

Students show filmmaking skills at Digicom

Written by Brett Kelman *The Desert Sun*
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PALM SPRINGS — Danielle Acosta, a Desert Hot Springs High School senior, ended with a promise.

“You will see my name one day as you are sitting there in the theater watching the credits roll,” she said, narrating as her short film came to a close.

(VIDEOS: [Danielle Acosta receives filmmaking scholarship](#) | [Jessica Pack receives Digicom classroom grant](#) | [Digicom Film Festival trailer 2013](#))

The movie was a hand-drawn, heartfelt monologue about how Acosta’s love of filmmaking helped her cope with the suicide of a loved one. It was one of about 40 student-made films featured in the fifth annual Palm Springs Unified School District Digicom Film Festival on Tuesday night. The festival gave Acosta a \$4,000 scholarship to celebrate her short film.

Hundreds of people attended the film festival, which was held in the Palm Springs High School auditorium. Other films included a goofy warning on the dangers of texting while walking, a documentary on homelessness in the Coachella Valley and a showdown between a superhero and a vandal — complete with explosive special effects.

(PHOTOS: [Digicom Film Festival 2013 Palm Springs HS](#))

Festival organizers also awarded technology grants to three teachers whose classrooms had submitted multiple entries in the festival. About \$6,000 was awarded to Tarra Bercegeay of Palm Springs High and Jamie O’Neil of Desert Hot Springs High. Jessica Pack of James Workman Middle was awarded \$4,000 and four iPads. Several student directors were given video cameras as a reward for exceptional films.

As the festival was about to end, Digicom Director David Vogel announced that a new partnership would help the program reach a new level in its sixth year. Vogel said the program had drawn the interest of NBCUniversal, a giant media company with major offices in New York and Los Angeles.

“They are interested in finding ways of mentoring our more senior students,” Vogel said in an interview. “It could mean some of them coming from L.A. to here to classrooms. And we will be taking some (students) there to look at the studios — not just for tours but for actual discussions. They will see the films, and they will have dialogue with these kids about their work.”