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CNU TO HOST STAR-STUDED PREMIERE FOR YOUNG FILMMAKERS

HAMPTON ROADS NATIVE BRINGS NEXT GENERATION STORYTELLERS TO FERGUSON.

by [Kelli Caplan](#) | October 4, 2024

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Christopher Newport will host the Next Generation Storytellers Film Festival, an opportunity for local high school students to debut films they have created.

Guided by two TV and film stars, the festival takes place the weekend of Oct 18th at CNU's Ferguson Center for the Arts. The curtain rises Friday night with private viewings that are invitation only, and then on Saturday and Sunday the festival opens up to all Captains and the general public. Tickets are free, but are required for all public events and can be reserved [here](#).

The film festival is the product of [Next Generation Storytellers \(NGS\)](#), a program co-founded by Hampton Roads native Trent Garrett. It focuses on introducing high school students to the world of filmmaking. The program recently teamed with Hampton City Schools and Newport News Public Schools to teach students from underserved communities how to produce films and to demonstrate that show business can be a viable career.

Over the past few months, high school students have collaborated with Hollywood actors, producers, directors, and other industry professionals to write, act, and produce high-quality short films that will premiere during the film festival.

The collaboration between NGS and CNU will continue long after the festival, as it has resulted in a new screenwriting pilot program for Christopher Newport students. This fall, six Captains are participating in NGS'

eight-week online screenwriting class. During the spring semester, a cohort of up to 16 students will participate in the screenwriting seminar, and all 24 CNU students will have the opportunity to take NGS's online Film 101 class that features industry guests from all facets of filmmaking. To bring the film concepts to life, production crews will arrive on campus at the end of the spring semester to produce two of the CNU student scripts. Christopher Newport students will then have the opportunity to continue their work throughout the summer on the sets of 11 films written by high schoolers.

Garrett, known for Disney's "Andi Mack," Netflix's "Army of Thieves," and Fox's "New Girl," started NGS with Jacob Young, a two-time Emmy award-winner known for "The Girl Next Door," "The Bold and the Beautiful," "General Hospital," and "All My Children."

Bringing the film festival to CNU provides not only an occasion to host the student filmmakers and recognize their efforts in a large venue, but also to introduce them to the University and all it has to offer, Garrett said.

"One of Next Generation Storytellers' missions is to connect the Hollywood industry with hometowns. Since Hampton Roads is my hometown, and my sister graduated from Christopher Newport, having the program and film festival here is particularly meaningful to me on a personal level. We couldn't be more thrilled to involve CNU," Garrett said. "The Ferguson Center is an incredible space, and we can't wait to show many of our students what it could be like if they attended Christopher Newport, knowing first hand how beautiful it is. A lot of these kids will go to secondary school as well as going straight into the workforce. We want to show them that anything is possible and hope this experience can open a new door or insight into their future."

To help make that happen, during the film festival, one very surprised participating high school junior or senior will be awarded a \$16,000 scholarship to attend Christopher Newport.

Check out the Next Generation Storytellers [trailer](#).
