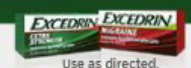


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Sue Chun is an award winning filmmaker and community activist based in Toronto's Jane and Finch. The noted Korean- Canadian has been involved with a website dedicated to the uplifting of one of Toronto's troubled neighbourhoods.

For her efforts, she has been recognized with the Ontario Volunteer Service Youth Award, the Aroni Image Award and most recently by the Canadian Ethnic Media Association. I caught up with her as she was about to receive her latest recognition from Ontario's Lieutenant Governor, The Honorable David C. Onley.

You are a noted filmmaker as well as a community activist from the Jane and Finch area of Toronto. Tell me about yourself?

I was born in Vancouver and lived in South Korea before settling in Toronto. I ended up moving to the Jane-Finch area during my high school years and stayed there ever since. I saw the barriers my mother faced as an immigrant woman in Canada and her experiences inspired me to share the stories of diversity and integration.

You are a graduate of Ryerson University's Radio and Television program and a student with CITY Leaders and the City Life Film project. Share with me the highlights.

Mainstream film and television does not accurately portray today's society. Ethnic stereotypes still run rampant in Hollywood. Notice how movies set in a futuristic world are solely populated by white actors? I think it's important to embrace the beauty of different cultures. Movies and television can play an important role in shaping our future and how

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we see each other.

My goal is to share real Canadian stories. Our society is made of many different cultures-each with a unique story to tell. Unfortunately, ethnic stories are often oversimplified or remain unheard. I want to touch mainstream audiences through compelling stories of the real immigrant experience.

During school, I saw opportunities where new filmmakers could innovate and tell stories that would enhance our Canadian identity. The City Life Film Project is a film-making program supported by industry professionals who guide at-risk youth towards the production of their own stories. It's a life changing opportunity that has given me the creative and business acumen to succeed in the film and television industry.

CITY Leaders is a fantastic program where youth develop leadership skills for community building. It was a natural fit for me because I am passionate about making my community a better place to live.

Tell me about your involvement with the Jane-Finch site?

To be honest, I was worried about moving into the Jane-Finch neighborhood. If you believed all the news reports, you would think that you were moving into the Wild West.

I moved in during high school, so I volunteered for **Jane-Finch site** to earn my community hours. It has been a fantastic educational journey since then. They welcomed me like family and I was exposed to new opportunities that I never thought was possible. I had always lacked self-confidence as a child, but the website helped me find my own voice.

Why do you think the Jane and Finch area is so misunderstood and reflect on the Jane and Finch you know and love.

It would be hard to blame the general public for looking down poorly at the area. When you are bombarded with news of crime, gangs and shootings, it's hard to ignore those facts. But those situations are only a small fraction of what goes on in the community. The area is full of life, warmth, and hardworking residents who are there to raise their families. Jane and Finch is truly a remarkable community where you immediately feel like family when you visit. There is a unique vibe that is hard to describe unless you experience it firsthand.

You have won many awards over the years. What do the awards mean to you?

I am truly grateful for the opportunity to share my story in the hopes that I can inspire other young people to follow their dreams. The recognition is proof that a place like **Jane and Finch** can produce positive young people who want to contribute to their communities. I owe a lot to the experiences that **I have gained from living in Jane-Finch** so a lot of the credit belongs to the community.

Where do you want to be in the next decade with your work and activism?

My hope is to grow as an artist and to contribute to our Canadian identity and mosaic through film-making. I also hope to be in position where I can mentor children and youth to reach their goals. I was fortunate enough to have caring mentors that selflessly gave their time and attention to help me along my career. I feel it is my duty to honor them by continuing the spirit of their kindness and generosity.

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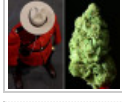


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