

Diverse Movies Matter

A list of some films for different ages and stages that centre around, honour and celebrate racial and cultural diversity in our world.

Introducing Diversity to Younger Viewers



Monsters University

Fun and frolics aside, this is a film about the inherent differences between people and how individuals, places and situations can help cultivate connections and understanding between those people.

Of particular note is the scene in which Mike and Sulley go to spy on Monsters Inc. and realize that "great scarers" come in all shapes, sizes, colors and attributes.

2013
Rated U



Big Hero 6

The cast includes strong, stereotype-defying women (one of whom is Latina) and several African Americans and Asian Americans, including the protagonist. At the same time, none of them are defined by their race or their gender. Two of the film's strongest characters, Go Go Tomago and Honey Lemon are bright, courageous women of colour. The characters are also voiced by actors of the same race and background.

2014
Rated PG



Zootopia

Even though this world is filled with animals, it breaks down racism in an understandable way for younger children. Judy Hopps fulfills her childhood dream of becoming a police officer in the urban city of Zootopia; however, she's instantly sent to parking duty because her chief doubts her abilities, all because she is a rabbit. The ultimate lesson in this movie is to never judge a book by its cover - or an animal by its ancestral background. In Zootopia, it doesn't matter if one's family was historically prey or predator. Everyone is equal.

2016
Rated PG



Kubo and the Two Strings

Kubo, a young boy, along with Monkey and Beetle, must find and wear his father's legendary suit of armour in order to defeat an evil spirit. The film draws eyes to a very common Japanese tradition. Not only does it teach us about the customs and reason of the Bon festival, but uses it as a storytelling vessel with stunning visuals and a tear-jerking lesson in forgiveness and empathy.

2016
Rated PG



Coco

Miguel pursues his love for singing in spite of his family's ban on music. He stumbles into the Land of the Dead, where he learns about his great-great-grandfather who was a legendary singer. From the Riveras' ofrenda to the stunning depiction of the Land of the Dead, the film authentically encapsulates the spirit of Dia de los Muertos and its customs.

2017
Rated PG

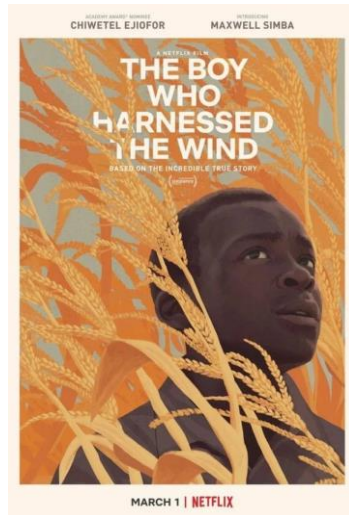


Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse

Miles Morales is half-Puerto Rican and half-African American, seamlessly switching between English and Spanish in his household. He offers a unique take on Spider-Man, given his upbringing in Brooklyn and recent school transfer to the charter school Brooklyn Visions Academy. Though it's only touched upon in the film, Miles feels out of place in this new school, given how different the environment is compared to the public school he attended.

2018
Rated PG

Feature Films



The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind

Set in Malawi, a 13-year-old boy is thrown out of the school he loves when his family can no longer afford the fees. He sneaks into the library and learns how to build a windmill to save his village from a famine. Based on the novel of the same name.

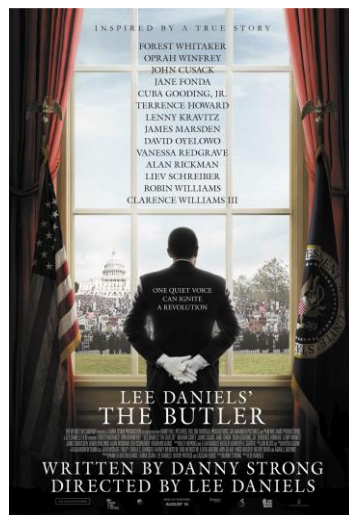
2019
Rated PG



Hidden Figures

The incredible untold story of Katherine G. Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan and Mary Jackson - brilliant African-American women working at NASA, who served as the brains behind one of the greatest operations in history: the launch of astronaut John Glenn into orbit, a stunning achievement that restored the nation's confidence, turned around the Space Race, and galvanized the world. The visionary trio crossed all gender and race lines to inspire generations to dream big.

