



Impact Story:

Saskatchewan Filmpool +
Film Camp

by
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Saskatchewan
Arts Alliance

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Each month SAA posts an Art Works article highlighting an arts organization making a positive impact in its community. For March 2018 SAA features the Saskatchewan Filmpool Cooperative’s Film Camp which will be held this year from July 9th to 13th in Regina. Registration will officially open in April but the Filmpool staff will take names and answer questions regarding the camp all year long. This article is written by Ken Wilson.

Gord Pepper’s eyes light up when he starts to talk about Film Camp, the Saskatchewan Filmpool Cooperative’s annual summer educational program for young people. “Film Camp exposes kids to a new form of self-expression—filmmaking,” Pepper, the Filmpool’s executive director, enthuses. And that exposure can have a powerful effect. “When you partake in an artistic act,” he

continues, “it opens up your world.”

The Filmpool has offered the camp every summer since 2005, with funding from private sponsors, the City of Regina and the Province of Saskatchewan’s Community Initiatives Fund. Parents are also charged a fee, currently just under \$300, for their sons and daughters to participate, but there are bursaries. “For the past five years, fourth-year students in the University of Regina’s film program have collected donations to support two Film Camp participants from Scott Collegiate, who wouldn’t be able to participate otherwise,” Pepper says. The camp attracts a diverse population of participants, including Indigenous youth and recent immigrants, and that leads to a diversity of work created at Film Camp. “The instructors are there to facilitate the kids’ ideas,” Pepper notes. “The diversity of participants leads to a

diversity in the kinds of films they make and the stories they tell.”

There are a lot of summer camps for young people in Regina, and the Filmpool has to work hard to promote and market the event. Still, some kids come back every year. And the camp has led to other programming for young people. In 2016, for example, the Filmpool offered an after-school program, Cine Class. Some of the participants had experienced the Film Camp, but others had not. “It was another way to get kids interested in filmmaking,” Pepper says. “At Film Camp and Cine Class, kids begin to use film to express themselves, and they come to see themselves in a new way.” Participants learn leadership and team-building skills. “Filmmaking is a collaborative process, so the kids are part of a team, responsible to each other,” Pepper observes. “Leaders emerge, but





all the kids learn what it takes to work together as a team, and they get a feeling of satisfaction from working together and from creating goals and striving to achieve them.”

According to Pepper, exposing young people to filmmaking can inspire them to make films on their own, or even study film in college or university. For example, Jason Rister was exposed to filmmaking at the Film Camp, and he has since gone on to complete a degree in film at the University of Regina and work as a director of photography on several Saskatchewan-made features, including *The Sabbatical* and *Basic Human Needs*. Matthias Graham, another former Film Camper, is currently a member of the Filmpool’s board. His most recent film, *Gas Can*, took home the Best of Saskatchewan

trophy at the 2017 Yorkton Film Festival. The Film Camp played a huge role in his decision to become a filmmaker, Graham says. “It gave me a much-needed boost of independence, skills, and confidence to know that I could do this.”

The Film Camp has not remained static. In 2017, the Filmpool partnered with Saskatchewan Interactive Media Association Inc. (Saskinteractive) to give participants an exposure to both filmmaking and new media. The two organizations ran separate camps simultaneously, with crossover sessions on topics like working with actors and storytelling. The Filmpool and Saskinteractive shared marketing costs, and the partnership helped to develop awareness for both organizations. “We thought, why not take a chance with this?”

Pepper recalls. The result was another success. Whether that collaboration continues or not, Pepper is already looking forward to the 2018 version of Film Camp. “It’s part of what makes the Filmpool valuable to the community,” he says. Who could argue with that?



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