



Youth For Social Change



DIRECTING CHANGE NETWORKING EVENT

MAY 21, 2025

Youth from around the state will participate in discussions on how to use their creative passion and artistic talent to make a difference in their communities, both now and in their future careers.

EVENT MENTORS



SHAILEN DAWKINS

Shailen Dawkins is a recent graduate from UCLA with a degree in film, television, and digital media, specializing in narrative directing. With over 4 years of experience in filmmaking and music, Shailen enjoys exploring themes of coming of age, mental health, and social justice. Shailen enjoys all aspects of music creation including production, vocal recording, mixing, and mastering.



CHRIS GORDON

Chris Gordon is a multiple Emmy® award-winning and multiple Promax Gold award-winning senior producer for the ABC station in Los Angeles. He's produced numerous television campaigns for news, sports, and entertainment programming, including ABC's "On the Red Carpet at the Oscars," Los Angeles Rams pre-season and Monday Night Football games, and ABC7's number one "Eyewitness News" franchise.



KARIN GORNICK

Karin Gornick is an award-winning creative and development producer leading documentary storytelling across multiple platforms to inspire positive change. Karin recognizes societal and cultural needs and challenges, explores why those needs exist, dives deeply to discover what people need to effectively meet those needs, and creates educational programs to support growth. She is known for her work on *Like: A Documentary About the Impact of Social Media on Our Lives* (2018), *Angst* (2017), and *Screenagers* (2016).



TARA MIELE

Tara Miele is a DGA-Award-nominated filmmaker originally from Long Island. Her widely acclaimed film, *Wander Darkly*, starring Sienna Miller and Diego Luna, was nominated for the Grand Jury Prize at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival and was distributed by Lionsgate.

In addition to her feature work, Tara's work on the final two episodes of Apple TV's *Lessons in Chemistry*, starring Academy Award® winner Brie Larson, earned her a DGA nomination for Best Direction in a Limited Series. Tara recently helmed a block of episodes on the upcoming Amazon series, *We Were Liars*, based on the New York Times best-selling book as well as an episode of the award-winning anthology series *Little America* for Apple, "The Bra Whisperer." She has helmed fan-favorite episodes of: *The Rookie*, *La Brea*, *Hawaii Five-0*, *Arrow*, *Batwoman*, and *Fantasy Island*, as well as four micro-budget features.

Tara is also well known for her 2016 viral video, "Meet a Muslim," which she created to combat Islamophobia and has over 45 million views. She is a graduate of Ryan Murphy's Half Initiative and the CBS Directing Initiative.

As a Co-Chair of the Women's Steering Committee at the Directors Guild of America, Tara helped launch the DGA's first peer-to-peer mentorship program for women, The WSC Squad. She is an Icon member of the Alliance of Women Directors and was featured in Women in Film's Hire Her Back campaign. Looking forward, Tara has a small aim to create work that changes the world, and when she isn't doing that, she's busy raising two kids. Both love that their mom went viral.

EVENT MENTORS, CONTINUED



MATT WALTON

Matt Walton is a writer whose credits include the Jennifer Lopez feature *This is Me... Now* and Ed Sheeran's "Antisocial" music video with Travis Scott. This year, Walton will produce and direct his short film *The Haunting of the Wilsons by Me and That Bitch Todd*, a dark comedy about a miserable ghost couple forced to haunt the young parents who bought their home. Walton lives in the Hollywood Hills with his lovely wife, three unhinged children, and a sassy old cat named Georgia.



AARON WOLF

Aaron Wolf was given the award of "Renaissance Man" in the third grade by his teacher, Mrs. Cheeves. He was a bit upset by the award because he didn't know what it meant. His parents explained it to him, and now he understands that it was the right award for him to receive. Wolf is an award-winning actor, director, speaker, talk show host and activist who uses his creative talents to tell stories that resonate and inspire. He co-founded Howling Wolf Productions, a film production company that provides a full range of filmmaking services – narrative, documentary and commercial. He is also the founder of the I Am Able Foundation, a non-profit dedicated to neurodiversity awareness.



