

Sacred underground film festival takes root

C.L. Cotter, Contributor

The Sacred Underground Film Festival was held in downtown San Antonio at the Carver Community Cultural Center on Nov. 22. The venue had a lively atmosphere. Several actors and crew were in the audience, and many attendees dressed in 1950s attire to match the night's theme: "The Golden Age of Cinema."

The festival began with a matinee of extended short films, each with a run time of around 20 minutes, followed by a screening of short films running from one to five minutes. Awards were given at the end of the night for categories, such as best short film, best actor or best cinematography. A majority of the films were created by Texan filmmakers, with seven by San Antonio residents. The films featured a mix of genres, directors and techniques, but it is not solely the variety that makes this festival special.

Each year, the SUFF **picks** a local nonprofit, organization or charity to support. The festival began in 2009, originally using its ticket sales to donate money to the families of cancer patients. After a 10 year hiatus from 2013–2023, the festival has picked a new charity each year to support.

This year, the festival raises money for the nonprofit Eastside Youth Content Creators Program, a program teaching students how to make films and other media.

"We teach youth ages 13 to 20 how to create films and content for free. [SUFF] is raising money for us, it's just amazing," director and humanitarian Andrew Jacobi Jeter said. "This is how we can keep it going. Unfortunately, a lot of programs, with the non-profit sectors, have lost funding, due to governmental changes. Continuing to make that program happen for free has been more of the passion from hearts and the community coming together."

EYCCP hosts eight-week programs in the spring, fall and summer. To donate or get involved, Roadrunners can visit the organization's website: fwdprogress.org/eyccp.

"We very much feel aligned to this charity, because we are here to grow the sacred ground of the sacred underground right here in San Antonio," Lambert said. "People say Texas is the future of film, they say San Antonio is the future of film, and we're betting on it."

To submit short films to the competition or learn more about the EYCCP, UT San Antonio students can visit the organizations' websites or [@sacredundergroundfilmfestival](https://www.instagram.com/sacredundergroundfilmfestival) on instagram.