
CENTER FOR DISABILITIES AND DEVELOPMENT

Possibilities in Education and Training

A quarterly publication of the Center for Disabilities and Development, Iowa's University Center for Excellence on Disabilities at University of Iowa Children's Hospital, Iowa City, Iowa 52242-1011

Iowa Money Follows the Person List of Firsts

By Brooke Lovelace, Money Follows the Person (MFP) Program Manager- Center for Disabilities and Development

(Editor's Note: Money Follows the Person (MFP) is a state/federal partnership which provides financial and direct support for up to one year to eligible Medicaid beneficiaries who want to move from congregate settings to the community. Each participant is assigned a transition specialist who typically coordinates all aspects of the move, connects participants to community services and supports, explores employment options with participants, and monitors progress throughout the year to increase the likelihood of a successful outcome. The examples below illustrate, at a practical and personal level, the impact which this program is having on the lives of participants.)

MFP participants experience many new things during their initial year of community living. Here are just a few examples of the exciting "firsts" reported by MFP participants:

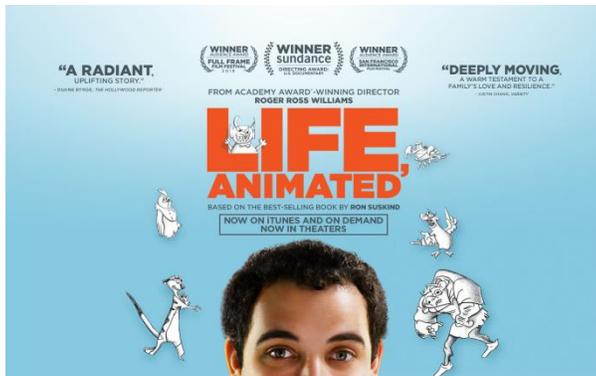
- Cooking dinner for my mom.
- Staying overnight in a hotel.
- Having my first "alone" time in seven years.
- Going to the I-Cubs game.
- Opening my first bank account.
- Having a pet duck and chickens that lay eggs!
- Grilling out.
- Seeing Grandma for Thanksgiving for the first time since I was a little girl, and seeing my sister for Christmas.
- Trying a zip line.
- Having my own mailbox.
- Joining a baseball league.
- Going to prom without staff.
- Getting my first pay check from Pizza Ranch.
- Attending Cyclone football games and tailgating with my family.
- Going to a doctor appointment in the community for the first time in 20 years instead of having the doctor come to the facility.
- Visiting nieces for the first time.
- Going on my first bike ride.

- Handing out Halloween candy.
- Vacuuming my own bedroom and apartment.
- Riding the bus and going to church without staff assistance.
- Getting a full time job with benefits.
- Being able to sleep in every day of the week because I am retired.
- Carrying my own money with me in my own wallet.
- Buying my own lawn mower.
- Going grocery shopping and planning my own meals.
- Having my very own bathroom.
- Going on my first vacation.

A Measure of Success ... In the Disability Resource Library

Life, Animated / directed and produced by Roger Ross Williams. Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2016. (92 min.) [Subtitles: English, SDH, Spanish]

Pervasive developmental disorder was a devastating diagnosis for the Suskind family as three-year-old Owen, the younger of two sons, suddenly lapsed into speechlessness and motor delay from which recovery was uncertain. Four years – and many Disney animated films later – Owen emerged to speak to his puppet, Iago, in *Lion King* lingo, thus setting a new communication standard for the Suskind family. As he grew older, Owen learned to interact with his family and his friends; his interests within the Disney sphere spilled over into new talents like drawing and storytelling. However, social skills remained just out of reach for Owen, a problem that would dog him into adulthood. At age 33, Owen

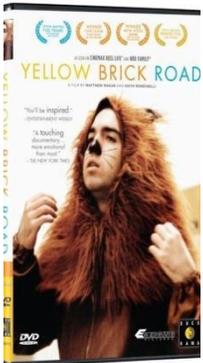


accompanied his parents to a conference in Rennes, France, at which he was the guest speaker. His speech would begin like this: “The way people see those with autism is that they don’t want to be around other people. That’s wrong. The truth is that autistic people want what everyone else wants.” Follow the rest of this speech to learn about Owen’s long, hard journey to acceptance of himself as a “proud autistic man, strong and brave, ready to meet a future that is bright and filled with wonder.”