LORI WOODLEY-LANGENDORFF

Lori is a trailblazer in education, emotional intelligence, and social impact. As an educator, speaker, trainer, producer, and author, she creates transformative tools for schools and communities. As the visionary behind the awardwinning film series *A Trusted Space* and the national campaign *This Is A Trusted Space*, Lori has reached over 1.5 billion viewers and secured \$75 million in free ad space within a year. These projects provide actionable strategies to navigate mental health and behavioral challenges in schools, turning moments of crisis into opportunities for growth through relatable narratives.

As a leader in social-emotional literacy (SEL), Lori is redefining how we balance self-care with caring for others. Her upcoming book, *SEL Muscle Mastery: 6 Tools for Building Resiliency and Connection in Schools and Communities* (Corwin Press, 2025), builds on her impactful work, including Leadership Development Through Physical Education, the Notice Choose Act® framework, and Building Trusted Spaces in Five Days. These resources empower educators to foster resilience and connection amidst today's challenges.

As co-founder and CEO of All It Takes, a nonprofit dedicated to equipping youth and their mentors with emotional intelligence skills, Lori has developed innovative training programs that consistently exceed expectations. Her work addresses critical issues like disengagement, bullying, and mental health struggles. Lori's philosophy is that "If the adults aren't okay, the kids can't be either," driving her mission to support educators and caregivers as much as the youth they serve.

With a master's degree in educational psychology, 28 years as a multi-level school counselor, and 33 years of parenting experience, Lori brings unmatched credibility to her work. Her workshops focus on building resilience, empathy, confidence, accountability, and purpose-driven action across all age groups. Drawing on decades of experience in counseling, curriculum development, and media production, she empowers communities to create meaningful connections that promote emotional well-being and fulfilled lives.

2025 MESSAGING AWARDS

Youth Creating Change was founded on the idea that stories are one of the most powerful tools for elevating conversations around critical health topics, changing norms, challenging harmful perceptions, and inspiring action toward more inclusive communities. When crafted with care and completed with authentic writing and characters, movies, shows, songs, and other media can open hearts and minds to change – and can help audiences feel less alone. Youth Creating Change recognizes content and creators that do an exemplary job of elevating conversations about mental health on an annual basis, driven by the conviction that shining a light on quality storytelling is worthwhile and can have a positive influence – not only on entertainment, but also on audiences and society more broadly.

Together, these shows, films, documentaries, creators, and advocates are working to normalize open discussion of mental health and suicide prevention topics, destigmatize important health issues for viewers from all walks of life, and encourage a culture of help-seeking and emotional support.

www.DirectingChangeCA.org/2025-Messaging-Awards

NETWORKING GROUP 1



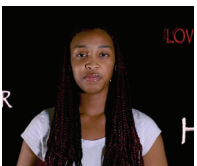
Light Beyond The Shadows

Butte County
Pleasant Valley High School
Filmmakers: Altreb Baysa, Lukas Krzyzek, and Shannon Fong
<https://vimeo.com/1062124476>



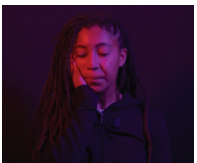
Dreams

Los Angeles County
Palms Middle School
Filmmakers: Abiel Mendoza Martinez and McGreggor Roberts
<https://vimeo.com/1061640879>



I love your hair.

