

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SIFF COLLABORATES WITH THE SONOMA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION
TO HOST A BENEFIT SCREENING FOR THE
K-3 PROFICIENCY PROJECT,
A LITERACY INITIATIVE FOR SONOMA COUNTY STUDENTS

*“LOST & FOUND IN CLEVELAND” STARRING MARTIN SHEEN AND JUNE SQUIBB
SCREENS SUNDAY, AUGUST 11 AT 5 PM AT SEBASTIANI THEATRE*

Sonoma, CA July 16, 2024—The first public screening of the new comedy film LOST & FOUND IN CLEVELAND starring Martin Sheen, Dennis Haysbert, and June Squibb provides an entertaining platform to gather and generate awareness about, and fundraise for the Sonoma based nonprofit K-3 Innovation (K-3i). K-3 Proficiency Project is a proven platform that leverages technology, data, and strategic targeted instruction to improve reading proficiency outcomes among participating kindergarten through third grade students.

Statistics show that 59% of third graders in Sonoma County read below their grade level. If kids don't learn to read at this critical point in their education, studies show that they do not catch up and their lives and livelihoods are negatively impacted. It was from these stark literacy rate numbers, that K-3i and the K-3 Proficiency Project was spearheaded by Gary and Marcia Nelson alongside a group of dedicated, experienced teachers and educational leaders.

“I appreciate the support from SIFF,” said Gary D. Nelson, K-3 Innovation Founder and Chairman of the Board. “A wonderful example of quality nonprofits collaborating to improve our Sonoma community...both culturally and educationally.”

The K-3 Proficiency Project partners with teachers and works in the structure of their classrooms. Students use adaptive online reading programs, while trained assistants provide small group strategic targeted instruction. Star Assessment test results from participating schools show remarkable results.

“Literacy is everything,” said Dr. Amie Carter, Ed.D., County Superintendent of Schools for Sonoma County. “If you show me a third grader that is literate and proficient, you've shown me a high school graduate.”

WestEd, a nonpartisan research, development, and service agency, assessed the K-3 Proficiency Project in 2023 and concluded that “students from all grades have demonstrated excellent growth and progress since



Fall 2020. The K-3 Proficiency Project shows consistent and strong promise for having positive impacts on student reading outcomes.”

“While SIFF is known for our annual film festival and monthly showcase films, as a Sonoma nonprofit, our legacy is our commitment to our community,” said Ginny Krieger, SIFF Executive Director. “We are always willing to use the power of cinema to bring people together and provide the means to generate awareness and fundraising opportunities to deserving community nonprofits which help others such as K-3i.”

In addition, the literary arts nonprofit, the Sonoma Authors Festival, also supports the K-3 Proficiency Project, knowing the importance of literacy proficiency and the positive impact the program is making for children in our community.

“If there is one thing educators agree on, it is that by the third grade, reading skills must be developed,” said David Freeman, founder of the Sonoma Valley Authors Festival. “Studies have proven that reading skills are the foundation for academic success going forward. Third grade marks the transition from *learning to read to reading to learn*. Proficient reading skills are the foundation for understanding and mastering subjects such as math, science, and social studies. The K-3i program tackles this challenge with impressive results that change lives.”

Ticket levels for the Sunday, August 11 film are available which directly benefit the K-3 Proficiency Project. For more information about the film and tickets, visit [SIFF SPECIAL SCREENING | LOST & FOUND IN CLEVELAND, benefitting K-3i](#).

About K-3 Innovation and the K-3 Proficiency Project

K-3 Innovation is a nonprofit organization, based in Sonoma, California, which empowers and inspires students with reading foundations that set students up for a lifetime of success.

Gary D. Nelson is the Founder and Chairman of the Board, and Marc Elin is the Executive Director. For more information, visit k3innovation.org.

About the Sonoma County Office of Education

The mission of the Sonoma County Office of Education (SCOE) is to foster student success through service to students, schools, and the community.

Dr. Amie R. Carter, Ed.D., is the elected County Superintendent of Schools for Sonoma County.



About the 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 in funding, equipment, internships, and college scholarships.

The 28th Annual Sonoma International Film Festival is March 19-23, 2025. Pass Sales for SIFF2025 go on sale in October 2024. Tickets and film information about the SIFF Monthly Film Showcase, featuring the best in new cinema from around the world, is at sonomafilmfest.org.

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