



**FREEDOM &
UNITY
YOUNG
FILMMAKER
CONTEST**

Open to VT & NH Filmmakers
in Middle & High School



2021

**WRIF
EMERGING
FILMMAKERS
CONTEST**

Open to VT & NH Filmmakers
ages 18-30

White River Indie Films

impact at the junction of film + community

www.wrif.org

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Young filmmakers are changing the Vermont and New Hampshire story:

**Vermont PBS “Made Here” to showcase WRIF Freedom & Unity Young
Filmmaker Contest 2020 winners on April 8, 2021 at 8pm**

plus

**WRIF announces two 2021 contests for young filmmakers in VT and NH
now open for submissions**

For immediate release: March 5, 2021

From the “Willing Hands” who grow local produce to feed VT and NH’s hungry, to our diminishing winter as a result of climate change, to the Burlington girls’ soccer team whose protest for equal pay for women athletes sparked a national movement – Vermont and New Hampshire youth have a lot to say about the places they call home and how they’re changing. WRIF (White River Indie Films) wants to make sure they get it on camera and the public is tuning in. **On April 8, 2021 at 8pm Vermont PBS** will air a showcase of the **WRIF 2020 Freedom & Unity Young Filmmaker Contest winners** in its “Made Here” regional filmmaking series to include the following films and filmmakers:

“Our Changing Winters,” by Farren Stainton, Jules Butler and Alden MacDowell (Sharon Middle School/Sharon, VT)

“Willing Hands,” by Ezra McGinley-Smith (Richmond Middle School/Norwich, VT)

“Sleeping Sun,” by Lachlan McCunn (Hanover High School/Hanover, NH)

“Yellow Cards for Equal Pay,” by Maia Vota (Burlington High School/Burlington, VT)

“Tuck’s Rock Dojo: A Rockumentary,” by Anna King (Homeschooled/Etna, NH)

In many of the films submitted in 2020 by VT and NH young filmmakers to the WRIF Freedom & Unity Young Filmmaker Contest – which had to pivot to an online format as a result of the pandemic – filmmaking became a form of bearing witness to a world in crisis. From Vermont's painful reckoning with racism to the closures of neighborhood diners, many films captured profound changes in local communities. Others resurrected lost local history, or were just plain funny. All expressed the resilience of VT and NH youth creating under lockdown and isolation.

WRIF seeks to expand opportunities for young filmmakers from VT and NH by offering two contests in 2021: The **WRIF Freedom & Unity Young Filmmaker Contest (for students in middle and high school age)** and the inaugural **WRIF Emerging Filmmaker Contest (for young adults ages 18-30 years old)**. Committed to regional filmmaking and the media arts as an engine of recovery in the creative economy, WRIF created the new contest to support filmmakers taking the next step toward careers in filmmaking. WRIF Emerging Filmmaker winning films will be featured in WRIF's May 2021 Festival (May 21-30), with the filmmakers welcomed to participate in networking events with mentors.

"One of my favorite things about the Freedom & Unity Contest is that the awards ceremony gives them a chance to meet other young people who share their passion for storytelling and filmmaking. And we create opportunities for young filmmakers to meet professional filmmakers so they can envision a future in the arts. I think the contest is a huge asset in our rural states," reflected Signe Taylor, long-serving WRIF board member, local documentary filmmaker, and champion of youth filmmaking at WRIF.

In the best of times, filmmaking requires a lot of support for success, particularly for young and emerging filmmakers with important stories to tell but who may lack the resources or network to get their films made. "Early successes like this can give young filmmakers the confidence they need to fully commit to a creative career – which in this current economic climate is more vital than ever," commented Johanna Evans, WRIF board member and one of the contest organizers, about the impact. "One F&U winner, Anna King, landed a filmmaking gig this spring because her 2020 film caught the attention of someone looking to document a project."

"Participating in the Freedom & Unity Young Filmmaker Contest supported my young filmmaking dreams. The kind and creative atmosphere of collaboration which Freedom & Unity offers, that passion &] ã^• just as much as it pushes you to get your voice heard!" Sent home abruptly months before graduation from Dartmouth College, Sophie Whitemore's senior film, "In Real Life," about gender identity and fluidity in the ambivalent space of social media, was completed in isolation but celebrated via the Freedom & Unity virtual awards ceremony in July 2020.

"Some of the young filmmakers have never shown their films to an audience. The feedback they receive and the confidence they gain in talking about their work is invaluable," observed Nora Jacobson, co-founder of the original Freedom & Unity Contest and leader of the collaborative six-part documentary film *0!'^^â[{ BÂW} ã' KÂ@Â^!{ [] ÔÂ [çã* (2014) in which filmmakers and

historians set out to understand Vermont's iconoclastic spirit: where it comes from, how it shapes our present, and how it lays the groundwork for the future.

Both contests are now OPEN FOR SUBMISSIONS.

[Wrif.org](http://www.wrif.org)

2021 WRIF Freedom & Unity Young Filmmaker Contest: freedomandunitytv.org

2021 WRIF Emerging Filmmakers Contest:

<https://filmfreeway.com/WRIFEmergingFilmmakersContest>

BROADCAST SCHEDULE:

April 8, 2021 at 8pm

2020 WRIF Freedom & Unity Young Filmmaker Contest Winners Showcase

Vermont PBS "Made Here"

Films:

Our Changing Winters, by Farren Stainton, Jules Butler and Alden MacDowell (Sharon Middle School/Sharon, VT)

Willing Hands, by Ezra McGinley-Smith (Richmond Middle School/Norwich, VT)

Sleeping Sun, by Lachlan McCunn (Hanover High School/Hanover, NH)

Yellow Cards for Equal Pay, by Maia Vota (Burlington High School/Burlington, VT)

Tuck's Rock Dojo: A Rockumentary, by Anna King (Homeschooled/Etna, NH)

STILL PHOTOS FROM 2020 WRIF FREEDOM & UNITY FILMS TO AIR ON VERMONT PBS:





Willing Hands
By Ezra McGinty-Smith



Yellow Cards for Equal Pay
By Maia Vota

