



**VISIONALIST**  
ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTIONS

*WE TELL AMERICA'S STORIES*

[www.v-prod.com](http://www.v-prod.com)

# VISIONALIST

ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTIONS

Visionalist Entertainment Productions, under the direction of Producer/Director Keith Famie, has been producing Emmy award-winning documentary films, as well as impactful, emotionally engaging stories for corporate clients and 501c3 organizations since 2006.

Our team of producers, video photographers, graphic artists, and editors, are incredibly passionate about what we do, from the initial creative process, to the launch of our films at a sold-out community premiere. Our philosophy is always the same - what is the story, why should someone care, and how can the journey inspire others. Once we establish these core elements, the magic of the creative process unfolds.

Whether we are working on a PBS special, assisting a client in building brand awareness, or commemorating a remarkable life story, our commitment to high quality storytelling does not change.

Visionalist has proudly amassed a diverse portfolio of work educating the PBS audience on topics like cancer, Alzheimer's disease, and the human aging process. We have paid tribute to the military, celebrated individuals thriving with Down syndrome, honored Detroit's rich history, and presented the Holocaust in a way that resonates with younger generations. Our dedication to crafting emotionally engaging narratives is what sets us apart.

As part of our commitment to the community, Visionalist actively supports local charities by bringing their stories to life for their own use. We believe in the power of storytelling to create positive change and are honored to contribute to the missions of these organizations.

At Visionalist Entertainment Productions, we are more than filmmakers – we are storytellers driven by purpose and passion. We tell America's stories.





## **Keith Famie** **Director/Producer/Author**

Director/Producer Keith Famie was, for many years, known as a celebrity chef and a metro Detroit restaurateur. He was selected as one of America's "Best New Chefs" in 1989 by Food and Wine magazine; Esquire Magazine chose his restaurants as "Best New Restaurant" in America on two separate occasions. Famie was also a finalist on the 2001 reality television series, "Survivor, the Australian Outback."

Keith hosted his own Food Network series, "Keith Famie's Adventures," traveling the world documenting cooking styles from the plains of Africa to monk monasteries of Taiwan, to the lifestyle of Key West. In 2004, the Adventure Chef embarked on a new journey - documentary filmmaking. "I didn't want to be the 'Adventure Chef' guy anymore. I wanted to help people tell their stories."

Since that life-changing decision, Famie has been awarded twelve Michigan Emmys and been nominated several other times for his rich, human-interest storytelling, from ethnic documentaries to military tribute films. He and his team at Visionalist Entertainment Productions create informative, entertaining films that touch a wide audience.

Along with documentary filmmaking, Famie has released several books throughout his career, *Famie's Adventures in Cooking* (2001), *You Really Haven't Been There Until You've Eaten the Food* (2003), *Living Through the Lens* (2019), and *Papa's Rules for Life* (2021).

Outside of documentary production, Keith is involved in charitable projects. In 2003, Keith finished the 25th anniversary Ironman Triathlon World Championship in Kona with Team In Training for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. In 2015, he was awarded the 2015 Diamond Award by the Association for Women in Communications Detroit Chapter. In 2017, Keith was presented the Media Award by the Gilda's Club of Metro Detroit, and in 2023, Keith was awarded a Dove Award from The Arc of Oakland County for Media Distinction. Over the years, Keith has been actively involved in several well-respected, Michigan-based 501(c)(3) organizations that support everything from children with cancer and hunger relief to veterans' issues.

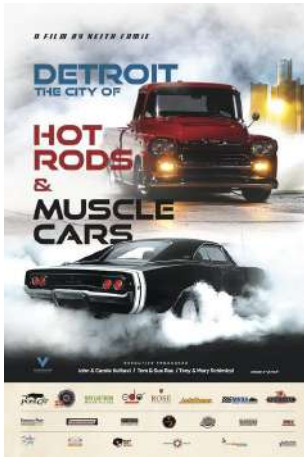
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## Visionalist Entertainment Productions

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### Documentaries:



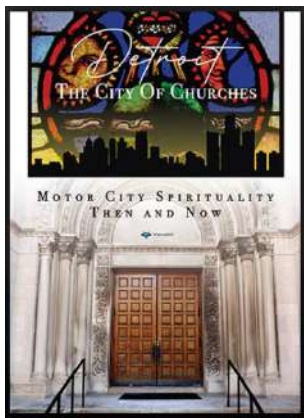
**Title:** Detroit: The City of Hot Rods & Muscle Cars (2023)

**Description:** The significance the many Detroit churches and houses of worship played on some of the most iconic moments in Detroit's history.

