



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CHRISTOPHER'S SMILE CAPTURED IN NEW SHORT DOCO



Christopher (5) from the Focus on Ability doco, 'Christopher's Smile'.

A brand new short documentary will premiere online tomorrow (June 20), to tell the brave and beautiful story of a young south Canberra Family and their daily fight with Cytomegalovirus also known as CMV.

The film, called 'Christopher's Smile', has been selected to take part in the **2019 Focus on Ability Film Festival**. It is produced and directed by Canberra and Goulburn region filmmakers, Dan Sanguineti and Michael J. Watson.

The story follows a single day in the life of the Roger's Family. Every day brings a new challenge, but none more than giving 5 year old Christopher the extra care that he needs. Living each day to its fullest, they know it's all worthwhile just to see Christopher's smile.

June is CMV Awareness Month and sharing Christopher's story is just one way filmmakers Dan Sanguineti and Michael J. Watson hope to #stopCMV



Christopher is a miracle baby who has surpassed every milestone and hurdle his doctors have set in front of him.

When his mother, Pam, sat in her obstetrician's office at 31 weeks pregnant she had never heard of CMV. The first time she heard about the disease was when her doctor told her that her unborn baby had contracted it and the subsequent damage to Christopher's brain was extensive and so severe, they were sure he wouldn't survive the pregnancy. If, by some miracle, he did, they were to prepared to enjoy the precious time with him, as it would be short.

Five years on from the day she and husband Tom had their lives turned upside down, every day is a blessing filled with activities and emotions. Christopher is a big brother to Charlotte and Matilda (Charlie and Tilly) who both adore and accept Christopher as simply being the best big brother they could ask for. After hundreds of appointments and multiple surgeries and procedures, the prognosis for Christopher is still unclear. "One day the demands of his body will be too much for the capacity of his brain and we have no way of knowing when that's going to be. There's no way of knowing exactly how long we've got him for."

For media enquiries regarding the film:

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For more on our film and press images to download visit:

<https://www.sanguinetimedia.com.au/christopherssmile>

NOVA Employment 2019 Focus On Ability Short Film Awards.

For more information of the festival please contact: ryan@focusonability.com

About Focus On Ability:

Based in Australia, this year's FOA festival had an amazing 245 entries, including 104 school entries and 61 international films. Following successful screenings last year right around Australia, in New Zealand, New York, Zimbabwe and Malawi this year the competition received entries from 26 countries.

This could be the richest short-film festival in the world, with over \$175,000 in prizes to be shared among the winners.



The winner of the Judges Choice Open Entrant Documentary section receives \$10,000 cash prize.

The winner of the Open Entrant Most Online Votes section receives \$5000 cash prize courtesy of Club York.

Voting starts 20 June and concludes 3 July: <http://www.focusonability.com.au/>

Every day during voting, voters go in the running to win a \$50 iTunes voucher, but you can only vote once in each category.

The six categories are:

Australia & New Zealand Schools Documentary
Australia & New Zealand Schools Short Film
Australian Open Documentary
Australian Open Short Film
International Documentary
International Short Film.

Winners attend a red-carpet event at The Concourse in Sydney on 6 September 2019.

Quotes from Martin Wren, CEO NOVA Employment: (FOA was his big idea!)

'Focus on Ability is a constant source of amazement for me. It came as a random thought bubble, "Wouldn't it be cool if we could use the medium of film to highlight the ability of people with disability?" It could change the world!'

'Now, I'm a Brixton kid – I'm hard as nails when I need to be – but I can guarantee you that I'll weep at least 5 times when I watch those films. I hear, see and feel people saying things like, "I didn't know that anyone would ever love me" and "It feels like I'm being destroyed". I have to go back and replay to check: "Yes they actually said that in my film fest."' 'I don't think, as a person, you can fail to be impressed and inspired by taking ten minutes to see a couple of FOA films. FOA changes attitudes about people with disability, and this is important because it's the first step towards an inclusive society.'