

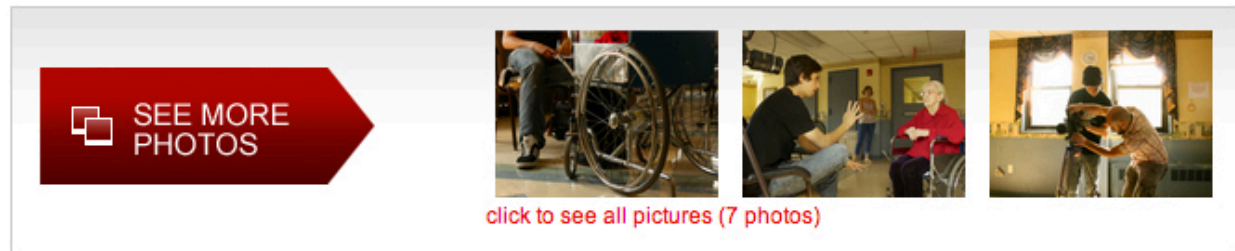
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# Senior Citizens Get Their Close-Ups in Program for Young Filmmakers

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COBBLE HILL — Before 18-year-old Hunter Zimny heads off to college to begin cultivating a career in filmmaking, he had one more documentary to make, thanks to an innovative mentoring program.

Zimny was filming at the [Cobble Hill Health Center](#) for a documentary about 87-year-old Theresa Barbieri and peppered the lifelong Brooklynite with questions about her youth.

Barbieri told an anecdote from her teen years — when she and her high school friend, who is black, faced racial abuse.

"How did you feel when people harassed you and your friend about her race?" Zimny asked.

"We just ignored them," Barbieri said. "That's what we did every time."

Zimny is filming under the guidance of [Old School Films](#), a non-profit program that teaches young auteurs

fundamental skills for shooting and editing documentaries.

The program connects aspiring filmmakers with senior citizens in the community to create short documentaries about their stories.

The program is free to students, and the mentorship is completely voluntary.

"This idea came about from a personal story actually," said Aaron Lubarsky, program director of Old School Films. "When my grandmother was about 85 years old, she lived in a senior center, much of like this.

"When I went to visit her, I noticed all of these elderly people sitting around and looking neglected. When I started asking questions and talking to some of the seniors, I noticed that their eyes lit up. There are all these young filmmakers out there who want to tell a story, and seniors who have stories to tell."

The program begins with an introduction and hands-on exercises with the filming equipment. Lessons are held in the Old School Films office, located at 307 Warren St., where a team of three, including Lubarsky, work closely with the young filmmakers.

"I like the idea of talking to elderly people," Zimny said. "I've been afraid of getting old and dying, and I feel like this is confronting my fears.

"Talking to Theresa during the pre-interview, she seems really content with where her life is right now, and I think that's a good place to be."

After Zimny set up the equipment, a nurse brought Barbieri into the room. As she was placed in front of the camera, Barbieri asked that the blinds be closed a bit, because the sun bothered her skin, she said. Zimny hurried to comply, and the interview lasted for about 45 minutes.

Barbieri was reserved at first but warmed up as the interview progressed.

"I was very relaxed because everyone was so friendly," said Barbieri. "I hope I did OK! But you've got to have confidence in yourself, I think."

Old School Films is always for looking for new filmmakers to join the program, but students are selected on a project-to-project basis. The program is free to all students.

To learn more or to apply, visit [www.oldschoolfilms.org](http://www.oldschoolfilms.org).