

Randolph High School Juniors Earn Recognition at the Bergen County Film Festival

By Henry M. Holden

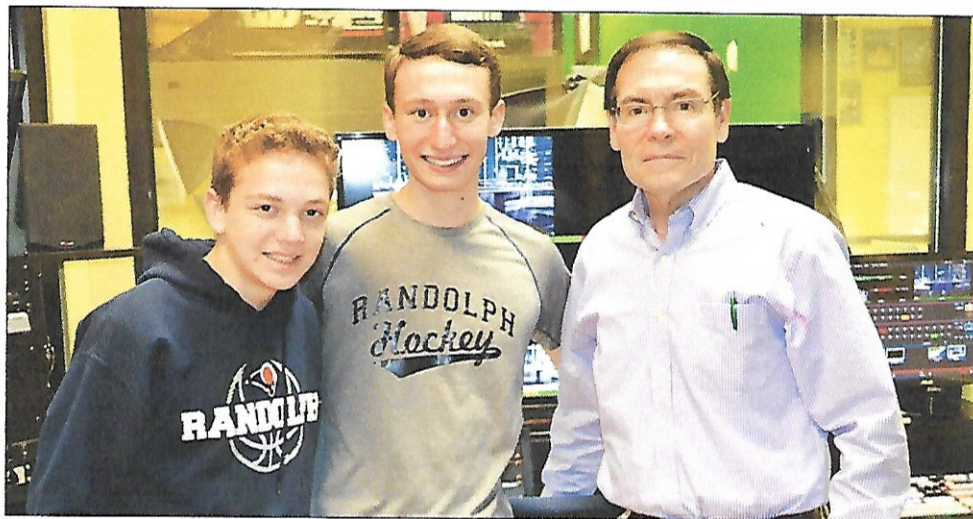
On March 16 and 17, Randolph High School juniors Eitan Leinwand and Corey Wichansky had their short experimental film *What Matters* chosen as an official selection in the student category at the Bergen County Film Festival.

"The festival celebrates diversity of artistic expression in films produced in the state of New Jersey," noted film/TV production teacher Mr. Robert Finning.

The two young men have been making videos for several years. "We've made about 30 videos," said Leinwand. The two started out with it as a hobby and it gradually grew as the boys learned more about filming and editing.

"My parents bought me a small action camera and I started editing videos and I found it really fun," said Leinwand. "My brother was already into film and he kind of introduced me to it, and I'm just following in his footsteps," said Wichansky.

Each year Randolph High School has a "Spirit Week," where students dress up for



Randolph High School Film/TV Production teacher Mr. Robert Finning, right, congratulates Cory Wichansky, left, and Eitan Leinwand on the selection of their film "What Matters." (Credit: Allison Freeman)

the week.

"We had come up with the idea to film Spirit Week about three years ago, but we had a hard time coordinating everybody and getting the administration on board," said Finning.

"Once everybody was on the same page we began filming," said Leinwand. "This year we hit the ground running to get everybody organized. Then we had an entire run through to get the sense of how the story would move."

"We did it in three parts, the first part on the second floor, then the first floor, and then out in the ball field. The only time we stopped was to move everybody from inside to the outside. We never did a second take. We did the final video in 35 minutes. We edited the 35 minutes down to 18 minutes of finished video. The action moved well, and the edited video looked very professional. There were a lot of people who were part of it."

The boys wanted to do something serious and different. "Something that would address some issues many young people have," said Wichansky.

"We made this film *What Matters* because we wanted to show what people can feel in their thoughts and how some kids are struggling to connect with others," Leinwand said. "We thought that this is what many people feel at some point in their lives, like not

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feeling wanted or needed and we felt this was a story that was relatable and needed to be told.

"The film is called experimental in the sense that it doesn't follow traditional film

formatting. All the dialogue is voice-over, so you don't really see the character saying anything. Most films are also traditionally brightly lit. This film is dark. The darkness contributes part of the feeling one gets when they're watching

the film."

"The candles at the beginning of the video represent life. You see six candles being lit at the beginning of the film and that his life. And then you see them being blown out as if he wants to get rid of his life. But then at the end you see a candle lit again showing that he realizes that he does matter, and, his life is worthwhile.

The young men were thrilled about being honored by the Bergen County Film Festival.

"This is the first time any of our videos have been seen on a full wide screen by more than just people we know," said Leinwand. "I think the people who were watching it got the true meaning." What does the future hold?

"I am going to continue pur-

suage film and hopefully go to USC for film and then work in the industry," said Leinwand. "I'm not sure what I want to do," said Wichansky "I'm still enjoying it as a hobby."

"The Film/TV category is a four-year program so students can take it beginning in their freshman year through their senior year," said Finning "The concentration in their first year is film and television and for the remaining three years if the student decides to major in it, they can focus on either film or video. I started the program 25 years ago and it's grown over the years. We've gone through some transformations.

If a student goes through the four years here, they often go on to college where they can continue the film or TV learning."

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