes as part of their class assignments over the course of the school year. Reach out to teachers involved in:

Media Arts  
Computer Labs/classes  
English  
Graphic Arts  
Social Studies

## 2. HOLD workshops to create hero content

- Hold targeted workshops to help students and community members create short hero films and artwork. Video production classes or media labs are good places to conduct workshops because filmmakers will need time on computers to edit their movies.
- Visit the MY HERO Project website for free lesson plans and resources for teaching and sharing short films on local heroes. <https://myhero.com/MediaArtsEducation>
- Review effective interview techniques and assist students with pre-production planning to set up interviews with their heroes.
- Provide resources to those interested in producing short films about local heroes. Cameras, microphones, videotape and computers are required.
- Take pictures of students in production and have students export movie stills from their works-in-progress. Upload the best stills to a server with links for media access, and use these for publicity and outreach.



John Barrett from LBHS assists Chad Kanner with his movie at Thurston Middle School. Credit: Wendy Milette



College student Nolan Plant mentors Jackie with her film about C eativity. Credit: Wendy Milette



# BEFORE THE EVENT

## 1. CHOOSE the submissions to be showcased

- Determine which pieces of artwork and short films will be included in the Hero Fest. Use a panel of judges or your own selection process.
- Notify those who have been selected (and possibly those who have not, if you choose).
- Assign the task of getting and displaying all artwork for the showcase. Label each piece of hero art with the title and name of the artist.



2009 Laguna Hero Fest venue [seven degees]



2009 Laguna Hero Fest audience inside [seven degees]

## 2. PREPARE the Screening Reel

- Assemble the selected finished movies into an entertaining anthology. The program should last about an hour and include several short films about local heroes.
- Fine-tune some of the student and community works (with their permission), so that the movies are presentable to an all-ages audience. If you have the budget for a sound mix, do it. If not, then LISTEN to the entire show and level out the audio levels for the screening.
- Enhance the presentation with post-production effects, including graphics, editing, and sound design. The MY HERO Project has some graphics and templates that can be used by local Hero Fest directors.
- Be sure that the credits are correct and that all people involved in the making of the films are properly credited.
- The best way to present media is to use a program like VLC, where you can combine videos and graphics into one presentation. Always test your media in the venue BEFORE your screening event (we suggest one week to give time to fix problems).





### 3. CREATE a program for the event

- Once the works have all been selected, and the actual reel has been completed, create a program for the Hero Fest. Programs can be structured with one main “community hero” film and speaker, followed by the remaining chosen films. In this case, the finale can be where the filmmakers and heroes are acknowledged all at once.
- Include the essential movie credits for each film: title, producer, director and who is featured. Be sure to check the spelling of all of the names.
- Give credit to the organizers of the event and, most importantly, the sponsors. Use sponsor logos whenever possible. Include contact info on the program.
- Be sure to recognize all of the community volunteers and organizations and local businesses that have helped to make the event a success.
- Consider modifying a student-made poster for the cover and give the student credit for the design.
- Create certificates to give to all local heroes and filmmakers whose works will be showcased at your community Hero Fest.



## 4. PUBLICIZE your Hero Fest

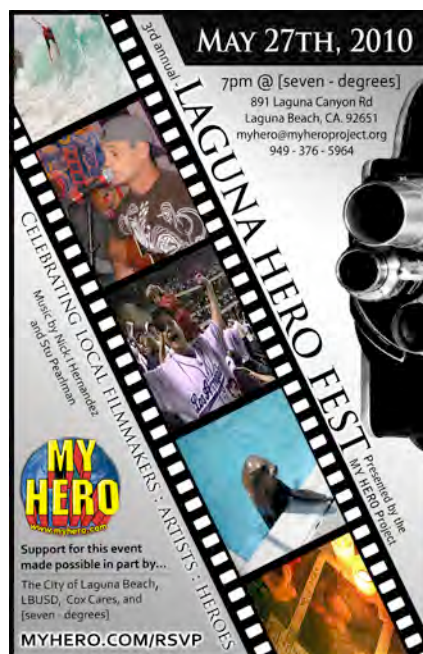
- Attract an audience by publicizing your event. Work with graphic artists, teachers and students to create hero art pieces, movie posters, flyer invites, event posters and the program.
- Organize the best high-resolution production stills and movie stills onto a server with links, so that artists and media outlets can have access to images for publication.
- Write and send press releases to local media outlets.

**Research** all local publications, news organizations, free press, radio, college papers, internet media outlets and compile a contact list.

**Assign** someone the task of writing, sending and following up on press releases. PHONE CALL follow-ups help you introduce this NEW program to your community! It is important to establish a relationship with the local press so they can help you reach your partners and audience, and support your work by helping to get the word out to the community.

