4-H Filmmaking

Think Smart! Produce It Creatively! Share It Safely!

Filmmaking can be an awesome and innovative way to explore new ideas, express your visions, and learn creatively. As new technologies develop there are more and more tools to help you make films and places for you to show off your films. But as you are producing, editing, and posting your videos to the internet there are a few rules to consider being safe and smart.

Production:

1) Your camera and tripod are tools of your trade. Treat them with respect and care. Keep your gear clean, in a secure location when not in use, and handle it with confidence. Cameras and tripods are delicate and expensive; don't force them or treat them casually. Take care with your movements and be aware of what you are doing. The more you know your tools, the better filmmaker you will become.

2) Never film alone. Use the buddy system. Having a friend along means you have another set of eyes to get better shots, better sound, and someone to help you carry and use your gear. It's easy to get lost in the world behind the lens, and forget about the larger world around you. Having a buddy watching out for while you are filming means you can concentrate on your artistic vision without having to worry about the open pothole you are about to walk into!

3) When you are interviewing people in your community be professional. Usually you will have contact with the person beforehand; but always shake their hand, introduce yourself and your project. Let them know what you expect of them in relation to your film. When interviewing anyone under 21 years old, use first names only. Be sure to get a media release signed by all the people who will be on the screen.

4) Consider the location that you are filming. Is it a busy street? Is there a lot of traffic, noise, construction sites? Is there electricity to plug in your equipment if you need to? What's the weather? Thunderstorms, rain, wind, snow, heat? Make sure that you know the location before filming and that there are no hidden difficulties or problems that could arise. **Your personal safety and your crews' safety are more important than any shot!**

Editing (Post-Production):

1) We live in a country that respects freedom of speech and expression; but you still must always consider the impact of your message and film on your audience. Express the message you intend with respect to your subject matter and to the people who will be watching it. Is your film going to help the world be open to new ideas and visions? Or is it possibly hurtful and damaging?

2) While editing, consider how the choices you make in showing people, geographies, philosophies, and cultures affect your message and your audience. Do you want your film to be inclusive or exclusive?

3) Beware of logos, brand names, or slogans in your film. Unless your film is made by or about a certain company or brand, don't film someone wearing a t-shirt with a brand or logo on it. Stay true to the purpose of your film. If it isn't an advertisement, don't treat it as one. Treat it as a vehicle to convey your message. Don't forget to prepare your actors and participants ahead time in terms of appropriate wardrobe.

4) Consider how hand movements, clothing or jewelry could be distracting to the audience. While you are editing, ask yourself, "What is the purpose?" If it has no purpose, remove it.

5) Think about appropriate sound and music for your audience. Does the music relate to the subject matter? Is it too loud? Adjust your sound levels to that voiceovers and narration can be clearly heard and understood.

Posting to the Internet:

1) **Think before you post!** Is your film something you want your friends and family to see? Could your video put you in a potentially dangerous situation? When posting videos of yourself or a friend, think about the potential consequences. Once a video is online, you never know who may see it.

2) **Be cautious with sharing personal information.**   Be cautious when posting your films. For example, only post your full name in a trusted environment. Unless it is necessary, avoid broadcasting your personal information on the web.

3) **Consult with your parent or club leader before you post your film.**

4) Videos containing minors should never be sexually suggestive or violent.

5) If you ever have inappropriate comments directed towards you or your film, immediately block them, tell your parents or leader, and report the incident.

6) The World Wide Web connects you to billions of people on the internet. It is a powerful tool, but one that you must use with integrity. It is a virtual community, and it is possible that people may not be who they say they are. If in doubt about an issue with your film, speak with an adult who you know and trust.

HAVE FUN, BE SAFE, AND THINK CREATIVELY!