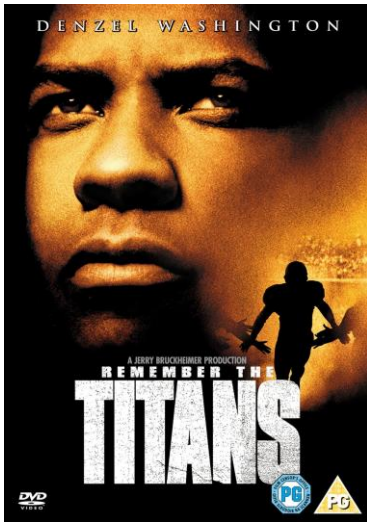
2016
Rated PG



The Butler

Inspired by the real life of Eugene Allen, who retired as head butler at the White House after 34 years of tenure. The film sees White House butler, Cecil, serve under no less than eight presidents throughout periods of significant history in America like the Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam War and the inauguration of Barack Obama.

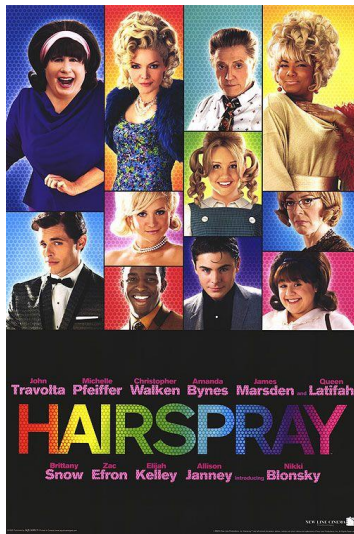
2013
Rated 12



Remember the Titans

The inspirational true story about the struggles and victories of the first racially diverse high school football team in Alexandria, Virginia in 1971.

2000
Rated PG



Hairspray

A light-hearted musical that follows Tracy as she emerges from being an overweight teenager to a television superstar overnight. However, her journey is interrupted when she decides to fight back against the racial segregation of the TV show she loved so much.

2007
Rated PG



Queen of Katwe

Living in Katwe, a slum in Kampala, Uganda, is a constant struggle for 10-year-old Phiona, her mother Nakku Harriet and younger members of her family. She and her younger brother help their mother sell in the market and scavenge for food and water. But her world rapidly changes after being introduced to the game of chess.

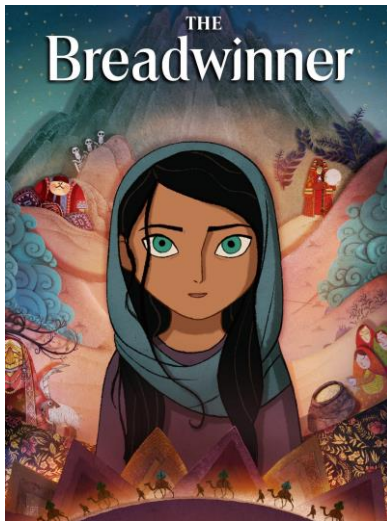
2016
Rated PG



Pride

In 1973, Jim Ellis, a college-educated black man, can't find a job. Driven by his love of competitive swimming, Jim converts an abandoned pool. But when city officials mark the new building for demolition, Jim fights back by starting the city's first black swim team. Recruiting troubled teens from the streets, racism threatens to tear the team apart, and Jim must do everything he can to convince his swimmers that victory, both in and out of the pool, is within their reach.

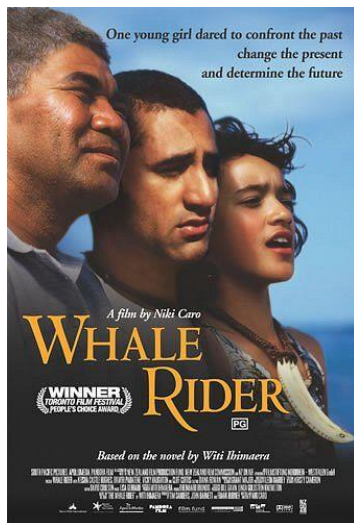
2007
Rated PG



The Breadwinner

Parvana is an 11-year-old girl who lives under Taliban rule in Afghanistan in 2001. After the wrongful arrest of her father, Parvana cuts off her hair and dresses like a boy to support her family. Working alongside a friend, she soon discovers a new world of freedom and danger. Drawing strength from the fantastical stories she invents, Parvana embarks on an epic quest to find her father and reunite her family.

2017
Rated 12A

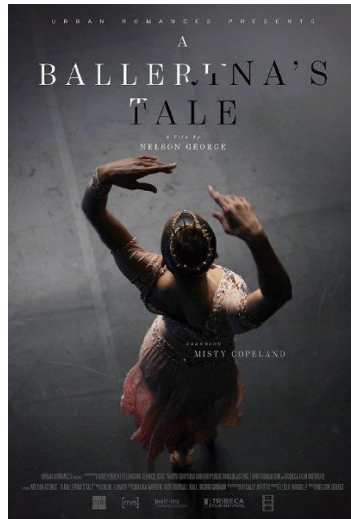


Whale Rider

Only males are allowed to ascend to chiefdom in a Maori tribe in New Zealand. This ancient custom is upset when the child selected to be the next chief dies at birth. However his twin sister, Pai survives. At age 12, she enlists the help of her grandmother and the training of her uncle to claim her birth right. But to break with convention, she'll have to do the impossible: win over her ultra-traditional grandfather.