**Length:** 90 minutes

**Broadcast:** Detroit Public Television/PBS

**Buy DVD:** [https://detroitcityofchurches.com/pdf/DCOC\\_DVD.pdf](https://detroitcityofchurches.com/pdf/DCOC_DVD.pdf)



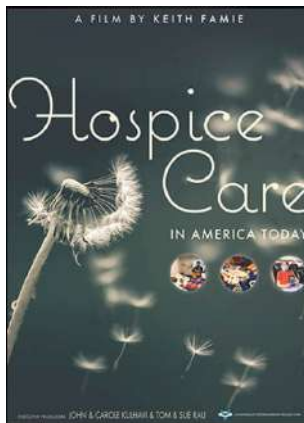
**Title:** Detroit: The City of Churches (2022)

**Description:** The significance the many Detroit churches and houses of worship played on some of the most iconic moments in Detroit's history.

**Length:** 90 minutes

**Broadcast:** Detroit Public Television/PBS

**Buy DVD:** [https://detroitcityofchurches.com/pdf/DCOC\\_DVD.pdf](https://detroitcityofchurches.com/pdf/DCOC_DVD.pdf)



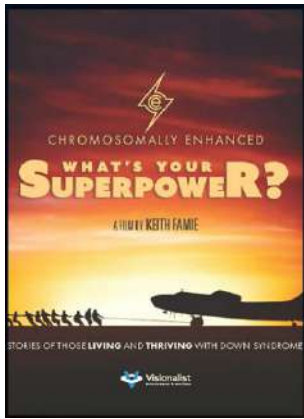
**Title:** Hospice Care in America Today (2022)

**Description:** An in-depth look at how hospice has historically changed the way we approach caring for those who are dying in today's society.

**Length:** 60 minutes

**Broadcast:** Detroit Public Television/PBS





**Title:** Chromosomally Enhanced: What's Your Superpower? (2022)

**Description:** A story of those living and thriving with Down Syndrome.

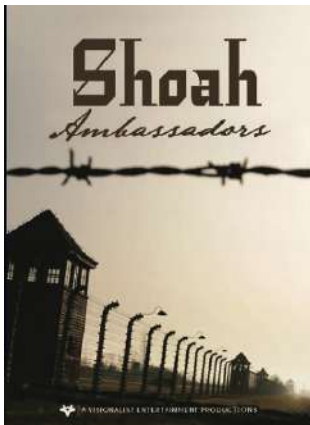
**Length:** 60 minutes

**Broadcast:** Detroit Public Television/PBS

**Awards:** Best Documentary - Grand Rapids Film Festival

**Buy DVD:** <https://whatisyoursuperpowerfilm.com/order.html>

**Streaming:** <https://chromosomallyenhancedwhatisyoursuperpower.vhx.tv>



**Title:** Shoah Ambassadors (2021)

**Description:** Bridging the chasm between the generation who endured the nightmare of World War II and today's bright-eyed, tech-savvy youths who may have only a limited grasp of what their elders suffered.

