



*presents*

## Year One

*A film by Carole Laganière  
produced by Nathalie Barton*



*Year One* tells the story of the challenges, doubts and rewards that await newly qualified teachers as they go through their first year in school.

## PRESS KIT

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*Quebec, Canada, 2010, HD Digital Video, Color, Dolby Stereo 5.1, 75 / 52 mins.*

<b>Researched, Written and Directed by</b>	Carole Laganière
<b>Assistant Director</b>	Ian Oliveri
<b>Camera</b>	Dominic Dorval
<b>Additional Images</b>	Robert Vanherweghem Patrick Pellegrino Ian Oliveri
<b>Sound</b>	François Vincelette
<b>Additional Sound</b>	Richard Lavoie Christine Lebel Jean-François Paradis
<b>Edited by</b>	France Pilon
<b>Sound Editing</b>	Alain Blais Michael Binette
<b>Mix</b>	Martin M. Messier
<b>Music</b>	Frédéric Chopin
<b>Performed by</b>	Hélène Jodoin
<b>Online Editing</b>	Guillaume Millet
<b>Production Manager</b>	Ian Quenneville
<b>Produced by</b>	Nathalie Barton

*Produced by*  
**InformAction**

*with the participation of*

Canadian Television Fund  
created by the Government of Canada  
and the Canadian Cable Industry

Quebec  
(Film and Television Tax Credit - Gestion SODEC)

SODEC  
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Canada  
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*with the collaboration of*  
Télé-Québec

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## Short Synopsis

*Year One* tells the story of the challenges, doubts and rewards that await newly qualified teachers as they go through their first year in school.

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## Synopsis

*Year One* tells the story of the challenges, doubts and rewards that await newly qualified teachers as they go through their first year in school. They discover a contrasting world where the problems of discipline are not always those they expect, and a profession that requires them to be educator, psychologist and entertainer all in one.

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## Long Synopsis

*Year One* tells the story of the challenges, doubts and rewards that await newly qualified teachers as they go through their first year in school. It observes young women and men imbued with a sometimes fragile passion for teaching, who hope to play a significant role in the lives of their students and to change the world of education.

The teachers profiled in *Year One* are in their early twenties and work in high schools in Greater Montreal and Quebec City. There's Dominique, who teaches math like a camp counsellor. And Isabelle, who is trying to help disadvantaged students in Laval learn basic French. Jérémie, the only guy in the group, who manages to get teenage girls interested in science. Anne, also a science teacher, who is having rather a hard time at her private school. And Catherine, who has inherited a class of kids with behavioural problems.

These young teachers discover a world of contrasts, where discipline problems are not always what one would expect, as they embark on a profession that requires them to be educator, psychologist and entertainer all rolled into one.

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## Interview with Carole Laganière

*Why did you want to make a documentary about young teachers?*

I've made films with children (*The Fiancée of Life* and *East End Kids*) and I wanted to look at the experience of teachers, who are significant people in the lives of children and teenagers. In *Year One*, I focus specifically on high school teachers. This film is different from other recent films I made (*Country* and *The Moon and the Violin*) since it doesn't show damaged people. This time, I wanted to make an observational documentary about work.

*The teachers in your film are in their first year of teaching.*

There's an energy in people who are just starting out. The dropout rate among teachers is very high, higher than in other professions. I wanted to understand why 20% of them give up teaching within the first five years.

*The film follows five teachers—four women and one man. Are men that rare?*

At the elementary level, it's only women! In high school, there are more men, but the numbers are declining. Not many men responded to my call for graduates in education.

*Are there problems filming inside a school?*

We filmed each of the teachers with two or three groups of students, so we had to get permission from the parents of each child. The vast majority agreed. I expected it to be more difficult for the kids with behavioural problems, but it wasn't. Quite the contrary, in fact.

*The film shows young teachers who are vulnerable, overworked, uncertain about their future careers.*

The workload is enormous, especially when they're first starting out, and imposing discipline is very demanding. One of the teachers in the film lost her job because she couldn't handle that part of the work—and she was teaching in a private school. No environment seems to be free of bullying, a problem that is raised in the film. However, I hope that I've also shown the joys of teaching.

*Does the presence of the camera affect the classroom dynamics?*

Only for about ten minutes. We're surrounded by images these days. Everyone dreams of being on a TV reality show. So they soon forget about the camera.

*Nevertheless, the young teachers aren't free to say whatever they think.*

A young teacher who openly complains about his colleagues or work conditions could hurt his career. In teaching, like everything else, there are workplaces where relationships are strained and others where newcomers are supported by those who have been there longer.

