



Article: *Senior Spectrum*

With the coming of Spring, it's time again for the Sacramento International Film Festival (April 9th - 17th). This perennial event showcases the talents of homegrown filmmakers as well as those from around the world. With categories including Environmental Visions, Cine Soul, and Surreal Cinema as well as feature, short, animation and documentary formats, there's a little something for everyone. And, this year two films present fresh perspectives about aging.

The first, *Inside My Being* by Modesto filmmaker Roberto Carlo Chiesa, is a short, two-character study of love between a mother with Alzheimer's and her daughter. The second, *Get Real! Wise Women Speak*, is a feature-length documentary profiling extraordinary older women who have used their energy and talent to benefit their communities.

Inside My Being will be screened at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 9th at the Crocker Art Museum (216 O Street, Sacramento). This very personal, 17-minute narrative portrays the relationship between a mother and daughter as they grapple with the mother's progressing Alzheimer's disease. Uniquely, the story is presented from the mother's point of view. The audience is privy through voiceovers to the mother's deepest desires to communicate and relate, despite the dementia eroding her memories and sense of self.

Determined not to lose her mother, Jenni taps into her inner strengths, rediscovers the lifetime of love that has bound them, and establishes connection. The filmmaker's message: "Never abandon a loved one who can no longer be themselves. Their heart and soul are still very much alive. You can reach them if you allow your heart to do the talking."

The story grew out of the filmmaker's experience of caring for his sister, Alma, during the last years of her life. "Alzheimer's disease progressively robbed Alma of her memories," Mr. Chiesa said, "and yet, as I looked deep into her eyes, I felt her love. I felt her recognizing and 'speaking' to me. The essential part of her was always there and I never lost that connection. It was illuminating and I felt I had to do something to honor her and the experience we shared."

Mr. Chiesa is a principal with Alexandria Perrin Company, a marketing-advertising-public relations firm in Modesto. But his passion has always been filmmaking and he has won national recognition for a number of short films. He is drawn to social commentary, which he handles with sensitivity in order to touch viewers' hearts.

He filmed portions of ***Inside My Being*** at Pacifica Senior Living Community in Modesto where resident Arlene Healey had once been Alma Chiesa's roommate. Ms. Healey portrays the mother in the film while local community theater actress, Jinni Abbott, plays the daughter. Eighty-nine-year-old Kathryn Seamon, once a Modesto radio personality, gives voice to the mother as the narrator.

Mr. Chiesa has partnered with the Alzheimer's Aid Society of Northern California (209-238-0538) to distribute ***Inside My Being***. The film can be obtained with a minimum \$20 donation. Half the proceeds stay with the Society, a nonprofit that provides support to families caring for seniors with dementia.

The film is presented in the Festival's line up for "Northern California All Stars". Seven other shorts comprise this category, including ***Before the Beginning***, which won the Festival's first prize for short script.

More information and a complete Festival Guide are available online at www.sacramentofilmfestival.com. Ticket prices range from \$10 for individual showings (with a \$2 student discount) to \$99 for an all-access pass to showings, after parties and events. Martin Anaya (916-524-5138) is the director of the Film Festival and its sister organization, The California Film Foundation.