

Local filmmaker sharing skills with community

By ERIN ALBANESE

Jadon Fowler's Jimmy Stewart impression is dead-on, and if you close your eyes while he impersonates Sean Connery, you'd swear you're hearing James Bond.

An actor since childhood, Fowler, 29, has now taken his spot behind the camera, founding Fusion Film Academy and teaching adults and children how to turn an idea into a film.

"My goal is to work with people of all ages and focus on giving them a chance to make movies," he said.

Working with people gives him the opportunity to share the excitement of see-

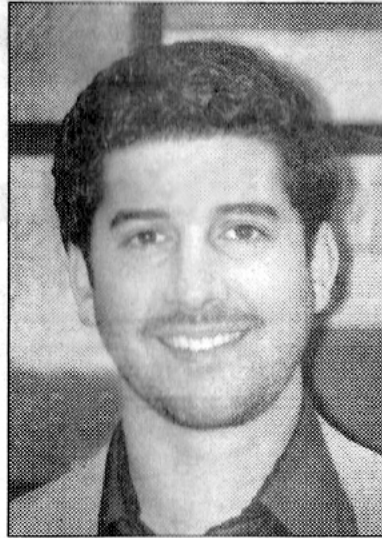
ing something evolve from notes to a finished production.

"This is something I jump out of bed to do every morning," said Fowler.

His charisma is fetching as he recites movie scenes verbatim, a skill he developed by rewinding scenes over and over, practicing the words and voice intonations.

"I talk to myself a lot," he laughs.

Fowler walked away from a career in real estate and mortgage finance to pursue his filmmaking dream. He attended and worked for Compass Arts Film Academy downtown, but before that



JADON FOWLER

life experiences helped paved the way.

After graduating from Forest Hills Northern in 1997, he lived in New York where he studied theater and

Shakespeare and played Judas in "The Passion Play." He returned to Grand Rapids in 2000, and began his career in real-estate investment, while saving money for film school.

But in 2006 he took another diversion - moving to Jamaica for six months to volunteer at schools, hospitals, and churches. He shot a lot of footage of the people and living conditions and created a documentary now used for fundraising.

He founded Fusion Film Academy last March, which meets at several locations, including the Forest Hills Fine Arts Center, Central Middle School, and Wealthy Street Theatre. Along with teaching about film, he also teaches a course on great film actors and their classic movie roles and a course on legendary classic movies.

His classes are for middle and high school students, adults, and seniors, and are available through Forest Hills

Public Schools Community Services. Adult classes include "Lights...Camera...Action!" "The Actor's Studio," and "Classic Movie Review."

"Lights Camera Action" is available to third- through ninth-graders, in which the kids create a movie. So far, Fowler and his students have remade "The Karate Kid," and "The Sandlot," and are working on "Martin In Between," a take on the TV show "Malcolm in the Middle." The movies are shown at Fusion Film Festivals.

Fowler has also filmed an action skate video in East Grand Rapids with high school student Jackson Gilmore called "Action Jackson."

Fowler literally grew up in local theater. His mother, Janae Dean, runs Children's Creations in Cascade and his whole family is involved. He is performing in the upcoming "Oliver Twist" for the theater company, and has

performed in "Charlotte's Web" and other productions. His brother, Kurt Fowler, is business administrator and director for Children's Creations, and his brother, Matt Fowler, owns the business Coat of Many Colors, on Wealthy Street in Eastown, which provides many costumes for the shows.

Fowler, his mother, and stepfather, Wayburn Dean, are also starring in a stage play of "Driving Miss Daisy," which they plan to perform in Texas.

It's easy to see Fowler's excitement as he talks about Marlon Brando or Al Pacino, "Gone with the Wind," or "It's a Wonderful Life." Movies, to him, are a passion he wants to share.

"I want to help people create positive, uplifting, and beautiful works that offer hope to the world," he said.

For more information about Fusion Film Academy, call 819-9968 or e-mail jadonfowler@yahoo.com.