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Five tapped for WIF/GM film grants

By Carly Mayberry

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Women in Film and General Motors. on Thursday announced the five recipients of their second annual grant for emerging Latina filmmakers.

This year's recipients -- Sarah Duran, Xochitl Gonzalez and Brenda Zuniga of Los Angeles, Erika Bagnarello of Heredia, Costa Rica, and Michelle Malley-Campos of San Juan, Puerto Rico -- will take part in a six-day mentoring program from Oct. 15-21 led by members of New York Women in Film & Television, the New York-based chapter of WIF.

The goal of the grant -- officially dubbed the WIF/GM 2007 Opening Doors/Abriendo Puertas: The Acceleration Grant for Emerging Latina Filmmakers -- is to assist promising filmmakers from Latin and Hispanic communities and other under-represented groups in becoming more established in the film industry.

"Once again, we are tremendously impressed with the depth of talent among Latina women across the country and in other territories and countries," said Judith James, chair of the WIF/GM Alliance chair Judith James said. "We applaud this year's winners and look forward to their future contributions to our industry."

Duran, a graduate of Cal State University, Northridge, recently was accepted into the 2007 Producers Guild of America's Diversity Workshop for her feature screenplay "The Search for Santiago." Gonzalez, who has an MFA in directing from UCLA, has had her films screened on KCET's "Fine Cut" series and at festivals.

A graduate of USC's School of Cinematic Arts, Zuniga's thesis film "Santa Teresa" is being exhibited at film festivals nationwide.

Bagnarello, a graduate of Florida State University, won second place in the student category at the 2007 Palm Beach International Film Festival for her thesis film "Inner Sight." Campos, a graduate of NYU's film program, is working in the Puerto Rican production office for the film


"The Argentine," directed by Steven Soderbergh.

The grant winners will receive round-trip transportation to New York, where they will be hosted by NYWIFT as well as industry passes to the Hamptons International Film Festival, set to run Oct. 17-21 in East Hampton, Long Island.

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