Behind the scenes of those behind the camera

by Veronica Polignano

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This summer, juniors Harrison Segal and Charlie Werner won an international award for a film project from the Teens Dream video competition. The duo have been developing their film skills together since 7th grade and are working towards careers in cinematography.

The competition's goal, according to Segal, is to encourage teens to start a movement focusing on world improvement, specifically as it relates to the environment, through film. "Segal and Werner had the idea of environmental filmmaking. "We spend a lot of time outside taking photos. I take a picture every day, and so I go on hikes and walk around and realized that there was a lot of trash everywhere," said Segal, crediting this to their theme choice.

The video focuses on how Californians can be more environmentally conscious by picking up trash when they come across it. Their footage contrasts the beautiful California coast against shots of the large amounts of trash seen along the region. Segal is flying to Washington D.C. at the end of September to accept the award.

Below is the award winning video done by Charlie Werner and Harrison Segal over the summer for the Teens Dream video competition. The video shows how people should be taking better care of our California coast. Werner and Segal placed in the top three in their category for this video.

In addition to the competition, Segal and Werner have used their skills and professional grade equipment to direct their own features. Peak House Films. Their business is an event photography company where they photograph mainly Bar and Bat Mitzvahs along with weddings, according to Segal.

Growing up, both Segal and Werner were exposed to the world of film through relatives. Werner's older brother is a director of photography in Hollywood, who travels to film movies when hired by different production companies.

Segal learned about the field from his father, who is an avid photographer. Though Segal's father does photography as a hobby, he in occasionally hires to photograph events as well. "Every family trip we have to sit around waiting for my dad because he is off somewhere taking pictures," Segal said.

Being exposed to the field early on has influenced Segal and Werner to pursue film, they said.

"From 7th grade through freshman year, I would text my brother at least once a week asking questions about film stuff or software or pretty much anything you can think of," Werner said.

Despite their success, neither Werner nor Segal have any formal training in photography or film, but both are self-taught. However, having photographers in their lives provided a helpful resource for learning the ropes.

"Charlie had been interested in film, in editing, in computers and so forth for as long as I can remember, and Harrison has been the same way," Werner's father, Bud Werner, said.

Bud Werner credits the Edna technology camp for contributing to their interest in film. Segal and Werner attended Afterschool for several summers, which helped develop their skills in editing and computers.

"The camp just sort of took them from the base level to the next level," said Bud Werner. "Now they have progressed onto much higher levels."

For both of them, their equipment collections started with a camera and grew, now including lights, lenses, tripods and multiple cameras. Today, Segal has about 30 pieces of equipment and Werner has about 50. Between the two of them, they have all they need.

Both Segal and Werner pride themselves on being able to complete an entire project independently, but divide the work on projects based on one another's skills.

"We are both stronger in different specific skills: Segal is stronger at using the steady camera and I'm slightly stronger at operating the assistant camera," Werner said.

In choosing this career path there are certain risks and fears. According to Werner, the field of film is extremely competitive and there is constant pressure to be the best. For Werner, he worries about film pieces being on a job-to-job basis instead of a job with a constant revenue stream.

In the future, both Werner and Segal plan to pursue film in college. The two of them both hope to attend Chapman University after they graduate.

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