Touch of the Light = Ni guang fei xiang / directed by Chang Jung-chi. Well Go USA Entertainment, 2014. (110 min.) [In Mandarin with optional subtitles in traditional Chinese and English]

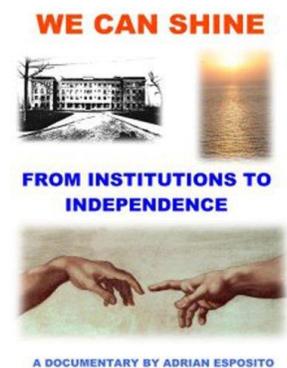
Huang Yu-siang is a Taiwanese pianist who has become famous for his musicality and charm. This film is a partially fictionalized version of his rise to stardom through musical and academic ranks that differed greatly from his sheltered roots in schools for the visually impaired: he is completely blind. Huang Yu-siang plays himself in the movie as Siang; his co-star and romantic interest is played by Sandrine Pinna as Jie, an aspiring dancer who is motivated by Siang's music to try out for a professional dance company. The great pleasure of this film is the performance sequences. The great disappointment of this film is that it is not dubbed in English so that more people could follow the story.



Yellow Brick Road / directed by Matthew Maker and Keith Rondinelli. Elementary Films, New Video Group, 2006. (75 min.)

Yellow Brick Road is a spin on the *Wizard of Oz* re-enacted for the stage by the members of the Long Island ANCHOR Organization, a recreational group for children and adults with disabilities. The focus of the film is the four months leading up to the performance, as actors and actresses become acquainted with their characters, their stagecraft, and each other. Under the watchful eye of the director, Sandy Braun, show time finally arrives. In the end, we don't see the full play; we don't have to: there are outtakes to attest to the magic of success.

We Can Shine: From Institutions to Independence / directed and narrated by Adrian Esposito; written and produced by Kristina Nomeika. Espocinema, 2010. (57 min.) [Optional subtitles] Filmmaker Adrian Esposito uses his own diagnosis of Asperger's syndrome as a springboard to question what life was like for people with disabilities in New York 40 years ago. In a word: dreadful. State schools, the working model of the time, were overcrowded, crumbling, and understaffed. In the film, resident whistleblower, Bernard Carabello recounts for Esposito inhumane acts in the crowded wards of the most chronic cases housed at Willowbrook State School on Staten Island. In the wake of the Willowbrook scandal, Bernard Carabello was released into the community, where supports and services did not exist. Seeing the gains made around him by the civil rights movement, the women's movement, and the newly fledged parent movement for the return of institutionalized children to their homes, Carabello started a statewide self-advocacy organization to help people with disabilities empower themselves. "We're not there yet," cautions Carabello. However Adrian Esposito goes on to show that his contemporaries have choices: personalized services, community living, relationships, meaningful activities and good health. A fellow Asperger's interviewee put it this way: "You can't take it with you, so sometimes you have to take whatever gifts are given. That day, you have a coffee with milk in it, that's your success. You don't need to make a million dollars to be successful."



**Paper Tigers: One High School's Unlikely Success Story / directed by James Redford.
KPJR Films, 2015. (102 min.) [Subtitles: Spanish, and SDH]**



There's a reason why communities across Iowa are discussing the film *Paper Tigers* in their schools and mental health resource centers: the movie offers imperiled students an outlet for toxic stress. Begun in Walla Walla, Washington at Lincoln Alternative High School, the ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) model was used with a class of seniors who had prolonged truancy issues, defiant behavior, explosive outbursts, and other behaviors unmanageable in the regular classroom. All teachers and support staff who engaged with the students in Lincoln High were trained in human neurobiology and the tenets of trauma sensitive education. Trauma in the sense that these kids are so hyper-charged with the fight or flight response from exterior stressors (a product of the natural steroid cortisol being released in the body and staying at abnormal peaks) that they cannot relax, they cannot trust, they cannot relate. The aim is for at least one teacher or mentor to get through to the child, engage them, and gain their trust. If one adult can counteract negativity over time, the first positive brain connection is made and the child is on his or her way to a more relaxed state in which learning can occur.

*"Without ambition one starts nothing. Without work one finishes nothing.
The prize will not be sent to you. You have to win it."*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

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