

New Afterschool Program Focuses On Film-Making



*New after-school program revolves around
film-making*



by
Amanda
Lawrence

Reel Serious is a new after-school program that provides New Bedford youth with the opportunity to produce short documentary films of cultural and social relevance. Beginning on June 26, the Reel Serious team will be focusing their sights on Andrea McCoy, a local boxing legend. With the programs start date rapidly approaching, I took the opportunity to sit down with Ivone Rego-Cass, the Founder and Executive Director of Reel Serious, to learn more about her exciting new program, and how to become involved with it.

Amanda: I was very happy to have discovered Reel Serious, but was unable to find much information about it. Could you give me a little back-story on the program?

Ivone: As a young woman, I have always felt drawn to work with kids. Later on, I had the opportunity to study theatre and film. When I discovered documentaries, I fell in love and knew that's what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. Documentaries were a cathartic and creative outlet for me; one that allowed me to express myself, while exploring my environment and learning new technologies. When my fiancé, now husband, Brian Cass and I decided to leave New York and move back to New Bedford to start a family... I began to marry my two interests and, Voila! Reel Serious was born. I often say I have three babies: Viola, Jasper and Reel Serious.

Amanda: What are some of the developments Reel Serious has made since it began?

Ivone: Since its inception in 2009, Reel Serious has piloted its unique and innovative programs at the Normandin & Roosevelt Middle Schools. We have retained fiscal sponsorship from the Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts (CFSEMA), and we've been awarded several small grants; as well as expanded our Steering Committee to a Board of Directors.

Our Board comprises of Ethan Weiss, Christopher Kelly, Nick Francis, Nina Gray, Casey DuFresne, Rebecca Janes, Jennifer Pires-Costentino, Dana Ribeiro and Max Cover.

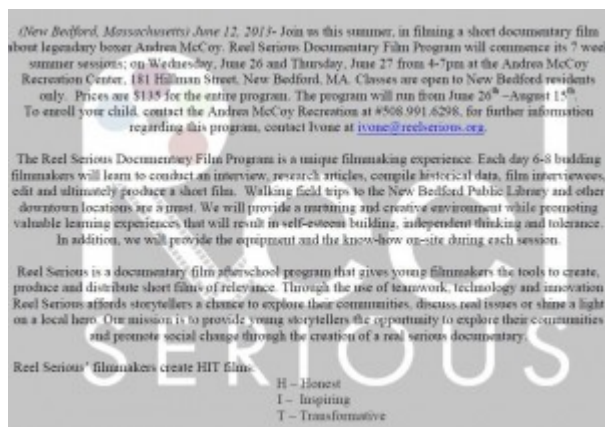
Amanda: Your first summer series entitled The Reel McCoy, is focusing on local boxing legend Andrea McCoy, what were some of the factors involved in choosing him as the star of your first project?

Ivone: Andrea McCoy's story is one of perseverance and inspiration. I believe his life is relatable and relevant. As a young boy he was bullied, struggled with his education, and grew up without a father; I believe anyone can relate to those

themes. He attended the local Boys & Girls Club, and later New Bedford High School before going on to become an Olympic hopeful. His dreams to fight at the Olympics stopped short after one tragic, life-altering event where he and fourteen of his teammates perished. The Reel McCoy will tell his story.

Amanda: What other Reel Serious projects do we have to look forward to this coming Fall?

Ivone: We are working with the Seven Hills Foundation to bring our "Living with HIV/AIDS" short documentary series to 14 young budding filmmakers. We will be working with young people from GLBT community to create a platform to tell stories that educate, provoke tolerance, depict respect and inspire social change. We are also hoping to bring our mentoring program, "Reflections" to the high school. This is where a Junior or Senior will be paired up with a Freshman or Sophomore who has a disability/special need. After seven weeks, the camera will turn and the freshman or sophomore will have a chance to interview their peer mentor.



Amanda: Who is eligible to participate in these programs, and how can they signup?

Ivone: Our programs are inclusive. We welcome any New Bedford resident between the ages of 14 and 18 with a genuine interest in telling stories, who want to learn how to direct,

produce and edit a short film. No prior experience is required. To enroll in The Reel McCoy summer program, simply contact the Andrea McCoy Recreation Center at (508) 991-6298.

Amanda: How is Reel Serious raising money to help fund its projects?

Ivone: We are raising funds mainly through grants. However, we have spearheaded our First Annual Summer FUNdraising event, which will take place at No Problemo, on Saturday, June 22nd

at 8 pm. We will have music and a raffle. We are asking folks to drop by and donate to a really good cause. While you're there, order some yummy food and enjoy the awesome music! And don't forget to buy a raffle ticket to show your support.

In addition to the event, you can also find our donation cans in and around the Downtown area. Local businesses such as; No Problemo, Brick, Green Bean, Destination Soup, Café Arpeggios, and Beach Plum in Padanaram have shown their support by allowing us to put our cans at their establishments, some have even donated gift certificates for the raffle. We are really feeling the love.

But if folks can't come to the Downtown NB area, no worries, they can show their support by donating at: www.youcaring.com/reelserious.

Amanda: Is it possible for parents, or other local residents to get involved with this project, if so, how?

Ivone: We are always seeking volunteers. We especially need help for our screening events. Anyone interested in volunteering at Reel Serious can email us at info@reelserious.org for more information on how to help.

Amanda: And lastly, what are some things you would like for your students to take away from their film making experience with Reel Serious?

Ivone: Filmmaking is a vehicle for self-awareness, empowerment, creativity, storytelling, and education. While a documentary can have a profound impact on an audience; this impact can sometimes be felt even greater by the creator(s). Through technical skill building and learning how to concisely and honestly tell a story; the participants in this program will find a new medium of self-expression and advocacy. Our hope is that this program will inspire young people to think creatively and critically about the world around them.

Remember, folks, space is limited, so be sure to sign up soon!
And keep your eyes peeled for the Reel Serious donation boxes
located around New Bedford!

Two Summer Sessions (4-7pm):

1st: June 26th through August 14th

2nd: June 27th through August 15th

Andrea McCoy Recreation, Center 181 Hillman Street,

**Walking Field trips in the downtown area*

Price: \$135 for the entire program.

Must be a New Bedford resident between the ages of 14 -18
years old

To enroll please call the Andrea McCoy Recreation Center at
(508) 991-6298