



**SIFF 2.0**

**JULY 30 – AUGUST 2**

June 2, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**SONOMA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (SIFF)**

**AWARDS ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIPS**

**\$8,500 Given to Select Students of The Media Arts Program**

SONOMA, CA – The Sonoma International Film Festival’s annual scholarship award recipients are among a select few Sonoma students who have participated in the Sonoma Valley High School Media Arts program, SIFF’s primary program support initiative.

“Our commitment to deserving Sonoma student filmmakers is part of SIFF’s mission to promote, support and inspire filmmakers and the singular art of storytelling that film provides,” said Sonoma International Film Festival Executive Director Kevin McNeely.

The Sonoma International Film Festival was integral in the creation of the Sonoma Valley Media Arts Program. Started at Sonoma Valley High School in 2002, the program introduces students to the process of storytelling as a creative art form. The program is led by longtime Media Arts teacher Peter Hansen. Since its inception, SIFF has provided over \$650,000 in funding and scholarships to provide the resources for Sonoma students to create films and expand their creative pursuits.

“What joy to help young people in their passionate pursuits of filmmaking,” said Peter Hansen, Sonoma Valley High School Media Arts Program Director and teacher. “But even better to be the captain of the ship, steering them towards a life-long career in the media arts. Bravo to SIFF for their vision and generosity in making this a reality.”

The 2020 recipients demonstrated a commitment to the Sonoma Valley High School Media Arts program, and an aptitude and affinity for filmmaking. Funds may be used for student needs in their continuing pursuit of film studies and careers in filmmaking. Many below have already been accepted by accredited Film School Programs.

**2020 SIFF Scholarship Recipients are the following Sonoma Valley High School Graduating Seniors:**

Connor Barry  
Eden Brown  
Kahlil Martinis  
Claire McNairy  
Sophie Portello  
Brian Duenas Sanchez  
Dean Szanyi

Additional SIFF support was awarded to the following for Outstanding Achievement in the Sonoma Valley High School Media Arts Program: Taylor Aguilar, Sean Callahan, Danny Hernandez, Jen Howlett, Nate Jordan, Abraham Martinez, Morgan Riveara, Anita Scheiblich, Rachael Williams and Jackson Zyskowski.

### About the Sonoma International Film Festival

The Sonoma International Film Festival is a 501(c)3 corporation dedicated to promoting independent film, supporting filmmakers around the world, and inspiring film lovers. SIFF offers the best in independent cinema including features, documentaries and short films that include a selection of World, North American, US and Northern California premieres. Blending a program of world-class film, food, wine and fun, SIFF is celebrating its 23<sup>rd</sup> year in 2020.

In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, this year's festival, showcasing more than 125 films, will be held July 30-August 2 both online and in person, where allowable by county and city officials. New social distancing group events include the SIFF Drive-In Movies.

The best way to experience the festival and have access to all films is by getting a SIFF pass. Student Passes are \$75, Cinema Passes are \$350, Soirée Passes are \$975, and Patron Passes are \$2,500. The new SIFF Virtual Film Festival Pass is \$75. For information about tickets and the upcoming SIFF 2.0 festival, please visit [www.sonomafilmfest.org](http://www.sonomafilmfest.org).

For More Information, please contact:

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