

We live in dangerous times. We ask ourselves who or what is going to change things for the better. I ask myself that. And the answer that comes back loud and clear is *I have to*. I have to take the lead, to play my part, in making this world a better place. And it's going to take the energy and passion and commitment of a warrior to do it.

That's why I've created Warrior Educational Films (WEF). This brand new IRS accredited 501.c.3 non-profit will do its part to create social change. WEF will do it through creating important works of film and TV art for social change. WEF will do it through extensive outreach, seeing that those works reach all their potential users. WEF will do it through follow-up, analysis, and implementation – tracking the significant changes that result.

In the past, I've sought production partners and fiscal agents on a case-by-case, film-by-film basis. Now, I've created a platform to launch and house all my various projects, and to maximize their social impact. My vision is that WEF will grow into a veritable studio, generating significant works of artistic merit and social utility long after my lifetime, reaching broad areas of the population with positive, alternative media, helping re-democratize and re-humanize our country.

Film and television are the dominant media of our age. For none is this more true than for young people. For youth, these are their media of choice, and they speak to them most directly and powerfully. Whether in a theater or through a TV set, computer, or video game, they look to these media for the bulk of their information and entertainment. It shapes much of how they perceive the world. As a film and TV producer my task is to feed them the truth, and to inspire them to reinvent the world for the better.

Business Plan

Warrior Educational Films (WEF) is a 501.c.3 IRS-designated non-profit corporation designed to support my on-going film work. It was officially incorporated July 8, 2003. Individuals will be able to make tax deductible donations directly to Warrior Educational Films. It will also be possible for Warrior Educational Films to receive grants and other gifts from foundations and corporations that will be non-taxable. The mission of WEF is "*Bearing witness, creating change.*" WEF will own all the film and video works created under its auspices. As a non-profit corporation producing works as a public service for the social sector, it is not foreseen that any of those works will generate a profit. As is the case in the educational film field however, all these films *will* generate income, but usually never enough to offset expenses. (For further explanation of the social impact of the educational film business, please refer to Appendix I below.) The real return on these films will come from the social changes they inaugurate.

In the past, I've usually had to do project research and development, fundraising, pre-production, and often even much of production, for no salary whatsoever. In some cases, I've done some of that work for deferred salary - in effect paying myself monies owed, years after the fact, after sufficient funds had been raised and the films returned revenue. This was the case with HOOP DREAMS. But it has not always been the case with my films. I've worked on many of my films without ever receiving a full salary, even after-the-fact, when the film was already in distribution.

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Previously, I supported my work by maintaining a very simple lifestyle, taking other jobs, and living off savings. For the years I was working as an unpaid maker of HOOP DREAMS I freelanced for other filmmakers. In recent years, I lived off HOOP DREAMS earnings and income from lectures and workshops. Now those savings are gone and the speaking engagements have dried up. The immediate prospect for sufficient income is not promising.

WEF will change that. For the first time in my career WEF will make it possible to pay myself while doing important project *start-up work*, dramatically speeding up the time needed to make films. That is the bare bones difference. For the months that it takes to get projects off the ground, funded, and into full production – a time period that now will be significantly shorter – I will receive a living wage.

WEF Board

The WEF Board is comprised of six people. The Board oversees the long-term functions of WEF. They meet twice yearly, as required by law, and I, as Executive Director, report on the company's activities. The Board advises me on future projects and the direction of present ones. The meetings take place in Chicago.

The Board Secretary is Larry Marx who, as former Co-Executive Director of Wisconsin Citizen Action, has years of experience directing non-profit foundations, serving on Boards, and working cooperatively with numerous non-profit corporations.

The other five people, all drawn from different walks of life, each commit to raising \$6,000 a year over the next three years. The \$6,000 target sum might come directly from each Board member as an individual donation, or from a single other person (or from six people donating \$1,000 each a year, or from twelve donating \$500 each, etc.) It's up to the Board members to reach their \$6,000 yearly fundraising target in the way that best suits each of them.

In addition to providing the funds and sustaining the legal and accounting framework for WEF, the \$30,000 raised yearly will help to employ me as WEF's Executive Director. As Executive Director it will be my principle task to continue the filmmaking work outlined below. The money will support and sustain that work over the coming three years.

If the plan falls short, WEF may need up to two years of additional support. But following that initial three year launch phase, once the films are funded, WEF should not need further funding – the projects themselves will sustain me for the subsequent 7-8 years, and with luck, indefinitely.

