

Volunteer Spotlight Interview



JASON COMSTOCK

Jason came on board in 2017 as a new volunteer and certainly made a mark! After attending the festival for many years with his wife, he joined the transport team as a driver and drove for nearly 40 hours in eight days! He always had smile on his face and genuinely enjoyed getting to know FIN delegates, filmmakers and staff. We were lucky to have him as part of the team and hope he'll be with FIN for a long time to come.

Cydney: What is your day job?

Jason: I'm a mortgage underwriter with Home Trust, I've been there for about four years. I'm the guy who says yes or no, and on a good day I make a whole bunch of people's dreams come true.

C: How did you get involved with FIN?

J: My wife has worked with Telefilm Canada for about 15 years, so we've always kind of been somewhat involved with the Festival. And now that the kids are a little older I can enjoy more of the films, and when the opportunity came up last year to get involved volunteering I jumped at it. I've been a big fan of Canadian films for years and, you know, smaller films get the spotlight at FIN and I've always enjoyed being at the festival and now I can be on the other side and kind of help pull off the event.

C: Why do you volunteer?

J: As the kids grow up and don't need mum and dad at home as much as they used to, I've always loved giving back to the community and to get involved in an event that I have a huge love for. I have the time and I have the energy and I have some skills that I think I can offer and I'm happy to do that when I can. FIN, as it grows and has a [wider] reach, I just enjoy being part of something like that.

C: What would your recommendations would you make if you are speaking with a first-time FIN festival-goer?

J: If you can get to the Opening Night Gala, that is a pinnacle. The energy, the excitement, the enthusiasm, and the celebrity that comes with it, it's just so much fun to be a part of. It's a huge deal, it's at a great venue, generally it's easily accessible, and yeah, it just kind of sets the tone for the week. [I]t's a must-see, a must-do.

C: What's your favourite film?

J: Hmm, oh boy. I think one that's always stuck with me over the years is IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER. It's about the Irish Republican Army and the Guilford Five, who were wrongfully accused of this famous bombing in Guilford, England and their fight for basically understanding and freedom. It's the kind of film that told a deep and meaningful story and really shows how politics and the need to blame someone often clouds fact... it was just a really powerfully-made film and a really great story.

C: So you've been volunteering with us for a year?

J: Yeah, just the one time so far.

C: What's your most meaningful or memorable moment that stands out to you from your volunteer experience?

J: I think one of my first shifts on transport I made a pickup at the airport and it was a large portion of the cast from the film INDIAN HORSE. I was not at all familiar with the film, I hadn't had an opportunity to review the guide for the year. The crew has just come from TIFF [Toronto International Film Festival][where the film had debuted, and they were dead tired, all of them, and they were talking about the film itself. Later on, I went back to the airport and picked up the director from the film and just learned a little bit about it and heard the buzz and excitement. I ended up attending the film later that evening, and really learned a lot about the film, the film-making process and how it all came to be. It's probably one of the best films I've seen at the Festival and I had that connection with the talent and the producer. It was kind of fun to see them up there talking

about their film and the crowd was a full house and the appreciation for the film was absolutely incredible. The next day I drove them back to the airport and they were appreciative of having seen me in the theatre, it was incredibly rewarding in that sense. Great film too, that I probably wouldn't necessarily have seen.

C: What is your favourite movie snack?

J: A big ol' bag of popcorn!