

Thursday, November 29, 2012

## Amid fundraising success, Photo Center NW continues outreach

12:04 am July 26th, 2012

by Stephen Miller, Editor  
- The Capitol Hill Times -

Photo Center NW thought it would be a long shot to make any money from a single-day fundraising campaign that asked the community to sponsor photographers. It ended up bringing in something in the ballpark of \$10,000. Now in it's fourth year, Long Shot continues to be a successful campaign for Capitol Hill's photo space, offering an opportunity to support and highlight the programs the non-profit offers.

Long Shot is a daylong campaign in which amateur and professional photographers from around the world ask for pledges – much like a walkathon – to shoot and submit photos to the center.

"What would be a really fun, interesting way to engage the community?" Marketing Director Rafael Soldi said the staff at Photo Center NW asked itself when coming up with the idea. "In two or three years the event just took off."



Photo by Ellen Sollod

About 100 participants took part the first time around. This year, from 6 p.m. June 1 to 6 p.m. June 2, 715 photographers submitted about 2,000 images. "Photographers have started to take the event more and more seriously," said the center's Jen Flood. "The arrival of superior camera devices in cell phones and creative

apps like Instagram have made Long Shot all the more accessible worldwide, allowing amateurs and professionals alike to submit excellent works."

The increase in participation also means more dollars raised. The event pulled in \$32,000 last year and set the bar at \$35,000 for 2012.

"This year was another booming success," Soldi said, though he won't know exactly how much the event brought in until after the exhibit auction. The Long Shot auction, held at Photo Center NW at 6 p.m. on Saturday will put about 200 photos from the event up for sale with prices dropping as the evening progresses. The idea is to give the community an opportunity to own a piece of the art it helps sponsor, Soldi said of the auction that will feature a live DJ and food. "Eat, drink, dance, have fun, purchase art for cheap, go home."

Long Shot's success is a piece of the funding puzzle that keeps the center's classes, workshops, seminars and outreach programs running. Photo Center NW also receives support from numerous grants and donors in the area. In May, Seattle's Office of Arts and Culture Youth Arts Program announced the distribution of \$175,000 to the city's youth programs. PCNW received \$7,800 for its Club Photo program, which it runs through the Seattle World School.

Club Photo is a photo class designed to help immigrant and refugee children "get a basic understanding of what their place is here in the U.S." while learning the basics of photography, Soldi said.

At any given time at the Seattle World School, 12 kids will be speaking 10 languages including Chinese, Farsi, Korean, Spanish, Russian and East African languages, he said. Club Photo encourages students with different backgrounds to interact with weekly assignments, including some that ask the students to document their lives at home.

"It's really cool to see," Soldi said. Some students will photograph their shoes because they've never had shoes before."

As with Long Shot, there is an exhibition at the end of the term. "It's cool to wrap up the session and see how much the kids have learned about use of their camera and how their eyes has developed, and what kinds of stories they have to tell," he said.



The Long Shot exhibit at Photo Center NW

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