

hotdocs

OUTSPOKEN. OUTSTANDING.



Documentary: def.: a film (or TV or radio show) that provides a factual record or report



The *Hotdocs Festival* takes place in downtown Toronto every spring season. Fortunately, *Hotdocs* offers an in-school festival whereby high school students have the opportunity to view documentaries in the convenience of their very own library or classroom. Teachers can choose 8 documentaries released the previous year to view in house with their students. This year, teachers at *Goetz* chose a variety of titles addressing topics across several disciplines: geography, social science, science, native studies, and media studies. *Fractured Land* chronicles the quest of a Native member of the Dene tribe who works tirelessly to raise awareness about the devastating effect of fracking (method of extracting natural gas from shale) on Canadian land. *Mussa*

explores the struggle of an Ethiopian family seeking refuge in Tel Aviv capturing the hateful rejection from politicians but also the enduring love from classroom teachers. *Backward Class* documents 15 impoverished students in India - who are given the rare privilege of receiving an education – under immense pressure preparing for state exams. *All the Time in the World* is an uplifting film documenting a family's journey through four seasons in the Yukon without a cellphone, electricity, or a clock. With just a video camera and the power of love amongst them, this brave family leaves everything in the city to experience a simple life.

The most popular film picks at *Goetz* were *Help us Find Sunil Tripathi* and *No Place to Hide: the Raetaeh Parsons Story*. Both documentaries share the common theme of the destructiveness of social media and the need to institute laws to protect individuals from online abuse – namely misinformation, false accusation, and hate messages – while addressing issues around mental illness and suicide. Both documentaries address serious and disturbing content but address 21st century problems that are too important to ignore.

46 viewings took place (some students and classes seeing more than one film), reaching over 1000 students across grades and subject areas. Students took part in rich conversation after viewing the documentaries and many participated in inquiry activities. The event was a huge success and we look forward to participating again next year!

N. Mouchbahani (a.k.a. Ms. M. the teacher-librarian)

“[This documentary is about] how we treat each other in a bigger society; in time of trauma, we don’t run to blame and accuse but to find truth and create justice”

Help us Find Sunil Tripathi (on using social media)

“The best way to combat sexual violence isn’t through the courts. The best way to prevent sexual violence is to engage youth in the conversation.”

No Place to Hide: the Retaeh Parsons Story

“15 years of benefit, 1000 years of destruction”

Fractured Land (on fracking – method of natural gas extraction)

“Friends don’t send friends away”

Mussa (on helping refugees)