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DOCUMENTARY “IN THE GAME” FROM PEABODY-WINNER MARIA FINITZO AND KARTEMQUIN FILMS TO HAVE U.S. PREMIERE IN CHICAGO IN AUGUST

FOLLOWING A CHICAGO HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS SOCCER TEAM OVER FOUR YEARS, WE SEE THE GIRLS - MOSTLY SECOND-GENERATION HISPANIC IMMIGRANTS - FLOURISH UNDER AN INSPIRING COACH AND AS PART OF A TEAM, BUT STRUGGLE WHEN THAT SUPPORT IS REMOVED UPON GRADUATION, REVEALING THE PERSISTENCE OF INEQUALITY DESPITE THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF TITLE IX

Latest film from makers of “HOOP DREAMS” and “MAPPING STEM CELL RESEARCH: TERRA INCOGNITA” opening in Chicago theaters, followed by direct distribution aimed at youth audience and educational professionals through partnerships with Illinois Youth Soccer Association, National Council of La Raza, Chicago Public Library, Chicago Public Schools, and more

Chicago Premiere Run: August 22 - 27

Gene Siskel Film Center of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago

[Tickets now on sale](#)

Website: www.inthegamedoc.com

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/133053729> Images & press kit: <http://inthegamedoc.com/press/press-resources>



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JULY 15 2015 (Chicago) -- Not-for-profit documentary collective [Kartemquin Films](#) (*Hoop Dreams*, *The Interrupters*, *Life Itself*) announced the forthcoming release of [In The Game](#), a new feature documentary from two-time Peabody Award-winning director Maria Finitzo that covers four years in the lives of a Latina girls' soccer team at Chicago's Thomas Kelly High School, revealing the numerous socioeconomic obstacles and inequalities low-income students confront in their quest for higher education.

Fresh from its world premiere at the Madrid International Film Festival, where Finitzo was nominated for Best Documentary Director, *In the Game* opens in its US premiere on Saturday, August 22 at Chicago's Gene Siskel Film Center. Following that run, special public screenings will be held at Kelly High School, and in partnership with Chicago Public Library and Chicago Public Schools this fall.

Director Maria Finitzo and those featured in the film will be at the Siskel Center screenings of Saturday August 22 and Sunday August 23. Illinois Youth Soccer Association, National Council of La Raza - Midwest, and Young Women's Leadership Charter School are also co-presenting screenings throughout the week and holding discussions on the issues featured in the film.

The screenings come in the wake of a landmark federal probe that will force Title IX compliance to address big gender participation gaps in Chicago public high school sports, and the much heralded victory of US Women's national team at the World Cup. Finitzo's film shows that playing team sports provides personal growth and stability among young girls, equipping them with the resilience to face the intense pressures of living in poverty.

"In life you deal with what's dealt your way. When you get knocked down, just get up right away. Never give up." – Stan Mietus, Soccer Coach, Kelly High School.

Set in the predominantly Hispanic neighborhood of Brighton Park, Kelly High School on Chicago's south side is an inner city public school struggling to provide the basic necessities for their students, many of whom do not make it to college, either because they cannot compete academically or because their families do not have the financial resources to send them. 94% of Kelly High School students are categorized as "low income" according to its [Chicago Tribune 2014 Illinois School Report Card](#). The girls of *In The Game* face an uneven playing field - or in the case of the girls at Kelly High School, no soccer

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field at all - little or no support, problems at home, uncertain futures, discrimination, and poverty, but remain undaunted thanks to their teammates and the dedicated mentoring of their coach, Stan Mietus.

The film follows three girls on the Trojans soccer team - Alicia, Elizabeth, and Maria - as they progress through their school years and beyond. All three seek to enter higher education after graduating high school, but must constrain their ambition due their families' lack of financial means. *In the Game* underlines that in a healthy democracy, equality is defined by who gets to play - both on the field, and off.

"I made this film, stuck with it through the good times and the bad, because I believe deeply in the endless possibilities that come with the word 'inclusion,'" said Director Maria Finitzo, who spent 6 years struggling to raise sufficient funding to bring this story to the screen. "Does the world really care that little about equality for girls and women, and even less so for women who are not rich and not white? In our country who gets to play and who does not is a yardstick by which we measure how close we are to achieving the goals of a democracy – a level playing field for all, or in a word: equality."

About Maria Finitzo

Maria is a two-time Peabody Award-winning social issue documentary filmmaker whose 26 years as a documentary filmmaker has resulted in a body of work that has won every major broadcast award and has been screened in festivals and theaters around the world. Her films are novelistic in their structure, providing multiple points of connection for an audience. She allows the narrative arc of her character's story to evolve, colliding with other subjects from the film, creating a complex, nuanced story that serves as a vehicle to deepen our understanding of society through everyday human drama. A coming of age story that reveals the resilience of adolescent girls (*5 Girls*), a father determined to heal his daughter after a tragic accident (*Mapping Stem Cell Research: Terra Incognita*), a young man, alone in the world trying to find his way (*With No Direction Home*), a soccer coach committed to teaching his players – Hispanic girls – about winning in life (*In the Game*), and a young couple, both working minimum wage jobs struggling to make ends meet while building a life for themselves and their children (*Hard-Earned*) are all films that explore different realms of storytelling by investigating the important social issues of the day.

Finitzo's films have tackled a variety of subjects from the controversial science of stem cell research and the complex questions surrounding the command and control of nuclear weapons to the psychology of adolescent girls, each film demonstrating a depth and breadth of knowledge and expertise. She is a long

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time associate of the award-winning documentary company, Kartemquin Films, one of the oldest and most respected social issue documentary film companies in the country. Finitzo is also a screenwriter and fiction film director. Her first feature, *Those Left Behind*, from her original screenplay is in post-production. Her interest in fiction filmmaking is a natural evolution of her commitment to exploring different realms of storytelling. Finitzo is currently developing *The Dilemma of Desire*, a documentary that will look at the complex nature of female sexual desire.

About Kartemquin Films

A collaborative center for documentary media makers who seek to foster a more engaged and empowered society, in 2016 **Kartemquin** will celebrate 50 years of sparking democracy through documentary. Their films, such as *The Interrupters*, *The Trials of Muhammad Ali*, and *The New Americans* have won numerous awards while leaving a lasting impact on millions of viewers. A revered resource within the film community on issues of fair use, ethics, story and civic discourse, **Kartemquin** is internationally recognized for crafting quality documentaries backed by audience and community engagement strategies, and for its innovative media arts community programs.

Their recent films include **Steve James'** *Life Itself*; **Usama Alshaibi's** *American Arab*; **Kirsten Kelly** and **Anne de Mare's** *The Homestretch*; **Joanna Rudnick's** *On Beauty*; **Dan Rybicky** and **Aaron Wickenden's** *Almost There*; **Brent Huffman's** *Saving Mes Aynak*; and *Hard Earned*, a six-hour series for Al Jazeera America.

Kartemquin is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization based in Chicago. www.kartemquin.com