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The Central Valley Community Foundation announces The Big Tell Film Contest Winners

Ten Central Valley filmmakers will present mini-documentaries at a film festival in October

FRESNO, CA – The Central Valley Community Foundation (CVCF), with support from the Central Valley Foundation and Bank of America, have announced the ten grant winners for the annual The Big Tell film contest. CVCF received more than 75 applications from local filmmakers vying for a chance to win one of ten grants to make a mini-documentary about life in the Central Valley.

The winners will each be awarded \$5,000 to produce their 5-minute mini-documentary, and will receive one-on-one mentorship from acclaimed documentary filmmaker Sascha Rice. Rice, who received an Emmy nomination for her 2012 film “California State of Mind: The Legacy of Pat Brown” (2012), is a Los Angeles-based filmmaker, entertainment executive, public speaker, and teacher, and the granddaughter of former California Governor Pat Brown.

“Now, more than ever, we need to listen to and promote stories that shatter the lens and offer new ways to see our communities. The Central Valley is brimming with talented, collaborative filmmakers who are sharing fantastic stories,” said Rice. “What makes The Big Tell absolutely unique is the commitment to local filmmakers telling their stories in the way that they want to tell them.”

This is the third year for The Big Tell, a regional film contest for professional, amateur, and student filmmakers from Merced, Mariposa, Madera, Fresno, Tulare, and Kings counties. The Big Tell is committed to promoting diversity in both the filmmakers it supports and the stories that they share. Combined, the 30 The Big Tell filmmakers from 2017-2019 range in age from 23 to 67 years; 40% are female; 66% are minorities; and 40% are amateurs or students.

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“The Central Valley is the future of California. It’s filled with dynamic and vibrant stories that need to be told – across the region and across the state. The films funded through The Big Tell reflect the complexity, diversity, and vibrancy of this region,” said Ashley Swearengin, President & CEO of the Central Valley Community Foundation.

For the third year, Bank of America is the Presenting Sponsor for The Big Tell as part of the bank’s support of the arts as a powerful cultural and economic driver in communities.

"Bank of America's support of The Big Tell reflects our belief that the arts matter. The arts help economies thrive, connect people across cultures, and educate and enrich society," said Mark Riley, Fresno Market President for Bank of America.

Other supporters of the Big Tell 2019 include the Central Valley Foundation (CVF) and the Community Media Access Collaborative (CMAC). CVF was founded in 1994 by Susan and the late James B. McClatchy, former Publisher of the Fresno Bee. CVF is led by a Board of Directors comprised entirely of Central Valley residents.

CMAC has supported The Big Tell since its origination and is a conduit to resources for filmmakers, including those participating in The Big Tell, as well as throughout the community. CMAC is a non-profit organization dedicated to empowering community voices through media, offering the tools and training to create and distribute high-quality media content that is of interest to local audiences.

The ten winning films will premiere at The Big Tell Showcase, a free event at Fresno’s Tower Theatre at 7:00 pm on Friday, October 25, 2019. The complete list of grantee filmmakers and a brief description of their films are included on the next page.

About CVCF

The Central Valley Community Foundation has been a trusted partner in philanthropy in the Central Valley for over 50 years. Our mission is to cultivate smart philanthropy, lead, and invest in solutions that build stronger communities. As the only nationally-accredited community foundation serving the 6-county Central San Joaquin Valley, CVCF attracts investment and deploys resources to solve persistent economic, environmental, and social challenges in the Central Valley.

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