

## Sunnyside festival features local, foreign short films

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Organizers of an offbeat film festival are hoping to bring some silver screen glamor to [Sunnyside](#) with a low-key alternative to Sundance, Tribeca and [Cannes](#).

Curtains are set to rise on the Sunnyside Shorts Film Festival on Saturday night with 16 entries, ranging from documentaries and animation to a sock-puppet love story.

"We want to get filmmakers from all over the world to show their work here," said Sherry Gamlin, a former actress who organized the festival with fellow Sunnysider Teresa Ward.

"We have filmmakers coming from [Colombia](#), [Japan](#), [France](#), [Romania](#) and all around the city," Gamlin said.

The festival, in its second year, started as a fund-raiser for [Sunnyside Gardens](#) Park, but proved so successful that that neighbors and visitors clamored for more.

"We like to make it as diverse as possible," said Ward. "It was difficult to narrow down all the selections."

The festivities begin at the park on 39th Ave. at 7 p.m. with traditional Irish music from several bands. The films, which range in length between one and 15 minutes, start at 8 p.m. Admission is free and all films are rated PG.

"We're hoping for good weather. If not, we'll do it indoors," said Ward, who noted the rain location is at the nearby Sunnyside Community Center on 39th St.

One film, "Inspiring Messages," deals with water safety and encouraging kids to learn how to swim.

"I've coached 8,000 kids in the last 40 years and learned that swimming teaches kids lessons about personal health and life," said [Jackson Heights](#) filmmaker [Shawn Slevin](#), who coaches at [St. Sebastian School](#) in [Woodside](#).

Slevin's movie features Olympic medalist [Lenny Krazelburg](#) and water polo goalie [Nicolle Payne](#). "As a filmmaker it's hard to edit a lot of footage down to 15 minutes, but sometimes you can say a lot with a few words," said Slevin, who also heads the [Swim Strong Foundation](#), a group dedicated to promoting children's swimming activities.

Ward and Gamlin said the festival will also offer a youth workshop to introduce kids to the art of filmmaking.

"This festival is going to bring attention to Sunnyside and show people what a great neighborhood it really is," said [Kevin Kolack](#), who is showing his three-minute music video, "Always A Puppet To Me," based on a [Billy Joel](#) song.