



Ayala High students' videos about mental health nominated for awards

Videos by Ayala High students have won second place in a state regional contest of The Directing Change Film Contest which highlights videos about mental health and suicide prevention.

Ayala High student Macy Caron's video "Submerged" has won second place in the Mental Health Matters category. "Through Our Eyes," a video by Ayala students Ashley Chuang, Melanie Pak, Nick Vettikattu, and Nelly Hejazi, has won second in the Through the Lens of Culture category.

The state regional awards ceremony will be held May 20 in Glendale.

The videos by the five students are also nominees in their respective category in the Inland Empire Directing Change Reception and Awards Ceremony, to be held May 5 at the Fox Performing Arts Center in Riverside.

Other video nominees in the Inland Empire contest from Ayala are: Mental Health Matters category, "We're All Something," by Jenna Ghrawi, Taylor Hill, Jasmine Hill, and Tammy Nguyen; "Get Found" by Zoe Derales; Through the Lens of Culture category, "Through My Eyes" by Ismael Sindha.

Honorable mentions for the Inland Empire contest are "Tear and Rebuild" by Ayala student Daren Lorenzo, and "I Am Always With You" by Ayala students Anthony Gan, and Charlie Zhou.

All of the students are advised by Ayala High photography/video teacher Kevin Russell, who was named this spring a 2016 San Bernardino County Education Medal of Honor Nominee.

The Directing Change Program & Film Contest is part of Each Mind Matters: California's Mental Health Movement. The program offers young people the opportunity to participate in the movement by creating 60-second films about suicide prevention and mental health that are used to support awareness, education and advocacy efforts on these topics, according to Each Mind Matters' website. Program participants – whether they are making a film, acting as an adult advisor, or judging the films – are exposed to appropriate messaging about these topics, warning signs, how to

appropriately respond to someone in distress, where to seek help, as well as how to stand up for others who are experiencing a mental health challenge.