

The Third Annual Reproductive Rights Film Festival — 2025



The 2025 Reproductive Rights Film Festival has wrapped, and what an incredible two weekends it was!

This year's festival brought together powerful films, talented filmmakers, and inspiring audiences across Cinemapolis, college campuses, and virtual events. We're proud to share that **attendance doubled** from last year, marking our most successful festival yet.

Campus Screenings & Student Engagement

For the first time, we brought films directly to students, with campus screenings of *The Janes* at Cornell University and Ithaca College. Emmy Award-winning and Academy Award-nominated director **Tia Lessin** joined us in person for a post-screening conversation and Q&A—an inspiring and energizing experience for students.



Short Shorts Film Competition

We were thrilled to launch our '**Short Shorts Film Competition**,' where winning films screened and filmmakers were celebrated with an awards ceremony.

Winner Kate Kelson said it best:

"Fantastic festival! So honored to have my short film BABY LOVE as an official selection. An incredibly supportive, professional and vibrant festival with an amazing selection of films. Highly recommend!"

Pop-Up Anti-Abortion Center Demonstration

This year's pop-up demonstrations outside the Finger Lakes Pregnancy Center were a major success. Participation surged, especially among local students from Ithaca College and the Lehman Alternative Community School, whose energy and commitment amplified the visibility and impact of the actions.



Organized by EAS interns Bella Phelps and Paige Currier, and EAS member Myra Kovary, the demonstrations energized both new and returning activists. As Myra shared in [The Ithacan](#):

"I'm thrilled that young people are finding a way to be actively involved. I just love them. I love working with them. The enthusiasm, the creativity, the passion. It just warms my heart."

Seeing this growing engagement from younger generations is one of the most meaningful outcomes of this year's festival.

Film Highlights

- *Fly So Far* — followed by a powerful discussion with Sarah Jane Cushman and Sammie Werkheiser, two formerly incarcerated women dedicated to advocating for women still behind bars.
- *Connie Cook: A Documentary* — followed by a post-screening conversation with Assemblywoman Anna Kelles, director Sue Perlgut, and Connie's daughter Cathy Cook, who inspired audiences by reflecting on how Assemblywoman Connie Cook's moral courage continues to shape their work and lives today.

- *No Choice* — directed by Ithaca native Nate Hilgartner and filmed in Tompkins County. The screening received a standing ovation, followed by a lively discussion with the cast and crew.

A heartfelt thank-you to Cinemapolis and our generous sponsors and partners:

Triphammer Arts Inc., Cinemapolis, The Office of Assembly Member Anna Kelles, Latino Civic Association of Tompkins County, Cine Con Cultura Film Festival, Finger Lakes Environmental Film Festival, CloseToHome Productions, Diane's Downtown Automotive, Documentary Studies and Production Degree – Ithaca College, Department of Performing and Media Arts – Cornell, LGBT Studies and Feminist, Gender & Sexuality Studies – Cornell, Central NY NOW, First Unitarian Society of Ithaca, Cornell Prison Education Program, and Kitchen Theatre Company.

This program was made possible in part with funds from the Office of Assembly Member Anna Kelles and from the Statewide Community Regrant Program through the New York State Council on the Arts, with support from the Office of the Governor and the NYS Legislature, administered by the Community Arts Partnership of Tompkins County.

Thank you to everyone who joined us, online or in person—you made this year unforgettable.

We can't wait to see you next year!

Sincerely,

Cayenne Cave

Managing Director | Reproductive Rights Film Festival