*What do you think it takes to be a good teacher?*

You can't take things too personally. You have to be close to your students and maintain a certain detachment at the same time. Some teachers take things very much to heart. That can turn against them.

*Were there things that surprised you?*

I was struck by how rare it is for kids to work quietly on their own, concentrating. Attention deficit seems to be the rule. There's never two minutes of silence in the class. The teachers are onstage three or four hours a day, 180 days a year. To succeed, they have to be good educators, shrewd psychologists and real entertainers. The ones who do best these days seem to be the ones who are also able to entertain the kids. That's not the memory I have of my teachers.

*Were there ones who made a mark on you as a teenager?*

The ones who treated me as a person, i.e., someone who wasn't necessarily stupid even though I was younger than them.

*Do you have a specific audience in mind for your film?*

I hope *Year One* will be seen by the students' parents, so they'll be a little more aware of what a teacher's job consists of, what it means to have all those kids in front of you all day long. I don't think teaching is highly valued these days. And yet, in my mind, it's the most wonderful profession in the world. The most important too. We spend our childhood with strangers who play a decisive role in our lives. When it comes time to make a decision, we turn left or we turn right—because of them. What a responsibility!

Interview by Michel Coulombe

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## Author Biofilmography

Carole Laganière was born in Montreal. In 1987, she graduated in Film Direction from the INSAS, Belgium. In 1989, she made her first short, *Jour de Congé*, who won a number of prizes in Europe. On her return to Québec, she directed *Aline*, which received the Best Feature Film prize at the 1992 Festival de Namur. Happy forays into the genre of documentary-fiction led the filmmaker to choose, with *The Fiancée of Life* (2001) and *The Moon and the Violin* (2003), to focus on reality. The latter both won the Gold Award for Best Canadian Documentary at Hot Docs (Toronto) respectively in 2002 and 2003.

She directed in 2004 a documentary about children in East Montreal, *East End Kids* presented in more than a dozen international festivals (Finalist for Best Documentary at the Jutra and the Gémeaux Awards 2005). She finished *Country* in 2005 and *City Park, A Little Music for the Soul* in 2006.

She's now working on the sequel of her documentary *East End Kids*.

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## Production Company

InformAction is one of Canada's leading documentary production companies, specializing in point of view and creative documentaries directed by some of the best filmmakers in Canada. Founded in Montreal in 1971, InformAction produces single documentaries and mini-series on social issues, international affairs, art, world cultures and human rights for Canadian prime-time television (Radio-Canada, CBC, Télé-Québec, Canal D, TV5, Artv, Bravo, Knowledge, History and others) and for theatrical release. Many have won awards and all are distributed internationally. InformAction has done several successful international coproductions with Europe, in particular with La compagnie des taxi-brousse in France, with broadcasters Arte France and France 5.

Latest titles include **Battle of Wills** by Anne Henderson, **Seeking Refuge** by Karen Cho (*Best Direction in a Documentary Program* nominee at the Gemini Awards 2009), **Shock Waves** by Pierre Mignault & Hélène Magny (*CIDA Award for Best Canadian Documentary on International Development* – Hot Docs 2008, *Film Most Likely to Change the World Award* – Detroit Docs 2007), **A Dream for Kabul** by Philippe Baylaucq (*ReelAward for Outstanding Canadian Doc* 2009) and **Afghan Chronicles** by Dominic Morissette, both coproduced with the National Film Board of Canada, **American Fugitive: The Truth about Hassan** by Jean-Daniel Lafond (more than 20 international festivals, including Hot Docs, Marseille, Dubai), **Lifelike** by Tally Abecassis (3 nominations at the Gemini Awards including *Best Science/Nature Documentary* 2006; Vancouver VIFF, Hot Docs, SXSW), **The Magic Touch** by Carlos Ferrand (3 *Gémeaux Awards* 2005, including *Best Cultural Documentary*), **The Genocide in Me** by Araz Artinian (more than 20 festivals, 6 international awards; shown in more than 50 cities in the world).

InformAction also supports emerging directors (**Sans réserve** by Patrick Pellegrino, *Best Mid-length Documentary Award* 2008 by Québec Critics Association; **La Vie après la shop** and **The Genocide in Me**, both nominated for *Best Social Documentary* at the *Gémeaux Awards* 2006).

Producers Ian Quenneville and Ian Oliveri joined the company 10 years ago and teamed up with senior producer and co-founder of the company, Nathalie Barton. Nathalie was for many years documentary representative on the board of the Association des producteurs de films et de télévision du Québec, and is now a board member of Femmes du cinéma, de la télévision et des nouveaux médias and Chair of the Documentary Network (l'Observatoire du documentaire).