

'Madame Presidenta' filmmaker to visit SUNY Broome for free event

April 16, 2015

Brazil, Argentina, South Korea, Ireland, Chile, Croatia, Malawi, Indonesia, Sri Lanka – these countries, and many others, have all had female presidents.

Filmmaker Heather Arnet asks “Why Not U.S.?” in her documentary “Madame Presidenta,” which comes to SUNY Broome on Thursday, April 23. The event will be followed by an interactive discussion with Arnet, who is also the CEO of the Women and Girls Foundation of Southwest Pennsylvania.

The event, which is free and open to the public, will be held in Decker Health Sciences Building Room 201. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. on the day of the event, with the screening beginning at 6 p.m. and the discussion to follow.

“Madame Presidenta” chronicles the journey of two women, one from the U.S. and one from Rio de Janeiro, as they explore the key question of why so many other countries have elected female presidents before the United States. In the process, they make important discoveries about new democracies, community and women’s rights. The film is a collaboration of the Women and Girls Foundation of Southwest Pennsylvania, and ELAS: Women’s Social Investment Fund in Rio de Janeiro.

Growing up, Heather Arnet’s grandmother, Vivian told stories of her great-grandmother Mary, the suffragette who marched the streets of New York for women to earn the right to vote. Vivian’s dream – passed down from her mother – was to someday help elect the first woman president.

The issue is especially timely as the United States gears up for the 2016 presidential election. Female candidates have surfaced in presidential races in recent years: Sarah Palin was the GOP’s vice presidential candidate in the 2008 election, while Hillary Clinton narrowly lost to Barack Obama in the 2008 Democratic presidential primary. Clinton recently declared that she is running for president in 2016.

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