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ATHERTON

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Terri Bullock:
Bringing Film to Atherton



Terri Bullock: Bringing Film to Atherton

By Abbie Burgess



Terri Bullock calls Windrider Film Forum her accidental career. With no background in film, she was invited by a friend in 2010 to attend the Sundance Film Festival, where she watched 17 independent films in a week. "I had no idea there were these types of thoughtful films about important issues in our world," she says. Back home in Atherton, she and a small group organized a mini version of that Sundance experience. This became Windrider Film Forum Bay Area, of which Terri is the director.

The Windrider Forum, which Terri first encountered during that initial visit to Sundance, was launched as an immersive experience between filmmakers and film lovers, designed to facilitate thoughtful conversation, awaken compassion, and inspire change. Windrider Bay Area is one arm of the organization.

A Growing Sensation

"We decided from the beginning to show a small number of highly curated films and bring the filmmakers to town to pamper them and let our audience have the opportunity to have meaningful conversations with them," Terri explains.

The initial response to the forum was enthusiastic, but it took time to become known enough to fill the Menlo-Atherton Performing Arts Center. This was especially true for the evening of short films, Terri says. "Part of that was simply introducing people to the power of short films. I've shown films as short as six minutes. You'd be amazed at how much a filmmaker can accomplish in that time."

Now, the theatre is filled for all three nights of the annual event which takes place virtually this year July 8-10 and 15-16.

In 2020, the virtual opening program had over 1,800 viewers and was watched in three countries and 29 states. One of the silver linings of last year was that the Windrider team learned to present the program virtually, along with creating an online library. The films, filmmaker conversations, discussion guides, bonus material and even bloopers are all available to a virtual audience for free, in the Film Library,

on the website.. "The team, all volunteers, did an awesome job of getting the word out and finding an audience, despite the challenges of the pandemic," Terry says.

Looking to the future, Terri says her dreams for the future of Windrider include continuing to find powerful, enlightening films and orchestrating conversations that promote enthusiastic, peaceful problem-solving.

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Making a Difference Through Film

These independent films are more important than ever, Terri says. “We look for films to screen that tell stories about critical human issues through what I call the ‘Lens of Hope.’ They tell stories in a way that educates people, shows them positive ways to address the issue, and encourages constructive conversations.”

Terri looks for opportunities to partner with nonprofits when she finds one whose mission aligns with a Windrider film. “For example, after the screening of the documentary ‘Skid Row Marathon,’ we hosted a reception with seven nonprofits at tables to let people stop by and talk to them about all the ways they could get involved working with the homeless and lower-income community members,” she explains. Similarly, the screening of “Alive Inside – Music & Memory” was followed by a reception with non-profits helping Alzheimer’s patients and families. After “The Dry Land” screening, a reception featured nonprofits helping veterans and their families.

“Because we highly curate our film forum, I care deeply about the ones we choose to include in our programming,” she says, “I’m grateful for these independent filmmakers who share these important stories in a way that encourages opening hearts and minds to others.”

“I’ve lost count of how many films I’ve watched,” Terri says, adding that asking if she has a favorite film is like asking if she has a favorite child!

Atherton

"I feel lucky to live in this neighborhood that feels like a beautiful park," says Terri, who moved from Menlo Park to Atherton's Lindenwood neighborhood in 1999. "For over a year, my main activity with my neighbors has been walking my dog and seeing my neighbors walking their dogs, stopping to say hi and checking in to see how they are." In years past, neighbors have graciously offered to be host families to the Windrider film guests.

Terri also enjoys hosting, opening her home to musicians from Music@Menlo, the annual summer chamber music festival. She has also hosted events such as Moms Without Moms May dinner party, pumpkin carving party at her ranch, and other holiday and social gatherings. In her spare time Terri enjoys riding her horse, Oreo and playing the piano. She attends First Congregational Church of Palo Alto. "More recently, Shel, my boyfriend, has been teaching me how to garden and go camping," she shares.

Her family includes son Ben, daughter-in-law Christina, grandson Brooks and daughter Christine and son-in-law Brian. "My son started Bullock Capital, a commercial real estate company and my daughter is the co-founder of Pronto Housing, a startup developing services and software to automate affordable housing leasing and compliance." Terri's happy three-year-old Portuguese Water Dog, Lexi, and Shel's dog Kai are also part of the family.

Terri was inspired by her mother's creativity, approach to problem solving and work ethic. "With her talent for celebrations, her unconditional love for family and friends, and her unwavering confidence in me, she gave me the tools and encouragement to take on all sorts of things, including the curve balls life throws."



Before she discovered her passion for film, Terri had an accomplished career as a certified and licensed financial planner. She worked for twenty years in wholesale banking and finance for Wells Fargo Bank and Chase Manhattan Bank and in investment advising for The Savant Investment Group. Her undergraduate degree is from the University of the Pacific and her MBA is from UCLA's Anderson School of Management.

Virtual Opening July 8

Recently, Terri traveled to the Carter Center in Atlanta to interview President Jimmy Carter's grandson, Jason Carter. He shared with her some personal stories about his grandfather and the work of the Carter Center, a nongovernmental, not-for-profit organization founded in 1982. "Windrider is opening virtually on July 8 with the film, 'Carterland,' which will surprise people with how much they didn't know about President Carter—especially about all his work with conservation and expanding the National Park Service," Terri explains. "We'll show part of my conversation with Jason after the screening of the film, followed by a virtual Q&A with the filmmakers."

Terri adds, "I have an amazing 'village' of friends and family and am enjoying bringing meaningful, independent films to the Windrider audience."

Find out more about the upcoming event at windriderbayarea.org/films/2021-films.

