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Local youths get red-carpet treatment

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July 01, 2013 3:30 am • By [Annie Getsinger](#) [\(0\) Comments](#)



As a white limousine pulled up at the Al. Ringling Theatre on Saturday, an excited chatter came over those gathered on the red carpet. The noise turned to cheers as a handful of pint-sized stars hopped out of the vehicle.

The youngsters were celebrating the Boys & Girls Club of Baraboo/Sauk County's participation in a film project with its

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Gabe Williams, 11, gets out of a limo Saturday at the premiere of "The Club," a feature-length film in which some of the local Boys & Girls Club members got to participate. Williams and a few others served as extras in the movie.

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Dane County counterpart. Several Baraboo youths served as extras in "The Club," a movie about some of the struggles faced by young people growing up today.

"It feels Hollywood-ish to me," Karen DeSanto, who oversees the Boys & Girls Clubs in Baraboo and Tomah, said at the premiere. "It was exactly what I wanted to happen for these kids. It's a great experience."

The movie, directed by Rafael Ragland of the Madison-based 608TV, premiered in May at the Overture Center for

the Arts. Saturday brought Baraboo's turn to screen it. The local community joined some of the Dane County club members, cast and crew for the free event in support of local youths.

The two clubs coming together for the project was a special experience, DeSanto said. "It is working together for the same causes, the same mission, the same good, helping the same kids," she said. "So if two clubs can lean on each other and support one another, I hope we are setting an example for other clubs to follow."

One of the young actors from the film, Abigail Kaiser, 9, attended Saturday's premiere with her mom, Danielle Kaiser.

When Abigail arrived at the event, she saw a lot of familiar faces. Some of the kids gave her big hugs and said it was nice to see her again. Others complimented her dress and shoes.

The Madison girl played a character named Crystal in the film.

"I think she gained a lot of self-confidence," Kaiser said of her daughter. "I like to give her a lot of diverse and new experiences to figure out what she's good at and what she likes. I think she gained meeting a lot of new people and access to a whole new world. We didn't really know about the club."

The Kaisers have been involved with the Boys & Girls Club of Dane County since they found out

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about the movie audition in January. In that time, they've found some new friends and a new sense of community.

“Just having a daughter with a disability and a difference that sometimes doesn't make

everyone immediately warm and welcoming, we always felt warmly welcomed in this group and the project,” Kaiser said of her daughter, who has Down syndrome.

Ragland said he was excited to be in Baraboo to share this film in particular. He has edited about 10 movies.

“I must say that this was the hardest movie to edit because every time I sat at my computer, I cried,” he said.

Crime, poverty, immigration, education, peer pressure and bullying were just some of the topics addressed in the film, Boys & Girls Club of Dane County CEO Michael Johnson said as he introduced Ragland to the Baraboo crowd. “The storyline is just absolutely phenomenal,” Johnson said.

The film's message is for kids in any community, Ragland said. “It's a positive message, letting kids know that they can be successful regardless of the struggles that they go through or the challenges that they go through.”

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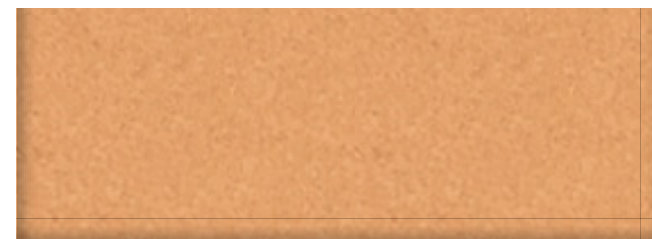
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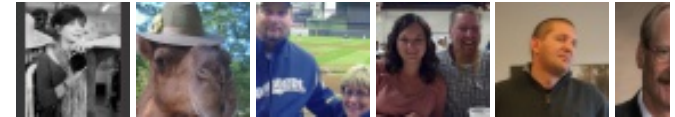
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