Riverside County
Heritage High School
Filmmaker: Maylin Sanders
<https://vimeo.com/1061677715>



I'm fine

Stanislaus County
Johansen High School / Viking Production Network
Filmmaker: Kamryn Little
<https://vimeo.com/1062951046>



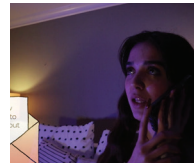
It's Okay to Get Help

Los Angeles County
Temple City High School
Filmmakers: Caden Osoteo, Mateo Johnston, and Emilio Madrigal
<https://vimeo.com/1062115717>



You Are Not Alone

San Mateo County
Hillview Middle School
Filmmakers: Luca Jane, Evan Dindo, and Emiliano Gonzalez
<https://vimeo.com/1061431083>



On the Line

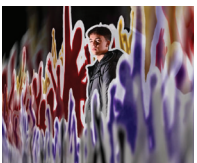
Contra Costa County
Acalanes High School
Filmmakers: Katherine Loghinov, Eli Sessums, and Veronica White
<https://vimeo.com/1061491439>

NETWORKING GROUP 2



Brothers

Marin County
Terra Linda High School
Filmmakers: Finn Wegner and Cade Wegner
<https://vimeo.com/1061639229>



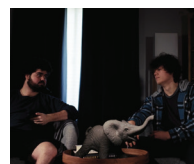
Distant

Butte County
Pleasant Valley High School
Filmmakers: Wyatt Acker and Charles Tuman
<https://vimeo.com/1062124572>



Talk To Me

Kern County
Heartland Charter School
Filmmakers: Alexander Phillips, Jackson Whitbey, and Gavin Rose
<https://vimeo.com/1057738378>



The Elephant in the Room

Marin County
Terra Linda High School
Filmmaker: Evan Egan
<https://vimeo.com/1061690865>



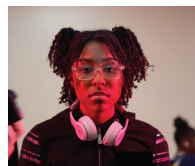
Don't Hold Back

Tri-City
Claremont High School
Filmmakers: Brooke Barraza, Julianna Cuellar, Vivian Perez, Mia Poovakad, and Angelique Wiesner
<https://vimeo.com/1061423153>



Right Now

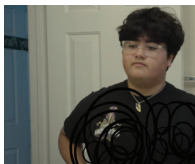
Shasta County
 Redding School of the Arts
 Filmmakers: Ann Edwards
 Kendrick and Mylee Thornock
<https://vimeo.com/1059906246>



The Mask

San Bernardino County
 Entrepreneur High School San Bernardino
 Filmmakers: Serenity Saterfield
 and Daniela Flores
<https://vimeo.com/1061577705>

NETWORKING GROUP 3



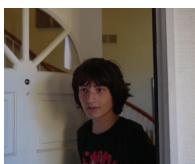
Binded

San Bernardino County
 Jurupa Hills High School
 Filmmakers: Dylan Martinez
<https://vimeo.com/1060621985>



To My Younger Self

Orange County
 Los Alamitos High School
 Filmmakers: Kyan Whiten,
 Christopher Blocher, Jessica Bae,
 and Luke Sanchez
<https://vimeo.com/1061498190>



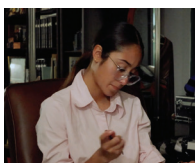
The Conversation

San Diego County
 SAY SD
 Filmmaker: Sophia Lee and
 Ryan Lonacker
<https://vimeo.com/1077492914>



You Are Not Alone

Fresno County
 Sanger West High School
 Filmmakers: Alyssa Katigbak, Mia
 McMillen, Jaydenn Valencia and
 Yesenia Yslas
<https://vimeo.com/1058454100>



Therapist

Orange County
 El Dorado High School
 Filmmaker: Zoey Rodriguez
<https://vimeo.com/1061692903>



A Shared Warmth

Sacramento County
 Franklin High School
 Filmmaker: Yennhi Vu
<https://vimeo.com/1060318483>



There is HOPE

Los Angeles County
 Warren High School
 Filmmakers: Samuel Almanza,
 Christian Torres, Dylan Saavedra,
 Ruben Salazar, and Walter Hervey
<https://vimeo.com/1061314291>



Hold On - (original song)
 Serrano High School
 Orange County
 Artist: Brooklyn Lightfoot
[Listen Here](#)



This event was supported in part by grant number H79SM088086 from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of SAMHSA or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).



YOUTH CREATING CHANGE

