



FILMAID REACHES OUT TO TEENS AFFECTED BY HURRICANE KATRINA

FilmAid International is proud to be a part of the **2006 Red Stick International Animation Festival**, which will take place on **April 20-23**. This year's festival is dedicated to "reaching the young people of New Orleans."

FilmAid, in collaboration with **Listen Up!**, the Red Stick International Animation Festival, AnimAction and others organized a three-day animation workshop at the Shaw Center for the Arts in Baton Rouge from **April 10-12th** for teachers and students affected by the hurricanes on how to use media, particularly animation, to tell their stories. The students' work will culminate at an exclusive screening and panel-forum at the Red Stick Festival where speakers will include representatives from Pixar Studios, Walt Disney and DreamWorks. Last year's festival drew more than 1,500 people.

"Having worked with forcibly displaced young people in other parts of the world, FilmAid has witnessed first hand how important it is for youth to have a creative way to reflect on their personal experience and voice their opinions, hopes and fears. It is part of the healing process and helps strengthen communities that have been through a traumatic event like Katrina," says Melissa Brough, Program Officer for FilmAid International.

The youth-made animated shorts will also be screened at **www.filmaid.org** and **www.listenup.org** for a national audience. **FilmAid** will also show the animated shorts to Sudanese and other refugees living in the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya. Like many students in Baton Rouge, these refugees know, all too well, the harsh realities of being forced from their homes.

FilmAid International, a non-profit organization that uses the power of film and video to educate and entertain hundreds of thousands of displaced people each year, is partnering with a national network of organizations to give middle and high school students affected by the hurricanes the chance to make short, original, animated films on how their lives have changed since the hurricanes.

FilmAid began working with communities affected by the hurricanes in December, 2005, when they hosted outdoor screenings of *Make It Funky*, a documentary about the musical heritage of New Orleans, at the Renaissance Village trailer park and in downtown Baton Rouge. The screenings, sponsored by **Turner Classic Movies**, brought entertainment, emotional relief, and the opportunity for evacuee families and local residents to socialize with a renewed sense of community during the holiday season.

The upcoming animation project is made possible by a unique collaboration of local and national organizations who share a mission to support the arts, media production and meeting the needs of those displaced by natural disasters. In addition to **FilmAid International**, they include **Listen Up! Youth Media Network**, **AnimAction**, **the Louisiana State University's Center for Computation and Technology**, **the Red Stick International Film Festival** and **The Shaw Center for the Arts**.

For more information on the Red Stick Animation Festival or to buy tickets, please visit www.redstickfestival.org.

For more information on FilmAid International go to www.filmaid.org.

Press contact Emily MacDonald at emacdonald@filmaid.org P. 212-529-1088
Program contact Melissa Brough at mbrough@filmaid.org.

###