



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**SIFF AWARDS FULL COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS
TO TWO SONOMA VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
Seniors Jacob Ceron Echeverría and Sakcham (Sam) Mishra
to Attend Sonoma State University**

Sonoma, CA August 29, 2023—In partnership with Sonoma Valley High School Media Arts teacher Peter Hansen, and Edward Beebout, Interim Dean of the School of Arts & Humanities at Sonoma State University, Sonoma International Film Festival proudly announces a series of firsts for Sonoma Valley High School seniors Jacob Ceron Echeverría and Sakcham (Sam) Mishra.

These students are the first to be awarded *full college scholarships* from the Sonoma International Film Festival in its mission to support and sustain the SVHS Media Arts Program at Sonoma Valley High School. Echeverría is also the first in his family to attend college. And, they will be among the first college freshmen to dive into the new Cinematic Arts and Technology major offered at Sonoma State University.

“As a unique Sonoma cultural arts organization, SIFF is known for our annual film festival and special events that entertain and delight, but our legacy as a Sonoma non-profit is the Sonoma Valley High School Media Arts Program,” said Kevin W. McNeely, SIFF Director Emeritus. “Being in a place to now provide full scholarships to Sonoma State University for hard-working, deserving Sonoma students fulfills and extends our mission to inspire our next generation of storytellers. All of us at SIFF appreciate the longtime support from our community that helped make this goal a reality.”

SIFF has proudly supported the Sonoma Valley High School Media Arts program for more than two decades by providing media lab equipment, internships, partial scholarships until now, and sustaining funding. The program has graduated hundreds of students, with some actively working within the industry. The program was spearheaded in 2002 by Kevin W. McNeely, SIFF Director Emeritus, and Ginny Krieger, SIFF Executive Director, and has been taught by Peter Hansen since its inception.

103 East Napa Street | Suite 2A | Sonoma, California 95476 | 707.933.2600

Sonoma Valley Film Society dba Sonoma International Film Festival is a 501(c)(3) organization. Tax ID: 68-0428999.



About Sonoma International Film Festival

The Sonoma International Film Festival is a 501(c)3 corporation dedicated to promoting independent film, supporting filmmakers worldwide, and inspiring film lovers. Blending a program of international film, food, wine, and fun, SIFF hosts its annual festival each March, year-round events, and special screenings. Ginny Krieger is the Executive Director, Carl Spence is the Artistic Director and Kevin W. McNeely is Director Emeritus.

SIFF's signature initiative--the Media Arts Program started at Sonoma Valley High School in 2002--introduces students to film, providing the resources for them to explore their creative pursuits. SIFF has granted more than \$800,000 to the program since its inception, with hundreds of students to date graduating through the program.

The 27th Annual Sonoma International Film Festival is March 20-24, 2024. Pass Flash Sales for the 2024 festival go on sale in October 2023 at sonomafilmfest.org.

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