Shot from the heart
North Lawndale student film debuts at Peace on Earth Festival

"Gun violence affects me daily. I believe I will be the next person to die," says a teen girl in the short film "Will I Be Next?"

The short, created by a class at North Lawndale College Prep High School, will be part of the first Peace on Earth Film Festival, which starts Friday.

I wake up, I realize I am getting old, I need to start doing things on my own," says film editor Raphael Rollins, 19.

"Some could say I am young, but I am old. I have been doing this for over 10 years. I have known the pain of violence. I have witnessed it," Rollins, interviewed on camera in "Will I Be Next?" shows his wound.

"It was really an interesting evolution for him," says his teacher, Elizabeth Cakravala. "We had a lot of conversations about how to be a backpacker to be a backpacker, to be a backpacker."

"I think the emotional wounds hurt the emotional wounds hurt the emotional wounds," McCarver says. "But on the other hand, the emotional wounds hurt the emotional wounds hurt the emotional wounds."

The film was produced by Free Spirit Media, a non-profit founded by filmmaker Jeff Holmberg, who runs a Chicago/Asian/Black film for his work in public television. Since its inception in 2000, Free Spirit— which promotes diversity in the staffing and content of media production—has helped produce more than 40 documentary shorts with students.

"Our student programs have provided a number of projects with violence in it," McCarver says. "We want to go where the violence is and go where the violence is."

"We want to get kids involved in the community and get kids involved in the community," McCarver says. "We want to give kids a voice and give kids a voice."