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Youngsters learn industry behind, in front of camera



Kids practice a scene in a short film they created as they learn about different aspects of the film industry during the Kids 'N Film Camp at the North Vallejo Community Center with the Greater Vallejo Recreation District on Saturday. (Chris Riley — Times-Herald)

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Whether or not the next Martin Scorsese, Meryl Streep, Reed Marino or Marlon Brando was at the North Vallejo Community Center is still up in the air, but a dozen kids Saturday enjoyed learning about film at the Kids N Film workshop.

The event was guided by Jacalyn Evone, a supervisor and director with the Greater Vallejo Recreation District.

"Basically we're trying to build self confidence and self esteem with all the kids," Evone said. "The kids get to learn what it's like to be on camera in front of their peers and feel comfortable about it, so later they can do it in front of their classmates and in other places. Also, they get to make some new friends here today."

Evone explained that sometimes the kids are given a script to work with, but this time the youngsters made a movie script themselves. On Saturday the story centered around a bunch of kids playing a video game and then all of a sudden being transported to become people inside the actual video game (think "Tron"). While in the video game, they are soon aware they each have super powers (think "Avengers"). There were also two villains.

Jacalyn Evone

Photographer/Film Director

The kids especially got excited in the scene where they all learned they had super powers as they each took turns moving their hands in different directions to show they could direct either fire, ice, thunder or something else.

While about 10 people acted out their scenes with each other on camera, two others would operate the sound and take care of slate duties.

"For me the best part was doing the slate (person who holds a clapperboard and yells the scene, take and action)," Emanuel Gomez, 8, said. "I've been interested in film and television because of my favorite show, Ninjago."

Twelve-year-old Ryan Cooper, a seventh grader at Elite School, has participated in the workshop previously and has experience working behind the camera. Cooper said he's worked with animation on YouTube and he was also part of a documentary film, University of Declaration of Human Rights, which was featured at the San Diego International Youth Film Festival.

During the day the kids learned how to direct, act, capture audio and operate a camera. They also learned how to create short stories, documentaries and monologues.

"Today it was fun to learn improv in acting and how to change your lines," Cooper said. "I've loved film for about four years now."

Cooper's younger sister, Riley, 9, was also at the event.

"I love acting and I like this day because you get to be part of everything in front of and behind the camera," Riley Cooper said. "I like both of the areas the same amount."

Sylanna Green, a third grader, said she "loved how they were doing the film because she got to feel like she was a real super hero."

Maya Edwards, 11, was at the event for the first time.

"I really liked learning the acting part," Edwards said. "I've always wanted to be an actress."

Gianna Fragozo, 11, liked learning information that took place behind the camera.

"I really liked being part of the sound," Fragozo said. "We would film and then I would hear the sound part on a specific channel. We wouldn't make the sounds for it, but I would hear how it would sound."

Evone, who's been involved with film for over 20 years, said the event started out years ago at Vallejo Community Access Television, but moved to community center with GVRD a few years ago.

"This is a really great group of kids," Evone said. "It's been fun and exciting to work with them."



Kids take direction from GRVD supervisor Jacalyn Evone at the Kids N Film Workshop at the North Vallejo Community Center on Saturday. (Thomas Gase – Times-Herald)