Though these films will eventually reach their audiences through some form of traditional marketplace distribution, the beauty of WEF is that they can be *produced* as non-profit vehicles, just as HOOP DREAMS was. Funds can be raised from foundations, corporate contributions, and tax deductible donations from individuals.

Therefore, those who choose not to be on the Board can still support WEF. Not only can they donate services, host fundraisers, provide contacts, information, and lend moral support, they can contribute cash. If the five Board members prove unable to meet their \$6,000 yearly commitment, these direct contributions will cover the shortfall. If Board donations and other direct contributions exceed the \$30,000 target in a given year, the additional funds will either be retained against the

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possibility of future shortfalls or they'll be put to use on particular films to bring them into production sooner.

For many non-filmmaking artists, from individual painters to theatre and dance companies to nationally renowned city symphonies, there are foundations that sustain their work, helping to provide the means for them to continue creating. I've been fortunate to receive tremendous recognition over the 25 years I've been making films. I've been nominated for Academy and Emmy Awards. I've received Guggenheim, NEA, and other important fellowships. I was named Artist of the Year by the Chicago Tribune and received a Robert F. Kennedy Special Achievement Award. Roger Ebert calls HOOP DREAMS one of the best films ever made. Utne Reader named it one of humanity's essential works. Now for the first time, Warrior Educational Films will make it possible for individuals to directly support my films *over the full lifetime of their creation*, to help me create important works of social change over the *next 10-25 years*, growing my career in the process, further developing the work of an artist who's been called "a major talent in American filmmaking."

But the best reason to support WEF is to change the world in which we live and make it better. Good film and television programs do that by changing the ways people think about issues; they change consciousness. Once consciousness is changed, there is potentially no end to the rippling impact of those changes across society: changing the way we think about teen boys – how they are raised, how to bring them successfully across the threshold into manhood, how to inculcate them with dramatically different values than those taught by consumer culture; changing the way we think about prisons and prisoners – how to make convicts themselves and our families, homes and communities safer by offering prisoners meaningful rehabilitation and healing; changing the ways we perceive and resolve conflict – on the microcosmic level as individuals, up to the macrocosmic level as nations – learning how to create peace and harmony in everyday life with simple Buddhist principles.

The specific works I'll focus on for the next ten years include the following:

- NEW AMERICAN HEROES (working title). Offering solutions to the social problems laid bare in BOYS TO MEN? this film is the logical sequel. This will be the definitive film on the need for initiation and mentorship of teens in our time. It will tell the dramatic real-life stories of four teenage boys over one year as they meet the challenges of coming adulthood with the help of tough initiations and loving mentors. It's the summation of everything I've learned as a filmmaker, from films like HOOP DREAMS, to everything I've learned as an adult man living his mission in the world through compassion, mentoring, and service.
- PRISON HOPE (working title). As its title implies, the goal of this prison-based documentary will be to steer policy makers and the nation at large away from retribution and toward prisoner rehabilitation. *Prison Hope* will document the amazing work of the Inside Circle Foundation among the maximum-security inmates of California's Folsom Prison. I myself have staffed these five-day workshops three times, and I'm convinced this is some of the most important self-transformation work happening in America today (and far more effective than the approaches seen in the renowned '80s documentary *Scared Straight*). Beyond promoting change within prison institutions, this film will act as an anti-recidivist tool—not just discouraging crime, but pointing youth and adults alike toward positive alternatives.

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- **WAGING PEACE** (working title). With the U.S. embroiled in conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, fighting terrorists around the world, ever fearful of new attacks here at home, how are Americans to maintain equilibrium, to live daily lives of relative peace? From community-minded monks in gang-ridden, Stockton, California, to a reluctant Tibetan savant living in the outer reaches of Wyoming, to overworked new immigrants struggling to make it in Chicago, to all-American children growing up in idyllic Marin County, California, *Waging Peace* tells the stories of those who are fighting the war at home - the war of self with others and the war of self with self - who, through different Buddhist practices, are discovering new non-violent ways of being. And they are winning.

With your help we can carry this important work forward. As a cash contributor, besides the valuable tax deduction, you'll see regular updates from me on project status on this website. As a Board member, you'll receive that and more: your name in production credits and the chance to visit set locations, complementary tickets for theatrical premieres and notification of national broadcasts. But whatever your level of participation, you can take pride in knowing you've launched important works that will better society for years to come. Please join us today!

