



One Earth

Film fest screens 30 documentaries that dig into environmental issues

BY BRUCE INGRAM
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One Earth, the Chicago area's homegrown environmentalist film festival, is back for its sixth incarnation, bigger and presumably greener than ever.

The all-volunteer fest, running March 3-12, will present 30 films (all of them documentaries) in 47 screenings in categories including conservation, climate change, health and environment, waste and recycling and social justice. Screenings and post-screening discussions (including 14 filmmakers) will be held at 39 venues in Chicago and the suburbs. Venues include Old St. Patrick's Church, Haymarket Pub and Brewery, the Adler Planetarium, Peggy Notebaert Museum, the Garfield Park Conservatory, the Chicago Public Library Austin branch, the Museum of Science and Industry and the Chicago Cultural Center, all in Chicago; Triton College in River Grove; Dominican University,

Good Earth Greenhouse and Thatcher Woods Pavilion, all in River Forest; St. Giles Catholic Church, Lake Street Theater and the Oak Park Public Library, all in Oak Park; Elmhurst College; the College of DuPage in Glen Ellyn; Prairie Crossing School and College of Lake County in Grayslake; Northwestern University in Evanston; North Shore Country Day in Winnetka; and the Wilmette Theatre.

"Films have such an emotional impact," said Tari Delisi, an organizer for the Oak Park/River Forest area where the fest began in 2012, as an offshoot of the Green Community Connections grass roots environmentalist organization. "Films as a vehicle provide the opportunity to tell environmental stories in a way that educates people, touches them emotionally and inspires them to take action — to become more involved, more open to trying new things. The idea is to inspire to make positive changes to care for the planet."

Also an active member of Green Community Connections, the Oak Park resident has become inspired in recent years to raise chickens and keep bees, among other measures she's adopted after watching more than her share of environmentally themed films. She was an audience member when the festival debuted, but by the second year she had begun serving on the film selection committee, in addition to cultivating relationships with west suburban venues such as Dominican University in River Forest and Oak Park's Lake Theatre.

This past year, she was part of the team that winnowed down more than 300 entries including films that had been screened at Sundance and other top festivals, to the 30 that made the final cut.

"We think of the venues where we show our films as partners," she said, noting that Dominican University, in addition to incorporating appropriate studies into its curriculum, has helped by apply-

One Earth Film Festival

When: March 3-12

Where: numerous venues in Chicago and the suburbs

Admission: Free for most screenings (except movie theaters) with a recommended donation of \$6.

Information: www.onearthfilmfest.org

ing for a grant to present a post-screening speaker. Coincidentally, Oscar-nominated director Josh Fox's "How to Let Go of the World and Love All the Things Climate Can't Change," screening at 7 p.m. March 2 in Dominican's Lund Auditorium, just happens to be one of Delisi's personal favorites at this year's fest.

"It helps us understand how we can use moral imagination to take moral action as a means of solving problems involving wind energy,

solar energy, wave energy and permaculture," Delisi said. "They call it moral investing and it takes in the entire world."

The fact that you'll have the opportunity to learn about all those strategies in greater detail after the screening is one of the attributes that makes One Earth stand apart from other regional festivals of this type.

"The D.C. festival in Washington is the largest, with hundreds of films on its schedule each year," Delisi said. "But that's all they do. Our festival's No. 1 distinction is that we always offer a program with the film, one that provides concrete, tangible actions audience members can take here and now to make a difference."

Apparently, that's a strategy that appeals to an ever-growing audience — consisting equally of environmental newbies and longtime veterans. Five hundred people showed up for the first One Earth fest in 2012 while 3,460 people attended last year.