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## Short films tell big Valley stories

*Winners announced for 5<sup>th</sup> annual The Big Tell Film Contest*

Central Valley Community Foundation (CVCF) announces this year's The Big Tell film contest winners. Ten area filmmakers each receive a \$5,000 grant to capture a Central Valley story in a five-minute mini-documentary.

Now in its fifth year, The Big Tell is coordinated by CVCF, an organization committed to raising the profile of California's Central Valley. "Each year The Big Tell offers a collection of powerful stories, each essential in sharing the bigger story about our Central Valley," CVCF President & CEO Ashley Swearengin said. "It's imperative we create a space to highlight these diverse stories and to support our talented local filmmakers."

More than 50 applicants submitted their best ideas for a film about an undiscovered story from throughout the six-county Central Valley: Merced, Mariposa, Madera, Fresno, Tulare, and Kings counties. A panel of judges evaluated the film concepts based on criteria including film subject, diversity among filmmakers and the stories they tell, and how the film will contribute to the rich and compelling narrative of the Central Valley.

The ten winning filmmakers have three months to complete their films which will premiere together at The Big Tell Showcase, a 90-minute televised special in November on Nexstar partner stations.

Presented by the James B. McClatchy Foundation, with support from Community Media Access Collaborative (CMAC), The Big Tell allows local filmmakers—professional, student, and amateur—the opportunity to share a meaningful undiscovered Central Valley story.

Along with the cash grant, filmmakers receive one-on-one mentoring from Emmy-nominated documentarian Sascha Brown Rice, founder and President of Fire of Life Films, and granddaughter of former California Governor, Pat Brown. “For the past four years, these short documentaries have brought to life the rich diversity of Central Valley,” said Brown Rice. “Sharing and celebrating stories is a timeless tradition. Collaborating with the Central Valley Community Foundation and mentoring the Big Tell filmmakers has been deeply rewarding. I look forward to working with this year’s lineup of winners!”

Brown Rice, a Los-Angeles-based filmmaker, public speaker, and teacher received an Emmy nomination for her 2012 film “California State of Mind: The Legacy of Pat Brown” (2012).

In addition to the grant and mentorship, CMAC provides winning filmmakers with an annual membership, ongoing technical assistance, and a full range of production tools and trainings.

“We believe that everyone has a story to tell and everyone deserves to be seen, heard, and recognized,” CMAC Executive Director Bryan Harley said. “Sharing these stories helps create a more connected community with people who are informed and engaged with what's happening—inspiring them to make their home even better.”

The Big Tell is committed to promoting diversity in both the filmmakers it supports and stories they share. Combined, the 50 The Big Tell filmmakers from 2017-2021 range in age from 23 to 67 years; 40% are female; 38% are Hispanic or Latino; 18% are Asian American and Pacific Islanders; 10% are Black or African American; 2% are Indigenous; 32% are white; and 50% are amateurs or students.

#### **Here are the 2021 The Big Tell Film Contest winners:**

- **A Movement Known Around the World**, Jeremy Miller
- **Good Fire**, Erica Tom
- **Hope in a Basket**, Chad Saecheo
- **Kawah Kweens**, Zach Green Films
- **Little Big Gym**, Rigoberto Moran
- **Mammoths in Madera?!**, Eddie Garcia
- **Mi Elotero**, Carolina de la Torre
- **Not Just any Restaurant**, Matt Mealer
- **Reclaiming Medicine**, Jennifer Robin

- **Stan Bitters: Ceramics Wizard**, Ed Goto

Find more information about The Big Tell Film Contest and view previous films at [www.TheBigTell.org](http://www.TheBigTell.org)

### **About CVCF**

The Central Valley Community Foundation has been a trusted partner in philanthropy in the Central Valley for more than 50 years. Its mission is to cultivate smart philanthropy, lead, and invest in solutions that build stronger communities. As the only nationally-accredited community foundation serving the six-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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