

RECOVERED

Journeys Through the Autism Spectrum and Back

Logline

Four families driven by hope. One organization that helped them overcome the odds.

Programming Descriptors

FORMS: Documentary

GENRES: Family, Educational, Human Rights, Independent, Science, Health/Medical

NICHES: Disability Culture, Youth/Teen, Children

<250 Word Synopsis

RECOVERED Journeys Through the Autism Spectrum and Back is a true, amazing story of recovery from Autism Spectrum Disorder as told by four children, their parents and the therapists who treated them. This project began in 1993, when Dr. Doreen Granpeesheh, founder and executive director of the Center for Autism and Related Disorders (CARD) began to videotape some of her patients in therapy in order to produce a training video for parents of children with Autism. However, the influx of new patients was rapidly increasing and projects such as this were put on hold. Ten years later she revisited the unedited videos, resolving to complete the project. As she looked at these tapes she realized it would be more valuable to locate the children and see how they were doing after all this time. Ten children had been videotaped and only six of these could now be found. Five of the six children had recovered! Four of those families agreed to participate in the project. Each child received services from CARD, including assessments, supervision, parent/teacher training and one-on-one behavioral therapy. The film presents documentation of therapy sessions along with interviews of the children who are now teenagers, their parents, therapists and Dr. Granpeesheh, herself. Their combined stories illuminate both their struggles and triumphs while providing hope to families of newly diagnosed children that recovery is indeed possible.

Production Notes

RECOVERED began production in 1993 when Dr. Doreen Granpeesheh hired B&B Productions to videotape some of the children receiving treatment at CARD. That footage sat in boxes until 2003 when Dr. Granpeesheh invited Michele Jaquis, artist, educator and ABA therapist, to work with her on the project. At that time Dr. Granpeesheh re-established contact with the families and over the next few years Jaquis conducted and recorded interviews with those willing to participate in the project. The final cut was completed in late 2007 and Michael Feldman mixed the audio, in early 2008. It includes an original score by Jeremy Quinn and Michael Feldman, with songs by Nine More Lies and H. Hanson.

www.recoveredautism.com

Media/Film Contact: Daphne Plump 818-345-2345 x 270
d.plump@centerforautism.com

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People

Submission Contact

Daphne Plump, Marketing Coordinator
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Michele Jaquis
837 Traction Ave. Suite 307
Los Angeles, CA 90013
213-625-0670 (home/studio)
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mjaquis@rise-ind.com

Production

Producer, Executive Director: Dr. Doreen Granpeesheh
Director: Michele Jaquis
Cinematographer/DP (1st Feature); Camera Operator: Michele Jaquis
Assistant Camera: Richard Loy, Anderson Raminelli
Additional footage provided by: featured families and B & B Productions

Post Production

Picture Editor, Digital Effects: Michele Jaquis
Sound Editor/Mixer: Michael Feldman

Music

Original Music/Composers: Jeremy Quinn and Michael Feldman
Songs by: Nine More Lies and H. Hanson

Qualifiers

Date of Completion

February 2008

Country of Production

U S A

Country of Filming

U S A

Production Budget

\$110,737

Funding Sources

- Center for Autism and Related Disorders
- Rise Industries (in kind equipment loan and studio time)
- Otis College of Art and Design (in kind equipment loan)
- University of California, Riverside (in kind equipment loan)

Formats

Shooting Formats

3/4 U-Matic, Hi8, VHS and MiniDV

Preview and Exhibition Formats

DVD Region 0 NTSC

Exact Runtime: 00 hr : 56 min : 46 sec

Aspect Ratio: 1.33 (4:3)

Print Details: Color, Stereo

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Directors' Statements

"Recovery" has been a controversial word for many different reasons.

Many people don't believe it is possible to recover from Autism. Others find it offensive that we even suggest recovery as a positive outcome for the disorder.

I have seen many children recover from Autism. These children overcome the difficulties presented by Autism. They develop the skills that were deficient and they succeed academically, learn to communicate appropriately, find friends and lead happy healthy lives.

When a child no longer meets the criteria for a diagnosis on the Autism Spectrum, when he scores within the normal range on tests of intelligence, language and adaptive functioning...we confidently use the term "recovered".

Over the past few years, there is a growing concern amongst adults with Asperger's that recovery as an end goal may be depriving them of their rights, or altering their personalities in a way that is not desired or acceptable. It has never been our desire or intention to alter any person's skills in a detrimental fashion.

