

# Workshops launch student filmmakers

SARNIA OBSERVER

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Julia Soetemans is shown in this file photo trying out a camera during a previous youth film training workshop in Sarnia offered as part of the Lambton Youth Short Film Competition. This year's workshop runs March 22. PHOTO BY FILE PHOTO //The Observer

Lambton County high school students will have the opportunity to learn about filmmaking later this month from instructors with the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF). The annual training sessions are connected to the Lambton Youth Short Film Competition, which is held each spring alongside the Lambton Film and Food Festival in Forest.

This year's student workshops are set for March 22 at the Shared Services Centre located in Sarnia's Bayside Mall.

There's room for 20 to 25 students in each of the morning and afternoon sessions, and there's no cost to those who take part.

The student film competition is a joint project of the Optimist Club and the Kiwanis Club in Forest, with financial help from cineSarnia and community grants.

The workshops are a unique opportunity for students in the Sarnia area to work with TIFF instructors who rarely hold workshops outside of Toronto.

“We’re very fortunate to have them back,” the Optimist Club’s Scott Ferguson said.

The Sarnia workshops have been held for approximately five years and, initially, were delivered by TIFF instructors. When they weren’t able to attend last year, the service clubs arranged for local teachers and film graduate students to lead the sessions.

They did “a fine job,” said Glen Starkey, with the Kiwanis Club, but the TIFF instructors were available to return for this year’s workshops.

Local high schools are invited to send students to the popular workshops.

“We’ve never had an empty spot,” Ferguson said.

A few of the past workshop participants have gone on to pursue careers in film, Starkey added.

Some students taking the workshops have also entered the youth short film competition held in May.

“That’s the other half of the equation we look for – to get some interest going in the competition,” Starkey said.

Typically, the competition attracts 12 to 20 short films made by local high school students.

The categories include comedy, drama and documentary, as well as Franco Fier, a French category, and Mino Bimaaddiziwin, an Ojibway category.

The service clubs are also working together this year to offer Camp Foodie, a summer food and cooking camp for students ages nine to 14 over three one-week sessions during the summer.

Local chef and teacher Sheila Ward will lead the day camps, which focus on locally sourced foods.

Starkey said the summer day camps seemed like “a natural extension” of the Film and Food Festival, which combines dinners and other food events with film screenings May 24 to 26 at the Kineto Theatre in Forest.

Details about the day camps are expected to be released soon by the service clubs, and organizers have arranged to hold a Yuk Yuks event on March 30 as a fundraiser for the youth cooking program.

Information about the fundraiser is available by calling 519-786-4688.

Information about this year’s Lambton Film and Food Festival, and the youth short film competition, can be found online at [www.forestfestivals.ca](http://www.forestfestivals.ca).

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