



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Keith Famie

248-869-0096 (Office)

248-318-2534 (Cell)

famie@famie.com



Chromosomally Enhanced: What's Your Superpower?
New Film Premieres for the Community at Emagine Novi on
July 26th, 2022

WIXOM - The documentary film by Keith Famie and his Visionalist Entertainment Productions team, *Chromosomally Enhanced: What's Your Superpower?* shows up close what life is really like for individuals with Down syndrome and their families. The film features Michigan residents of all ages and stages of life with Down syndrome, as well as community organizations that aid these families.

The premise behind this documentary is that after spending time with children with Down syndrome, Famie came to the conclusion that their superpower is that extra chromosome, which gives them the ability to see the world through rose-colored glasses. "They all have a sincere, caring, empathic, way in how they see the rest of humanity spreading joy and smiles to all they meet, something the world could use a big dose of right now," Famie said.

After almost 3 years, thanks to Paul Glantz and the Novi Emagine Theater team, the film *Chromosomally Enhanced: What's your Superpower?* had its debut to a full theater of 320 guests that included eleven of the fifteen featured stars, their family members, and some notable community leaders, including Jim "JJ" Johnson from WOMC radio and singer/songwriter Jill Jack whose song, "Super Hero" closes the film. Retired Detroit Lions player, Eric Hipple, who is featured in the film, opened the evening with insightful comments about what can be learned from those living and thriving with Down syndrome.

One of the big highlights of the evening was the poster signing with our featured superheroes. Smiles, smiles, and more smiles were had by all.

The closing evening comments were filled with positive emotion and enthusiasm for the world to see this film of those living and thriving with Down syndrome among us.

"This film captures the essence of people with Down syndrome, highlighting the extraordinary in the ordinary. Expect to come away with a refreshed understanding of what is possible when we all believe in each other." - Brian Skotko, MD, MPH/Director of the Massachusetts General Hospital Down Syndrome Program.

Pre-COVID, Famie filmed with four Michigan Special Olympics individuals on the Plymouth Canton Stars powerlifting team: Kyle Siarto A.K.A. Iceman, Sean Bowers A.K.A. Tank, Kevin Welgosh A.K.A. Hollywood, and Robby Heil A.K.A. Sparty. The team was practicing to compete in the 2020 Michigan Special Olympics State Summer Games scheduled to take place the last week of May at Central Michigan University. The pandemic took this opportunity away and halted production for what many thought would end the production altogether.

However, Famie was determined to keep this production going. As part of the closing scene to the film, Famie envisioned something iconic and interactive. In October 2020, nine featured individuals and local first responders from the Wayne County Sheriff's Department, White Lake Township Police Department, Novi Police Department, Ypsilanti Township Fire Department, Livingston County K-9 Unit, and the Willow Run ARFF, as well as two of Detroit's favorite football icons, Eric Hipple and Lomas Brown, all came together, like superheroes, to physically pull a 33,000lbs B-17 Yankee Lady Bomber, thanks to Willow Run Airport/Yankee Air Museum.

As part of the story, Famie wanted to incorporate a segment in the film about employment. Famie and the VEP team filmed with Michael Renkiewicz, 31. Renkiewicz has worked at Kroger in Novi, Michigan for 5 years. Also, Bracha Greenes, 27, an employee at Dakota Bread Company, a gourmet Jewish bakery founded by Levi and Bassie Shemtov of the Friendship Circle. And Anna Perzyk who works at Arby's in Waterford.

Also featured in the film is board-certified medical geneticist, Dr. Skotko, the Emma Campbell Endowed Chair on Down Syndrome at Massachusetts General Hospital. As a national leading doctor for children with cognitive and developmental disabilities, Dr. Skotko brings an important element to the film, providing answers to the technical and medical questions.

Additionally, Jill Jack, an American singer-songwriter based in Ferndale, Michigan, wrote a song with co-writer Brian Lord called, "Super Hero." Famie and his team filmed a short music video to the song with nine featured individuals that are shown in the film.

"An Amazing story about a group of young adults with Down syndrome, when given the opportunity in an all-inclusive community and school setting, they are able to thrive and persevere! The movie opens your eyes to the limitless possibilities when the playing field is leveled." - Shailee Patel, Ed.S/Novi Community School District/Director of Special Education Program & Services.

The hope of this film is to give a voice to these individuals that may not always get a fair chance in life and to also encourage empathy from a society that may not fully understand what it is like to live and thrive with Down Syndrome.

The film will air on local Detroit Public Television on September 2nd, 2022 at 4:00pm Eastern standard time.

To learn more about the film's production and learn about how you can be featured as supporter please go to <http://whatisyoursuperpowerfilm.com/>

Chromosomally Enhanced: What's Your Superpower?

Premiere Comments

“This film captures the essence of people with Down syndrome, highlighting the extraordinary in the ordinary. Expect to come away with a refreshed understanding of what is possible when we all believe in each other.”

Brian Skotko, MD, MPP
Emma Campbell Endowed Chair on Down Syndrome
Massachusetts General Hospital

“When Keith Famie approached me about the filming of his documentary, Chromosomally Enhanced: What's Your Superpower?, there was no hesitation on my part about getting involved and supporting this film. As a speech language pathologist and founder of Kids On The Go, a nonprofit organization which serves children with special needs, I have been honored to work with hundreds of children and their families with Down Syndrome. As a result, my life has been blessed. I was honored and humbled to preview the film. I found myself overcome by pure emotion with the personal stories and accomplishments of these Superheroes. Keith is a master at the art of storytelling. Not only does he beautifully capture the gifts that these individuals with Down Syndrome provide to our communities, he shows the world that anyone can be a Superhero when you just believe in them.”

