

# 2009/10 Worldstudio AIGA Scholarships Coyne Family Foundation Award



## JESSICA POLANIECKI

Animation  
Junior  
School of Visual Arts

Through out my life I have undergone numerous surgeries to repair the cleft-lip and cleft-pallet I was born with. To be exact I've had 13 operations between the ages of 1 and 17. These surgeries involved long periods of recovery where I would be stuck in a hospital bed for weeks. It was during these long stretches of time that animation, particularly fairy tales, became my savior. My parents brought me classic Disney movies on video and I watched them over and over again. They managed to simultaneously distract me from the pain as well as inspire me. I would sit with my notebook out, sketching the characters from my favorite films and soon began creating my own characters and stories. These films got me through the toughest parts of my life and brought out a creative side of me that I cherish more than anything.



As I got older I continued to draw as well as develop my characters and story ideas. I took some summer classes and learned to animate on my own. It soon came time to decide what I was going to do for college and I knew I wanted to pursue my art. When I discovered a school merely an hour away from my home that offered animation



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Animation

as a major, my decision was clear. Today I am a student at the School of Visual Arts, studying the art of stop-motion animation as well as puppetry.

Having experienced the healing powers of storytelling and animation, I plan to explore different methods of using this medium to comfort ailing children around the world. I plan to create films that will be comforting to children who are going through what I went through and much worse. Having experienced the agony of being left in a hospital room for days, I know the agony of daytime television; a compilation of animated shorts made specifically for sick, injured or grieving children would be comforting and hopefully inspiring. While I am in school and surrounded by eager animation students, I am organizing a group of students interested in contributing films to this cause.

I also plan to travel with these films as an international children's film festival, so children in poverty or war stricken countries, as well as victims of terrorist attacks, can see them as well. I am specifically drawn to Middle-Eastern countries because of my heritage. I have seen the television shows made for Palestinian children and they promote hate and murder. I plan to create children's programs that do the opposite, teaching children not to be prejudiced but rather to be open to and appreciate other cultures.



I am going to Kazakhstan in August to work with victims of war and I plan to share my films with them. I would also have the festival tour America to raise money to be able to produce the films and donate them to hospitals or directly to families with sick children. For me this would be the most fulfilling and meaningful way to embrace my talents as an artist and animator.

