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Danbury High to screen new Darfur documentary

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DANBURY -- A new documentary, "Child of Hope: **Darfur** Dreams of Peace," will be screened publicly at Danbury High School Nov. 27, continuing the school community's ongoing commitment to raise awareness of the genocide in the Sudan. The film was created by Danbury High school graduate Brian Simalchik and Danbury High Assistant Principal Tim Salem, and is narrated by Danbury High graduate Emily DeMasi.

The three collaborated in 2006 with four students on the award-winning documentary "The Promise," about the genocide, which will be aired as well.

The new film, "Child of Hope," reveals the genocide in **Darfur** through the eyes of a child and features the photography of actress Mia Farrow of Bridgewater, who recounts personal stories from her visits to the region.

"I've seen the film," said 17-year-old senior Kim Ashayeri, a member of Distributive Education Clubs of America. "It's wonderful, very powerful. It's done from the eye of a child in the region."

The film is part of a two-hour program sponsored by the Peer Leadership Class, the marketing club, DECA, and Tri-M, which is the National Music Honor Society. Proceeds will go to Save The Children.

The program includes a talk by Dr. Jerry Ehrlich, a pediatrician from Doctors Without Borders, who will speak about his work in **Darfur** in 2004.

Tri-M will perform songs by the Beatles. The News-Times will receive the Spirit of Hope Award, which the students working on behalf of **Darfur** present to a group or individual who has made a profound impact on the humanitarian crisis in **Darfur**.

Mia Farrow was last year's recipient.

In the December issue of Connecticut Magazine, Salem is profiled in an article titled, "Standing Tall," which focuses on four individuals selected for making a difference. Salem is cited for his ongoing commitment to educate others about the suffering in **Darfur**.

Also in December, the Connecticut Geographic Alliance will award its annual Friends of Geography Award to the high school students involved with the two films and Salem for their efforts to raise awareness about the genocide. The students and Salem also are finalists for the Dove Award, presented annually by the Center for Youth Leadership in Norwalk.

"The Promise" was written by Salem, who led the project, and was not done for class credit or an assignment. The eighty-minute documentary was meant to be a reminder of the promise the United Nations and the world made in 1945 to hold people accountable for crimes against humanity.

It was named best student documentary at the Kent Film Festival, honored by the Westport Youth Film Festival and the nationally-renowned program Facing History and Ourselves as the film that deals most effectively in filmmaking technique and substance with the complex theme of social justice in the world.

It was also shown during a news conference by state Treasurer Denise Nappier when she announced plans to stop investing state pension money in companies with financial interests in Sudan.

IFYOUGO

WHAT: Screening of award-winning video "The Promise" followed by the new documentary "Child of Hope: **Darfur** Dreams of Peace"

Music by TRI-M, the Danbury High School music honor society

Guest speaker, Dr. Jerry Ehrlich from Doctors without Borders

WHEN: Tuesday, Nov. 27, 6 to 8 p.m.

WHERE: Danbury High School, 43 Clapboard Ridge Road, Danbury

COST: adults: \$5; students: \$3

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