

# Deaf young people get their chance to be on the Big Screen!

YouthDeafinitions

A few new short films are being screened in Bradford - they're not the old-fashioned "silent films", but many don't have any sound to them. Why not? Because these films are made by and for deaf young people! Most only use British Sign Language and have English subtitles available, but other than that, they're very similar to short films that any other young person would make. We have a dance-off with 'hoodies', vampires and romance, nightmares at school, and a mess-up on a school trip.

Funded by *The Youth of Today* Leadership Fund and hosted at the National Media Museum in Bradford, this will be the Second Yorkshire SignFilm Festival (YSFF) with short films made by deaf young people from across the North of England. We also have a short film sent from deaf youth in Northern Ireland. This is the first year where the films have been judged by a panel of deaf youth and professionals, so the groups will be receiving trophies for 'Best Directing' or 'Best Editing', etc., as well as choosing the 'Best Film' overall!



Deafinitions' Youth Management Committee of deaf young people feel the YSFF is an important opportunity for more deaf youth to have the same opportunities as their hearing peers. At the SignFilm Festival, **all** the young people there have a hearing loss and most use British Sign Language (BSL) to communicate, so they are finally the majority and not the 'odd ones out' as they can so often feel. The training to make and edit the films was all provided by deaf professional film-makers in BSL, which helped to empower and build confidence in the deaf young people.

The Festival takes place at the Pictureville Cinema in the National Media Museum on Tuesday the 11<sup>th</sup> May 2010 from 10am to 2pm and will be attended by deaf young people from across Yorkshire and Greater Manchester. The 'Master of Ceremonies' are members of the deaf Youth Management Committee and deaf young people from each film-making group will have a chance to give short presentations about how they've felt making their own film and seeing it on the Big Screen.

Young people who have been involved in making these films say they have enjoyed learning the different roles involved in film-making – acting, directing, editing, and working the cameras. Deaf youth love the visual media as they can fully access it through body language, facial expressions and especially British Sign Language. The responsibilities and working together have given them increased confidence too.

**A student in Oldham at the Hathershaw College of Technology and Sport said,**



*"I think this filming has been a very, very good experience and I feel more confident. At first, I didn't really want to be involved but I started with trying to act a bit and, then, I wanted to be involved more and more! I feel good and liked the filming. I loved it! I never thought deaf people would have a chance like this. I'm really proud of it."*



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**Another student from Doncaster College for the Deaf said,**

*"I've never been a 'Director' before and at first I was really nervous, I didn't know what to do. But now I feel more confident. I didn't want to rely on the teachers to help, but wanted to do it myself. This has made my confidence grow as I've gotten used to the responsibilities. It's still hard work and I feel worn out... I enjoyed the whole film-making process and liked being the one in charge! I feel really proud of myself that I've done it. I would love to do it again!"*



Being involved in making these short films has also helped a few students make some important decisions for their lives. "This year, I had to choose which GCSEs to study for and I chose media because I thought this was good practice for it and from this, I already know some filming and media to build on," said a young student from **Allerton Grange School in Leeds.**

*"After leaving school, I'm going onto a media course. This SignFilm Festival really influenced my decision. I think it [film-making] has been very interesting and want to do more in the future."*

Nageena, the Youth Deafinitions' project worker for the Yorkshire SignFilm Festival – and a previous Youth Management Committee member – says, "As a deaf person, I've been told that I 'can't' do this or that. We want the Yorkshire SignFilm Festival to be an opportunity for deaf young people to show what they CAN do. The films are all made by deaf youth and they have a chance to see their films on the Cinema, watch other films made by their peers and meet new friends from other cities – but they're all signing and laughing together."



For further information or some photos of the young people making their films, please contact Youth Deafinitions at [ysff@youthdeafinitions.org](mailto:ysff@youthdeafinitions.org) or call **01274 299211.**



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