**Be prepared** to provide the local press with digital photos you can email to them online. Make sure to have a text file with captions: names, place, date, etc. for each photo.

- Invite local non-profits to have tables at your event to promote their good work (and to build an audience).
- Ask local musicians to play music after the screening and while people are looking at the artwork, during the reception.
- Invite portrayed local heroes to speak at the festival. Decide who will present the honors to the heroes and filmmakers that will be present.
- Create invitations, a Save-the-Date card, or an online RSVP system to invite and keep track of those planning to attend.



# THE EVENT



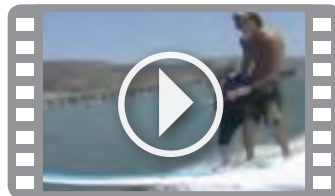
## SETTING UP and RUNNING the screening and showcase

- Use the program as your guide for how the event will unfold.
- Test all equipment & media prior to screening.
- Display some items for auction and place a donation box at the door.
- Have each guest sign in so you can use the guest list to help build on your program for the following year.
- Assign people the task of taking pictures and documenting your event on video to help with publicity in the future.
- Assign someone to be the Master of Ceremonies, who will run the show, introduce the festival, talk to the audience, and introduce the heroes selected to speak.
- Hand out certificates and/or prizes to each participant.
- Follow the screening with an art showcase/reception, and include snacks or drinks if desired.

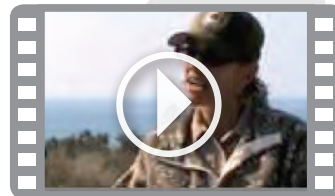
## Selected Films from earlier Laguna Hero Fests



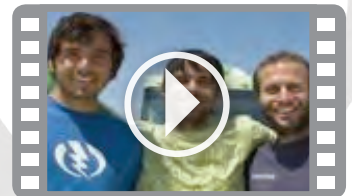
Tribute to Diane Challis Davy



Surfer's Healing



Crystal Cove State Park  
Nature Film

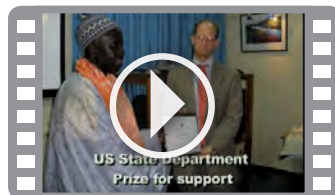


Roadtrip Nation

## Senegal Hero Fest



Heroes Day 2011



Senegal Hero Fest Day 2009

# AFTER THE PROGRAM



## 1. FOLLOW UP with those who were involved

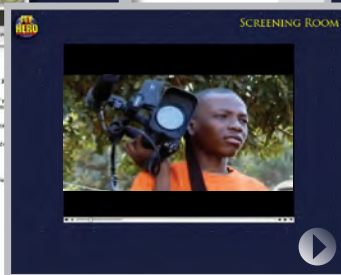
- Create a web page on MY HERO with links to all of the films that were screened and photos of the event. Make the link to this page available to all of the organizations and people who supported the event.
- Send pictures and/or video of the best of the festival to sponsors.
- Create a press release that informs the public of the event and the artists who were showcased.

## 2. SHARE your hero stories with the world

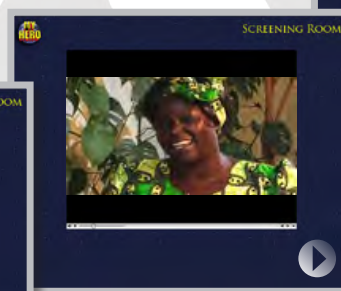
- Submit your stories, art and short films to the MY HERO website and share your local hero stories with the world. Filmmakers are encouraged to submit their short films to the MY HERO International Film Festival. Prizes are awarded for the online awards ceremony.

<https://myhero.com/Submit>

- All films that are accepted into competition will be streamed online for visitors from around the world to view and share. <https://myhero.com/winners>



**HOME is where you find it**  
By Director - Alcides Soares /  
Producer - Neal Baer



**NOBELITY: Wangari Maathai**  
By Turk Pipkin



**Biblioburro: The Donkey Library**  
By Valentina Canavesio

# MY HERO RESOURCES

## Submit local hero films to the MY HERO International Film Festival

- ▼ MY HERO Short Film Festival Call for Entries Flyer
- ▼ Sample Release / Consent Form
- ▼ MY HERO Short Film Festival Submit Link



View the Laguna Hero Fest Sizzle



## Share your local hero stories with our global audience

- ▼ Create Program - stories
- ▼ Gallery Program - artwork
- ▼ Audio Program - music, poetry
- ▼ Screening Room - films



**The MY HERO Project**  
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The MY HERO Project is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit profit educational project.