

cosmopolitan productions

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Cosmopolitan Productions was founded on the belief that knowledge, dialogue and good storytelling can change the world.

Susan Barrett Price and Maria Cristalli were partners for 12 years in the field of human services. They started Cosmo after seeing the positive power of short films – more direct than all the words, words, words that flood our lives.

Short Movies: Youth and Family Specialty

Cosmopolitan Productions is noted for its compassion toward the dilemmas and longings of children – as well as empathy for the adults who struggle to do the right thing. The team has also begun exploring the world of families at later stages in life.

“The Valentine 1955” Two little girls face off. Where is the respect in fearful times? This animation is a conversation starter for cultural competence training. Shown at 6th Annual United Nations Association Film Festival in Palo Alto CA, October 2003 – one of 30 films selected worldwide. UNAFF Traveling Festival Monterey, November 2003 and Harvard University JFK School of Government, September 2004. Licensed for broadcast on the Free Speech TV and released as a radio production (see below). (2:30 min)

“Lightening the Load” Under the auspices of the Mental Health Association of Rochester/Monroe County, actors in fictional scenarios explore the emergence of anxiety disorders in older loved ones and illustrate how working caregivers can recognize and manage these situations. (18 min)

“Lucy’s Integrated Plan” Unified Services of Allegany County wanted a story to inspire and enlighten service providers who are learning a new service model for youth in trouble. The Cosmo team wrote the story of Lucy, a teen mother in distress, and created a simple animated cartoon to portray her journey. (5:30 min)

“Foster Parent Recruitment” Five foster parents from western New York talk about working with kids and the support they get from Hillside Children’s Center. (8:30 min)

“What Students Are Saying” Students from Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection express how the program has given them opportunities they might never have had. Certificate of Creative Excellence (Non-Profit Public Relations), 2003 U.S. International Film and Video Festival, Redondo Beach, CA. (7 min)

“Lucy” Developed as a recruitment tool for Hillside’s Parents As Partners Roundtable. Using animated cut-outs, it tells the

story from a child’s perspective, watching what her mother has to go through to help her brother who is in trouble. (2 min)

“Polar Bear Project” Children whose parents participate in the Mental Health Association’s Better Days Ahead program depict their vision of family life in this expressive micro-documentary on the development of one entry in Rochester’s ESL Animal Scramble. “It turned out to be a really moving piece. It told the story in a meaningful way that leaves you feeling like this program is one that truly makes a difference in the lives of these kids” (Meg Joseph, speaking on behalf of the sponsor Business Methods in a interview for the *Penfield Post*). (2 min)

“Green Reality” Hillside staff discuss the impact of implementing a new behavior support system at the Halpern Education Center. They have learned not only new tools for eliciting positive behaviors, but also gained insights about themselves. (5 min)

“Learning Respect” Youth with histories of not being able to get along reflect on how they have learned about “respect” and what it means to them. This film shows the youth perspective on positive behavior expectations at Hillside. Along with the video above, it has been used throughout the NYS community of Positive Behavior Intervention & Support (PBIS) experts to illustrate Hillside’s implementation of the model. (3 min)

“The Cost of Cool” A youth-produced video that looks at what happens when a boy sells his soul to the devil just to be one of the cool guys. Produced under the label “Mad Mary Moviemaking,” which gives kids the opportunity to plot their own stories and improvise their own dialogue. Fast work and fun for all! (7:30 min)

“System of Care Progress – Live!” The Cosmo team traveled throughout central and western NYS to interview fifty-five staff, clients, and Board members of Hillside Family of Agencies about progress toward Hillside’s strategic goals. The result is a lively montage of faces and voices expressing their enthusiasm for the “new” Hillside and hopefulness for the future. This production was used to lift spirits at the annual HFA staff conference. (5 min)

“The Hill – A Place to Reinvent Myself” Three youth in residence volunteered to tell the Hillside story to potential donors. They worked from a script and also spoke from their hearts. Youth in need of services are presented in a positive light – using their strengths to do what Americans do best: reinvent themselves. (5:16 min)

Short Movies: Personal Essays

“Artist Emerging” Rochester artist Sheila Peters commissioned this piece to celebrate the opening of her workspace and her participation in the ESL Animal Scramble. The video is a very personal statement in which she muses on the duality expressed in her work.

"Ghosts" In this experimental piece, 8-mm film of a 1940s party is edited together with sound clips of home recordings from the same era. The mood is established as raucous and silly, then reverses into something sadder.

Short Movies: Community and Environment

"Mission and Magic" (3:40 min) The Seneca Park Zoo Society commissioned this piece to promote and support the Monroe County Seneca Park Zoo. What is the role of a small zoo in the Rochester community and what is its place in the world? A Zoo Society board member provides his perspective, his voice complemented by the perspective of a zoo visitor.

Cosmo Radio

Independent radio productions are expanding Cosmo's reach to new audiences.

"Dangling Woman" Social reformer tries to take a vacation in Costa Rica and gets stuck in the treetops. Featured online at Transom.org and licensed for broadcast in Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket MA; Little Rock AR; Mendocino County CA. (5:15 min)

"The Valentine 1955" Two little girls face off. Where is the respect in fearful times? A radio version of our film. Licensed for broadcast at Fordham University, NYC; Antioch University, Yellow Springs, OH; Angeles University, Angeles City, Pampanga Philippines; Williams College, Williamstown MA. (2:30 min)

"Kitty Keeps On Singing" A personal essay exploring how my grandmother dealt with sorrow and loss, using family recordings from the 1940s. Available for licensing on PRX.org (6:30 min)

Background

Maria Cristalli, MPH (Master of Public Health). Hillside Children's Center/Hillside Family of Agencies: quality improvement, strategic planning, special projects (14 years).

Susan B. Price, M.S. (Community Health). Hillside Children's Center/Hillside Family of Agencies: founder and administrator of quality improvement and information technology systems; administrator at various times for learning systems, marketing, community relations, strategic planning, project management, food services and facilities (24 years). Additional studies in graphic arts, writing, web design, and video production.