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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Rod R. Blagojevich – Governor

news

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CONTACTS:

Cheryle Jackson	312/814.3158 (office)
Abby Ottenhoff	312/814.3158 (office)
Rebecca Rausch	217/782.7355 (office)
Andrew Ross	312/814.7168 (Op. Returns)

GOVERNOR BLAGOJEVICH ANNOUNCES FUNDING FOR INNOVATIVE PROGRAM TO SUPPORT YOUNG FILM FANS

90 Children Will Break Into Movie Business At The “Young Chicago Critics 2004” Camp

CHICAGO - Recognizing the immense value of a rejuvenated film industry to the Illinois economy, Governor Rod Blagojevich today announced that the Illinois Film Office will be supporting the “Young Chicago Critics” (YCC) program, an intensive camp for kids developed by the Chicago International Children’s Film Festival for children who love movies and love sharing their thoughts and opinions. Ninety children from neighborhoods throughout the city will have the opportunity to explore the art of really “seeing” a movie - as Facets Multi-Media hosts Young Chicago Critics 2004. The \$10,000 in funding comes as a part of *Opportunity Returns*, Governor Blagojevich’s pro-active, regional development plan designed to stimulate growth and create jobs in the Northeast region that will be announced in the coming months.

“Our fight to put Illinois back in the film spotlight was greatly aided by a number of homegrown, talented artists in the industry who believed so strongly in our state and all it has to offer as the location for making movies. By funding the Young Chicago Critics program, we’re supporting filmmaking here in Illinois, and giving rise to the next generation of talent who will continue to bolster the reputation of Illinois as a great place to make movies,” Governor Blagojevich said.

Every day children learn to analyze and discuss films from around the world with their peers. Using cutting-edge technology, kids write scripts, perform, learn visual techniques, and complete the camp by filming their own mini-movie. Led by filmmakers, teachers, critics and producers, the YCC program will give children the skills they need to make their own short films and think critically about what they see in films - on television and the Internet. The camp will open on Wednesday, June 23rd, and runs through Friday, July 2nd.

“We must do all that we can to encourage our young people to express themselves, and the exposure they will receive at this innovative camp is priceless,” State Senator Rickey Hendon (D-Chicago) said.

“This is a fantastic opportunity for our young people to be exposed to the wonderful world of film. I know the Young Chicago Critics program will make this the summer of a lifetime for all of Chicago’s future writers, directors, producers, actors and critics,” State Representative Kenneth Dunkin (D-Chicago) said.

“We’re delighted to be involved in a program that uses filmmaking and film criticism to make a difference in children’s lives,” said Brenda Sexton, director of the Illinois Film Office, which is supporting the attendance of 16 children with full scholarships.

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With the generous support of the Illinois Film Office, and the Elizabeth Morse Genius Trust, almost 75% of the children attending the camp receive full scholarships.

“Kids have a great time learning how to ‘read’ the messages that filmmakers put into movies,” said Nicole Dreiske, Director of Children’s Programs. Kid critics who complete all parts of the program will receive special film critic’s “credentials” at a graduation and screening on July 2nd. Four Young Chicago Critics will be selected as delegates to the prestigious Giffoni International Children’s Film Festival in Italy. Graduates of the program are invited to participate in the Festival’s Children’s Jury in August.

Special highlights of the “Young Critics Chicago 2004” camp include:

Friday, June 25: kids “get tough on media” - a town hall meeting format in which campers will discuss and critique the manner in which way they feel kids are depicted and represented in the popular media. **Friday, July 2:** graduation day. This day is dedicated to the “world-premiere” of the films each child has produced at camp. Each child will then receive a special certificate to recognize their accomplishment and declare their status as a bona fide film critic and avowed member of the film community.

For more information, phone **773-281-9075** or e-mail Kidsfest@facets.org.

The *Opportunity Returns* regional economic development plan is the most aggressive, comprehensive approach to creating jobs in Illinois’ history. Since a one-size-fits-all approach to economic development just doesn’t work, the Governor has divided the state into 10 regions – finding areas with common economic strengths and needs, and developing a plan with specific actions for each region. Each plan is tailored to deliver real results that local businesses will see, feel, and, hopefully, profit from. Governor Blagojevich has already unveiled plans for six of the ten regions – Northern Stateline, Northwest, Southern, North Central, Southwest and West Central regions. Governor Blagojevich will announce his plan for the Northeast region in the coming months.

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