



MEDIA RELEASE

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919 N Broad Street • Brooksville, FL 34601

Nature Coast seniors win big at film festival

Brooksville – A group of 10 seniors from Nature Coast Technical High School's Digital Cinema Production program has returned victorious from the prestigious All-American High School Film Festival (AAHSFF) in New York City, where they took the Grand Prize, placing first in the world in the highly competitive Film Invitational.

The winning short film, entitled "What Happened to You Guys?," was created by seniors Austen Aupperlee, Carson Beyerl, Oliver Conley, Yamil Erazo, Alexandra Fennell, Mariana Ferlita, Spencer Flinn, Kaden Jeffries, Kendal Kohlas and Katarina Kraut. It was crafted during a 56-hour competition that required students to shoot and edit a film in New York City. The film – a blend of comedy, mystery, and suspense – follows three friends as they race through the city to recover stolen tickets, only to uncover a surprising twist involving their taxi driver.

"I couldn't be more proud of my students," said Ian Wald, Digital Cinema Production teacher at NCT. "Their incredible achievement not only highlights their talent and dedication but also reflects the strength of our entire program, built by the commitment of both our alumni and current students in their pursuit of excellence. This is, without a doubt, the crowning achievement of my career."

The AAHSFF, the largest high school film festival globally, provides a platform for emerging filmmakers to showcase their talents and connect with industry professionals. It draws thousands of high school filmmakers from around the globe, and the Nature Coast Tech team stood out among the fierce competition. "Their ability to create a polished, original short film under intense pressure is a testament to their dedication and talent," Wald said.

The film was screened at the AMC Theatre in Times Square and evaluated by industry professionals. The students also had the opportunity to attend screenings, participate in workshops, and network with leaders from top universities and film schools. Their incredible accomplishment was celebrated at the Teen Indie Awards (Tindies) – the "Teen Oscars" – held at the iconic Kings Theatre in Brooklyn, N.Y.

"We are proud of these talented young filmmakers," said NCT Principal Toni-Ann Noyes. "Their victory showcases the strength of the DCP program and the bright future ahead for its students."

You can watch the short film here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P3LJbLxa4zg>