Kristy Schena
Kids On The Go

“Keith, as the Executive Director for the Down Syndrome Guild and a parent of a 25-year-old daughter with Down syndrome it has been my pleasure to meet thirty new families each year and welcome them to the Down syndrome community and help make connections with families who have walked a mile in their shoes. The team created a thought-provoking production of how life can be with great support from the medical community and community support that allows persons with Down syndrome to reach their full potential whether that's working or living in their community. Thank you for giving all the participants another memory.”

Paulette Duggins
Executive Director
Down Syndrome Guild of Southeast Michigan

“I was honored to be asked to preview the documentary on, Chromosomally Enhanced: What’s Your Superpower, by Keith Famie. Mr. Famie and his creative staff did a beautiful job chronicling the journey of the families blessed to be given the gift of a child with Down Syndrome. The documentary touches points from the time of birth to adulthood. What impacted me was the interviews with the medical professionals and the change of attitudes to having a child with Down Syndrome. No longer is it a discussion of putting a child in an institution, but a celebration of a beautiful life, and a wonderful journey ahead. As a parent it was no surprise the strength, support, and unconditional love of the families in the documentary. We all strive for our children to be the best that they can be, and follow their dreams and goals, whether they have a disability or not.

This film takes us on a journey of exploring what our Down Syndrome community CAN do, not what they CANNOT do. This film shows us what love and support of not only family, but of doctors, teachers, coaches, and employers can do to help achieve the goals of our children.

I hope what is taken away from the film is that when a person with Down Syndrome is looked at, people will think, "I wonder what their Superpower is," but really it starts with that they are all just angels hiding their wings.

Thank you to Keith and everyone at Visionalist Entertainment Productions for highlighting our "differently abled" children...and don't forget to bring your Kleenex.”

**With much gratitude,
Gail Bowers
Mother of Sean Bowers/featured in the film**

“This film will save lives. Now that abortion is not a Federal Right, couples who have questions about Down Syndrome have a resource to allow them to see the beauty of being a parent of a DS child and hopefully not go to a state that allows abortion. They could put the child up for adoption, instead.

Furthermore, parents who want to “slow down” and “enjoy life” can see firsthand how a family has done that by adopting a DS child.”

**Signed,
Parent of a son with DS**

“This compelling film reminds us that every person is special and unique and has the capacity for bringing joy into the world. If we want a better world, we need to take the time to listen to their stories, celebrate their special qualities, and love and appreciation them. Something everyone - babies, kids, teenagers, adults and the elderly - is longing to receive.”

Carl and Carol Schiller

“An amazing story about a group of young adults with Down syndrome, when given the opportunity in an all-inclusive community and school setting, they are able to thrive and preserve! The movie opens your eyes to the limitless possibilities when the playing field is leveled.”

Shailee Patel, Ed.S
Novi Community School District
Director of Special Education Program & Services

“People say that the world needs more love, compassion, and understanding. This documentary is packed full of all of these combined. I know for me, it motivated me to be a better person. And I believe that will be a ripple effect for anyone who experiences this movie.”

Jill Jack
Singer – Songwriter

“The film reveals the trials, struggles, and happiness experienced on all sides of children with Down Syndrome. It's a powerful compendium of lessons learned from those involved with these exceptional children.”

Dr. Tim Hartge
Marketing Communications Professor
University of Michigan

“Our kids/young adults want to be seen and treated as people first and their disability second. They want to be included and positively contribute to their community. Our Superhero individuals see others with no bias and are very intuitive, eager to help others and will not tolerate injustices to others. They are members of the greatest employee resource pool - punctual, low absenteeism, hard workers, possess superb customer service skills, eagerly learn and master new skills. Give our Superhero kids/young adults a chance - you will not be disappointed, instead, you will be amazed!”

Beautiful, Dedicated, Respectful, Kind, Welcoming, Helpful, Angels, Bright, Gratitude, Joy, Honesty, Heart, Humbleness, Purpose, Community, Supportive, Live, Includes Others, Resourcefulness, Loyalty, Caring, Friendliness, Learning, Participation...”

Ginger Renkiewicz, RN, BSN, MSBA

“In a society that is so full of animus, the families of DS children teach us it is even more important that we embrace those devoid of antipathy by nature, whose hearts are pure and their love sincere, not unlike the parents that brought them into this world. Their ability to contribute to society is demonstrated every day, but more so, they are goodwill ambassadors for mankind that is necessary to teach us by example, the true goodwill that should exist in all of us.”

Tony and Mary Schimizzi

*“**What is Your Superpower?** is a perspective-shifting film and a must-see for anyone, whether or not you have a personal connection to someone with Down syndrome. The film’s theme aligns with the mission and passion of my work and life. People with disabilities have God given superpowers that give them a unique way of viewing and interacting with the world. The more society recognizes, embraces, and includes these superhero children and adults in all spaces, the more blessed and beautiful our community will be.”*

Levi Shemtov
Friendship Circle Co-Founder