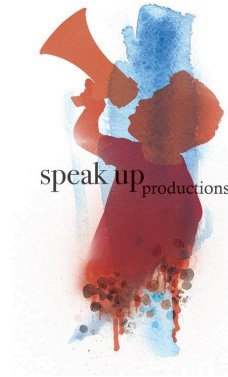


UNDER THE TREE
DESIGNS



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First Missouri Filmmakers Approved for Reinstated Tax Credit Aim to Spark Change in Underserved Communities

LOS ANGELES – Feb 22, 2025 – The fictional story of a teenage artist in North St. Louis, Missouri is the focus of a new short film meant to inspire individuals and communities to improve neighborhoods challenged with poverty, homelessness, and disinvestment. *Vision* is screening at the prestigious NewFilmmakers LA film festival on Feb 22nd. *Vision* is the first film directed by a Missouri filmmaker to receive the newly reinstated [tax credit](#).

The project is a collaboration of numerous St. Louis organizations with one goal: to better our community. The story reflects the mission of the nonprofit [LOVEtheLOU](#) and was produced by [Speak Up Productions](#) and [Under The Tree Designs](#). Thanks to presenting sponsor Guild Mortgage, the Regional Arts Commission Artist Support grant and Missouri Humanities Council funding, *Vision* has been touring festival and community venues around the country in a screening tour.

Vision follows Louis, a 17-year-old visual artist from North St. Louis who meets a mysterious man who gives him a pair of sunglasses that empowers him to see the potential all around him. Louis must decide if he will use his newfound vision for his own purposes or for the greater good of the community around him.

Vision was filmed entirely in St. Louis with a local cast and crew, including lead actor Zion Thomas and well-known storyteller Bobby Norfolk. The film was directed and co-written by award-winning filmmaker Dan Parris with an all-star team including award-winning actress/producer Jessica Ambuehl, South by Southwest award-winning post-production studio Outpost/Bruton Stroube, Grammy award-winning composer Courtney “J.R” Peebles, and

Director of Photography Josh Herum whose recent film “A Road to a Village” premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival and is being distributed worldwide.

“We want the film to start conversations about a bigger and better vision for St. Louis and other cities with similar challenges,” Parris said. “Films alone don’t change the world but they can launch conversations and relationships that can change the world.”

“*Vision* challenges viewers to see the potential and beauty in brokenness, between what once was and what can be. We want to push conversations forward about race, social activism, and poverty as well as inspire many to get involved with local non-profits,” said Lucas Rougely, Founder and Executive Director of LOVEtheLOU.

Guild Mortgage was interested in supporting the film because of the focus on neighborhood revitalization.

"Each day, we see first-hand the positive impact that homeownership offers our communities, and the generational wealth it builds into the beautiful, revitalized neighborhoods of St. Louis and across the country," said Dino Willis, Community Loan Officer for Guild Mortgage. "We are proud to be a part of this conversation and to work alongside worthy non-profit organizations in St. Louis like Love the Lou."

Numerous screenings for the film are being planned. Every screening will be followed by a community discussion and Q&A with a panel of experts.

Additional information about the film can be found at the film’s website www.visionthefilm.com or on Facebook at [facebook.com/visionthefilmpage](https://www.facebook.com/visionthefilmpage). The trailer for the film can be viewed at <https://vimeo.com/speakupproductions/review/937929042/2a9c5dfc2a>.

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Speak Up Productions, founded in 2008, is an award-winning St. Louis based production company that makes films about what matters. Its goal is to entertain, educate and inspire people to action through story. www.SpeakUpProductions.com.

Under The Tree Designs is a production company that brings stories to life with excellence through various services such as producing, casting, and photojournalism with the mission to use imagery to connect the world through human experiences by evoking emotions in the audience to desire to learn more, value differences, discover beauty in brokenness, and expose them to a world they didn't know existed but can now no longer deny. www.UnderTheTreeDesigns.org.