2002
Rated PG

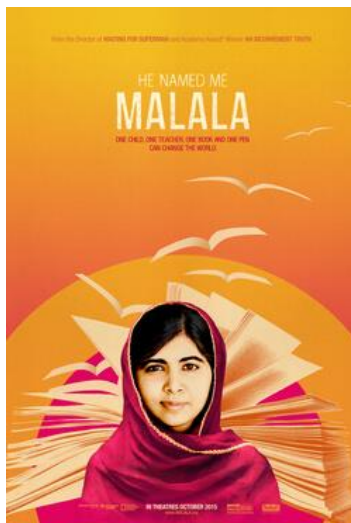
Documentaries



A Ballerina's Tale

Few dancers reach the elite level of ballet; of that, only a fraction are black women. Misty Copeland shattered those barriers in 2015, making history as the first African American principal dancer with the prestigious American Ballet Theatre. This film intimately documents Copeland's historic rise while shining a light on the absence of women of colour at major ballet companies. The film also explores how ballet's emphasis on waifish bodies impacts the health of ballerinas while sending a negative message to young fans.

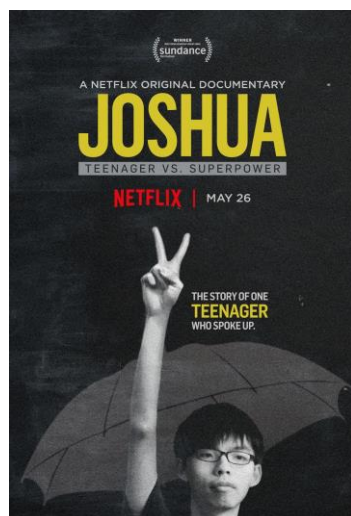
2015



He Named Me Malala

After the Taliban tries to kill her for speaking out on behalf of girls' education, Pakistani teenager Malala Yousafzai emerges as a leading advocate for children's rights and the youngest-ever Nobel Peace Prize Laureate.

2015



Joshua: Teenager vs. Superpower

When China's Communist Party breaks its promise of autonomy to Hong Kong, a teenager rallies thousands of kids to occupy the streets and becomes an unlikely leader and dissident.

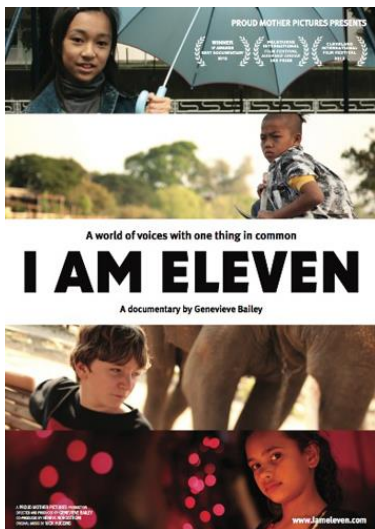
2017



Ladies First

Born amid abject poverty and limited women's rights in the Indian village of Ratu, Deepika Kumari rises to become the best female archer in the world at the age of 18.

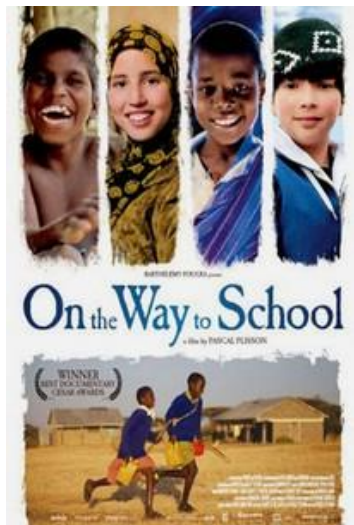
2017



I am Eleven

A documentary that follows 11-year-olds from around the world as they share their thoughts, triumphs, and challenges. The kids, who hail from Australia, Bulgaria, China, France, Germany, India, Morocco, Japan, Sweden, Thailand, the United Kingdom, and the United States, share their beliefs, challenges, passions and triumphs, showing that issues like bullying and discrimination are experienced by everyone, regardless of where you come from and what you look like.

2014



On the Way to School

This French documentary features four children from different countries on their way to school, each of them overcoming their own personal obstacles to get there. Samuel is pushed 2.5 miles in a homemade wheelchair by his younger brothers; Jackson has to avoid wild animals on the African savannah; Zahira navigates the Atlas Mountains weekly to get to boarding school; and Carlito has a 90-minute horseback ride across the pampas. The imagery is beautiful, subtitles are minimal and there's no voice-over narration.

2013