For decades, the **Martha's Vineyard Film Society** has been a cornerstone of the island's cultural landscape. It has run the award-winning **MV Film Center** since 2012, where it presents 600+ events and welcomes over 30,000 attendees annually. Programming outstanding American Independent and World Cinema, the MET Opera Live streams, National Theater Live performances, Science on Screen, Art Exhibition on Screen, and other live events, the Film Society brings many forms of culture to our Island every week of the year.

The Film Center has also created a gathering space for community engagement and collaboration. Through partnerships with local organizations, the Film Society provides free use of its theater and helps create fundraising opportunities for a variety of initiatives that serve the greater good.

A Hub for Community Collaboration

What truly sets the Film Society apart is the breadth of its partnerships and the variety of causes it supports. Over the past 28 years, it has teamed up with numerous island nonprofits, helping them raise awareness and critical funds for their operations. These partners include **MV Hospice**, **Island Children's School**, **MV Community Services**, **MV Animal Shelter**, **Vineyard Conservation Society**, **Island Housing Trust**, **Island Grown Initiative**, **Island Food Pantry**, **Theatre on the Blue**, and many more. In just the last couple years, these collaborations have helped generate over $10,000 for local organizations. A recent fundraiser for **Tisbury Waterways** raised $2,190 for the non-profit.

One of the Film Center's cherished annual traditions is its free holiday screenings for children, ensuring that island families have access to festive experiences they might otherwise miss. One such event is the interactive screening of *The Polar Express*, a collaboration with the **Vineyard Haven Library** that has become a beloved holiday staple. As one local mother shared, *"It warmed my heart to see my boy enjoy a special holiday event like this. Sometimes, living on the Vineyard, I feel like he misses out on things."*

Another powerful example of dedication to the community was our theatrical run of both the 2025 NY CAT and NY DOG FESTIVALS. Both programs ran for several days at the Film Center, with a percentage of proceeds going directly to the **MV Animal Shelter**. As a bonus, artist Lexi

Ladd worked with the Film Society to auction off a custom portrait of a beloved pet, with the funds going to the animal shelter as well.

Additionally, the Film Society collaborated with **Island Housing Trust** to address the issue of homelessness among veterans. In honor of the anniversary of D-Day, we were joined by producer Charles Pinck and a panel of local veterans for a discussion, with most of the proceeds going to new Veteran's housing on the island. By using cinema as a tool for advocacy, the Film Society sparks conversations and mobilizes community support for important social causes, like affordable housing.

A Commitment to Giving Back

The Film Society's approach to community service is guided by a simple philosophy: when there is an opportunity to help, they say yes. As Executive Director Richard Paradise explained in the **MV Times**, *"Sometimes, it's an event that's just a goodwill gesture. For instance, we did a free screening for the volunteers at Hospice & Palliative Care of Martha's Vineyard. They asked if we were willing to do this to thank their volunteers. I said, 'Of course.'"*

Similarly, this past New Year's Eve, the Film Center hosted a free, sing-along screening of the 1964 classic musical MARY POPPINS. Instead of charging admission, the Film Society asked attendees to bring canned goods for **Island Food Pantry**. The event was sold out, with enough donated food to fill several large boxes that were hand-delivered to the pantry.

More recently, the Film Center hosted a fundraiser for **Theatre On the Blue**, Martha's Vineyard's non-profit theater company. With its screening of the adventure film JURASSIC WORLD, the Center is proud to have raised over $800. Proceeds went directly to help with their teen program and fund their upcoming trip to Scotland, where they will be performing *The Hobbit* at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival!

A Place to Connect

The Film Center is more than just a place to watch movies—it's a place where people connect, share ideas, and feel a sense of belonging, where residents can come together and engage in meaningful conversations. The

Film Center has also provided space for local emerging artists and filmmakers to showcase their work, furthering the cultural enrichment of the island.

Throughout the year, the Film Center is open for free student screenings for **Island schools**. World Studies and ESL students enjoyed an exclusive presentation of the Oscar-winning Best International Picture, I'M STILL HERE, the true story of a mother and activist coping with the forced disappearance of her husband in Brazil during its dictatorship.

Currently, the Film Society is planning an event with the **MV Center For Living** and a local filmmaker to raise awareness for the center and its work addressing community caregiving for dementia sufferers.

As one longtime Tisbury resident puts it, "*We just love the Film Center. But it's more than great movies—it's where we see our friends.*"

A Lasting Impact

Whether it's bringing families together for holiday traditions, providing a platform for vital community conversations, or supporting local nonprofits in their missions, the Martha's Vineyard Film Society remains an essential cultural hub. Its unwavering dedication to both film and community make it a cherished institution on the island—one that not only entertains but also uplifts, educates, and inspires.