

News Release



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"Our Children Are Our Future," a hard-hitting documentary on the plight of Indian children in today's child welfare system, will be given a special showing on Feb. 4 at 8 p.m. in the University of Regina's Education Auditorium.

The film was produced by Direction Films of Toronto and financed by charitable contributions, including an \$80,000 grant from the Donner Canadian Foundation, under the sponsorship of the University of Regina.

Tony Snowsill, director/producer of the film, will be in Regina Feb. 4 for the special showing. He said the film examines the reasons that so many native children are in the care of child welfare agencies.

"Native people make up less than five per cent of the population, but forty to sixty per cent of children in the care of provincial child welfare agencies are native," he commented.

According to Snowsill, the film gives native people a chance to express their concerns and to offer suggestions for ways "to alleviate the burden of this human tragedy."

The film has received accolades from educators, activists and people in the human resources field. Pauline Harper, president of National Indian Rights for Indian Women, said the film offers "a strong message for natives and non-natives."

Otto Driedger, dean of the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Regina, commended the film for its sensitive approach to the problem of placing native children in the care of child welfare agencies.

"It's a moving film that doesn't try to smooth over the issues," he said.

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Driedger, who uses the film in a course he teaches, said he would highly recommend the film to people who work in the human services area, including teachers, social workers or psychologists.

The film runs for approximately 55 minutes.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL:

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S Y N O P S I S

"Our Children Are Our Future" is a compelling and disturbing film that looks at the reasons so many native children are in the care of provincial child welfare agencies.

The film also tells the story of the growing number of Indian people fleeing the overwhelming economic and social problems on their reserves in search of a new and better life in the city.

Avoiding the conventions of external narratives, the film relies on the characters to tell their stories in their own words, in their own way.

"Our Children Are Our Future" looks at the story of Chip, a foster child on the Blackfoot reserve in southern Alberta. Chip was found when he was a month old in a shack on the reserve where he was being fed a formula of Coffee-mate and water. Severely malnourished and not expected to live, he was given a foster home on the reserve. In spite of the economic and social problems that are so much a part of reserve life, Chip is identifying a strong Indian identity through close contact with his large extended family and the spirituality that is part of his heritage.

Chip's story embodies the paradox that is at the heart of this thought-provoking film: Despite the economic hardships, despite the devastating social problems that Indian communities are striving to overcome and despite the forces that threaten the very existence of Indian family life, Indian children belong in Indian homes.

The film was produced and directed by Tony Snowsill, head of Direction Films in Toronto. The associate producer was Christine Welsh, a graduate of the University of Regina's film program.