All personalities change over the course of development. We all learn skills as we grow older and these new skills change the way we interact with and learn from the world.

Our intention in providing proof of Recovery and in identifying a course of action toward that goal is only to bring hope and determination to those families who feel it is in the best interest of their child to learn new skills in order to better access the rewards of life.

We feel every child has the right to be healthy, to be taught the skills they need to interact appropriately with their peers and to be allowed to demonstrate their strengths, instead of fight their weaknesses. We feel confident we have found the path to make this a reality.

Dr. Doreen Granpeesheh, 2008

Our aim in producing this documentary is to provide hope to families of newly diagnosed children that recovery from the Autism Spectrum is indeed possible. It is also our intention to bring awareness of this fact to the general population, medical practitioners and government funding agencies so that the needed support for the treatments of Autism becomes a priority.

Michele Jaquis, 2008

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Screenings

- 4.25.08 Silver Screen Theater at the Pacific Design Center, West Hollywood, California
- 5.25.08 Hope Academy, Greenville, South Carolina
- 7.18.08 The Nile Theater, Bakersfield, California
- 8.9.08 Autism/Aspergers Conference, Pasadena, California
- 8.16.08 Campbell Community Center, Campbell, California
- 8.19.08 Children's Hospital Central CA, Madera, California
- 9.20.08 Hyatt Regency Austin, Austin, Texas
- 9.27.08 Folino Theater, Chapman University, Orange, California
- 10.02.08 92Y Tribeca, New York, New York
- 10.25.08 Defeat Autism Now! Conference, San Diego, California
- 10.25.08 Director's Chair Film Festival (Best Documentary), Staten Island, New York
- 11.14.08 National Autism Association Conference, Weston, Florida
- 11.15.08 Northwest Area Education Agency, Sioux City, Iowa
- 11.22.08 Victoria Independent Film Festival, Sebastapol, Australia
- 2.14.09 3rd Annual Anaheim Autism/Asperger's Conference, Anaheim, California
- 5.21.09 AutismOne 2009 Conference, Chicago, Illinois
- 6.5.09 - 6.6.09 NW Louisiana Autism Conference & Expo, Shreveport, Louisiana
- 6.7.09 Autism House Annual Conference, Albany, New Zealand
- 6.24.09 ReelHeART International Film Festival, Toronto, Canada

Awards

- Best Documentary – 2008 Director's Chair, Staten Island, New York
- Official Selection – 2008 Victoria Independent Film Festival, Sebastapol, Australia
- Official Selection – 2009 ReelHeART International Film Festival, Toronto, Canada
- Nominated – 2009 Voice Award, United States Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (awards to be announced in October 2009)

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News & Reviews

"Research & Scholarship: Documentary Focuses on Autism," Inside UCR: News for Faculty and Staff of the University of California, Riverside, Volume 4 Number 3, February 13, 2008, p. 3
http://www.insideucr.ucr.edu/cgi-bin/display.cgi?issue_id=48§ion_id=2

Carin Yavorcik, "'Recovered' Premieres in Los Angeles," Autism Society of America, April 15, 2008
<http://www.autism-society.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=11175>

Jonathan Tarbox, "Recovered Journeys Through The Autism Spectrum and Back: An Interview with Documentary Co-Producer Michele Jaquis," Autism One Radio, April 24, 2008
<http://autismone.org/radio/default.cfm?archive=6028&bg=&FromA1>

Mikailian, Arin, "Autistic Teens Honored at PDC," The Los Angeles Independent West Hollywood Edition, May 1-7, 2008, p. 1, 4

Miller, Sam, "Inside Autism: Four Teens 'Recovered' From Autism Star in Documentary," OC Register, September 28th, 2008
<http://autism.freedomblogging.com>

"The Best Documentary on Autism", WATCH US GO!: The Invigorating Ride of Recovering our Son from Autism, December 3, 2008
<http://thekellys6.blogspot.com/2008/12/best-documentary-on-autism.html>

Geradi, Dave, "Recovered; Journeys Through the Autism Spectrum and Back, Center for Autism and Related Disorders," Spectrum Magazine, February 2009, p. 37

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Directors' Biographies:

Doreen Granpeesheh: Producer, Executive Director

Dr. Granpeesheh is the Founder and Executive Director of the Center for Autism and Related Disorders, Inc., and has dedicated over 30 years to the study and treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorders. Dr. Granpeesheh earned her Ph.D. in Psychology from UCLA under the guidance of Dr. Ivar Lovaas. She is a licensed psychologist and a Board Certified Behavior Analyst. A highly recognized psychologist in the field of autism, Dr. Granpeesheh recently earned one of the Autism Society of America's highest honors – the Wendy F. Miller National Recognition Award for Professional of the Year (2007). The award recognizes significant contributions made by a psychologist, psychiatrist, physician, and other professionals in the autism field. That same year, Dr. Granpeesheh was elected to the Autism Society of America (ASA) Board of Directors. She also serves on the Defeat Autism Now (DAN!) Executive Council and the US Autism and Aspergers Association (USAAA) Scientific Advisory Board.

Michele Jaquis: Director, Videographer, Editor

Michele Jaquis is an interdisciplinary artist and educator, with over 12 years experience working within the field of Autism, first as an Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapist and most recently as a videographer and editor working with the Center for Autism and Related Disorders. Jaquis earned her BFA in sculpture and experimental studio with a minor in psychology from Hartford Art School/University of Hartford and her MFA in sculpture from Rhode Island School of Design. She is an Assistant Professor and Coordinator for the Artists, Community and Teaching Program at Otis College of Art and Design, where she developed and teaches an Integrated Learning course called *Creative Solutions to the Autism Epidemic*. Jaquis is also the co-founder of Rise Industries: Interdisciplinary Projects. Her installations, performances, videos and digital prints have been exhibited across the U.S and can be seen at www.rise-ind.com.

Available for Interviews:

The four recovered teenagers
Dr. Doreen Granpeesheh
Michele Jaquis

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Cast Biographies:

Janna was diagnosed with Autism at age two and a half, at which point her mother was told by their pediatrician to "put her in an institution." Before treatment Janna's IQ score was in the mild mental retardation range. After three and a half years of intensive early intervention treatment provided by C.A.R.D., Janna's IQ reached the normal range and she was considered recovered at age 6. Since then Janna has developed a passion for rescuing stray dogs, She has also become a talented artist and competitive color guard performer. Janna is now 16 and entering her senior year in high school, after which she plans to attend college.

Ruffin was diagnosed with PDD-NOS (Pervasive Developmental Disorder – Not Otherwise Specified) when he was three years old. The neurologist who diagnosed him told his mother that he would "never be employed...that he would not know that [she] loved him, nor would he love [her], nor would he be likely to marry, and that if [she] had money [she] should probably invest it because [she] would need it to be able to care for him lifetime." Four months later he began treatment with C.A.R.D. as a workshop case, since there was no local C.A.R.D. office in their vicinity. Before treatment Ruffin's IQ was in the moderate mental retardation range and after two and a half years of intensive early intervention his IQ score reached above average. Ruffin officially recovered at age 6. He is now 17 and entering the twelfth grade. At his boarding school he is not only on the honor roll but is also studying Chinese and working as a sound designer for the theater department. He looks forward to majoring in engineering in college and has been invited to apply to MIT.

Brett was diagnosed with Autism at age two and a half. The diagnostician told his parents to "...just love him...there's a 50% chance that he won't be able to talk at all, but if he does talk he will only be able to make simple desire requests...and probably by the time he was ten he'd be in a home." Instead Brett received intensive early intervention from C.A.R.D. for five years, after which his IQ score rose from the mild mental retardation range to the normal range. He was considered recovered at age 7. Today Brett is 16 years old and about to enter twelfth grade. He continues to earn A's and B's while competing on the track team. After graduation Brett plans to go to college and law school.

Nick was diagnosed with Autism when he was four years old. His mom reports "I was told by another doctor to take him home and make him comfortable. Put him in a special education class in a public school and to not be stressed out about anything because there wasn't that much I could do." While, "Doreen [Dr. Granpeesheh] told me that he would recover. And Doreen told me he would go to regular kindergarten." After five years of intensive early intervention with C.A.R.D. and a gradual fade out over the next few years, Nick recovered when he was ten. His IQ score went from the borderline intellectual functioning range, before treatment, to well into the normal range afterwards. Now at 18 years old, entering his senior year of high school, Nick is an accomplished musician and aspiring filmmaker who is looking forward to college.

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