Appendix I

Overview of Educational Filmmaking

Films made for this market can and do make money, but they rarely return more money than they cost to make. Nonetheless, they can reach substantial audiences.

Hoop Dreams follows two African-American boys and their families over 4 ½ years as the boys pursue the elusive dream of NBA basketball stardom, struggling with enormous pressures of school, ghetto life, racism, and exploitation. The educational outreach campaign for *Hoop Dreams* had numerous components: Nike Corp. funded free theatrical screenings of the film for thousands of youngsters nationwide; the Center for the Study of Sports in Society in Boston developed a curriculum guide and oversaw the nationwide use of the film in YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, high schools, community groups; "Teaching Tolerance: Facing History and Ourselves" incorporated the film in their national social change curriculum for teachers; PBS funded a national tune-in campaign to have school teachers assign the film to students for viewing; they also bought ads in national publications encouraging teachers to tape the program off the air for free to use in the classroom.

All this occurred after the film played to huge acclaim in theaters coast to coast. It also was subsequently broadcast on PBS, TBS, Sundance, WB, and other domestic networks. Additionally, the film played in theaters and on TV networks in most of the world's nations.

Higher Goals, a shorter version of *Hoop Dreams*, encourages young people to balance their love of basketball with the need to focus on their studies. The educational outreach campaign for *Higher Goals* included having Toyota Corp. fund an effort to give 4,200 copies of the program to inner city schools nationwide. A Teacher's Guide was written and included with the free tape copies. The film has also been sold to hundreds of other schools and individuals nationwide through PBS Video. The film received a "Golden Apple" best of category award at the National Educational Teachers Conference and an Emmy nomination as "Best Daytime Children's Special" when broadcast nationally on PBS. It has also aired in numerous other nations worldwide.

Dreams from China examines China's lack of human rights and democracy even as huge modernization transformations sweep the country. ***Dreams from China*** has been distributed to schools, libraries, museums, etc. by Filmmakers Library in New York since 1990. It has been distributed by Tapestry International (also in New York) to international TV buyers since 1991. It was broadcast nationally on PBS and The Learning Channel. Presently, it is part of a three film tape sold by Facets Inc. in Chicago to schools, libraries, museums, and home video customers.

Saving the Sphinx details the ongoing efforts to save this planetary treasure from the ravages of modern life. After being broadcast domestically on the Learning Channel and in Europe on Discovery Channel, ***Saving the Sphinx*** is also distributed to TV networks worldwide by Tapestry.

Boys to Men? follows three teens over one year as they struggle to resolve conflicts with their parents, their schools, and themselves. ***Boys to Men?*** is being distributed by National Film Network in Washington, D.C. Associated with the nation's largest academic bookseller Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, NFN markets not only to the nation's schools, libraries, museums, etc. but to major retailers like Borders and Barnes & Noble. They recently promoted the film at the ALA convention – the national librarian's association.

Early short films like ***Dream Documentary*** (a visual essay on third world marginalization) and ***House of UnAmerican Activities*** (a personal essay on 50s McCarthyism) have been distributed domestically by Picture Start Inc. and are still generating revenue overseas from Berlin-based Freunde der deutschen Kinemathek.

Most of the films above have also played at numerous film festivals worldwide, screening for thousands of additional viewers. garnering awards and occasional cash prizes.

Out of the Silence features two case studies of human rights struggle: one in Czechoslovakia culminating in 1989's "Velvet Revolution," and one in Guatemala revealing oppression of indigenous natives. The film was bought by Amnesty International and over 10,000 copies were distributed to their local groups worldwide. It was also broadcast around the nation on PBS.

Inside/Out (also known as ***Jailvision***) features a performance by Cook County Jail inmates of a play based on their own lives and written by them. It was broadcast on PBS's series "The 90s."

Other educational films that I have worked on include: ***A Safer Place*** and ***Taking Care*** both examining the aging boomer population and care for the frail elderly; ***First Do No Harm***, on improving medical care for the elderly; ***First Liberty***, a PBS documentary celebrating the 1st Amendment to the U.S. Constitution; ***The Big Sell***, on the perniciousness of alcohol industry advertising to youth; ***Not a Game***, preventing the spread of sexually transmitted disease among youth; ***Citizen/Labor/Energy Coalition***, on activating youth for social change.