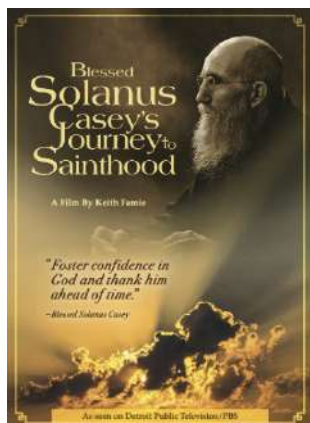
**Length:** 60 minutes

**Broadcast:** Detroit Public Television/PBS

**Awards:** Emmy Awards - Best Director, Best Lighting, Best Editing  
Best Documentary - Toronto Indie Filmmakers Festival

**Buy DVD:** [https://shoahambassadors.com/pdf/Shoah\\_OrderForm.pdf](https://shoahambassadors.com/pdf/Shoah_OrderForm.pdf)

**Streaming:** <https://shoahambassadors.vhx.tv>



**Title:** Blessed Solanus Casey's Journey to Sainthood (2019)

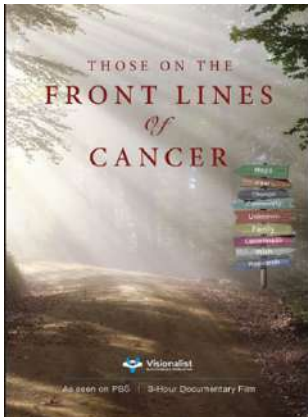
**Description:** How does a humble boy from Irish Immigrant parents rise to the rare and distinguished honor of beatification?

**Length:** 60 minutes

**Broadcast:** Detroit Public Television/PBS

**Buy DVD:** <http://solanusjourney.com/#dvd>

**Streaming:** <https://blessedsolanuscasaysjourneytosainthood.vhx.tv>



**Title:** Those on the Front Lines of Cancer (2019)

**Description:** Can the uncommon journey that cancer patients undergo result in anything positive?

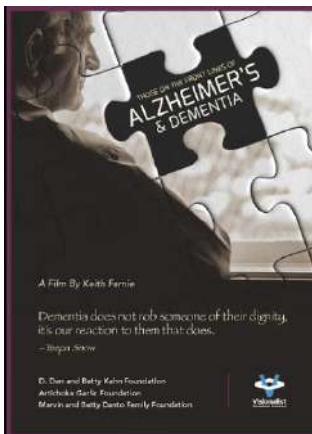
**Length:** 120 minutes

**Broadcast:** Detroit Public Television/PBS

**Buy DVD:**

[http://ontodaysfrontlines.com/cancer/pdf/TOTFLOCancer\\_DVDOrder.pdf](http://ontodaysfrontlines.com/cancer/pdf/TOTFLOCancer_DVDOrder.pdf)

**Streaming:** <https://thoseonthefrontlinesofcancer.vhx.tv>



**Title:** Those on the Front Lines of Alzheimer's & Dementia (2018)

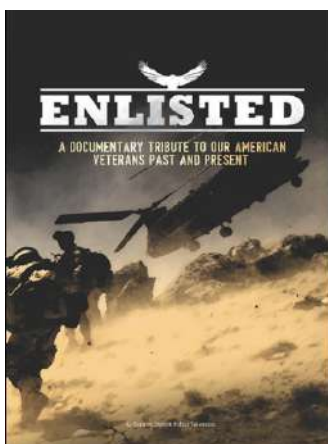
**Description:** What can be done to stop this truly devastating disease?

**Length:** 180 minutes

**Broadcast:** Detroit Public Television/PBS

**Buy DVD:** <http://ontodaysfrontlines.com/alzheimers/pdf/DVDOrder.pdf>

**Streaming:** <https://totfload.vhx.tv>



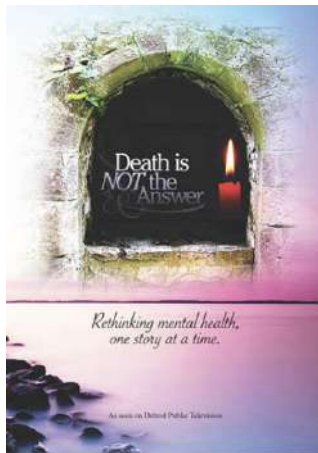
**Title:** Enlisted (2018)

**Description:** Choice. Adventure. Growth. Why would one enlist in the military?

**Length:** 60 minutes

**Broadcast:** Detroit Public Television/PBS

**Buy DVD:** [http://enlistedfilm.com/pdf/Enlisted\\_DVD\\_OrderForm.pdf](http://enlistedfilm.com/pdf/Enlisted_DVD_OrderForm.pdf)



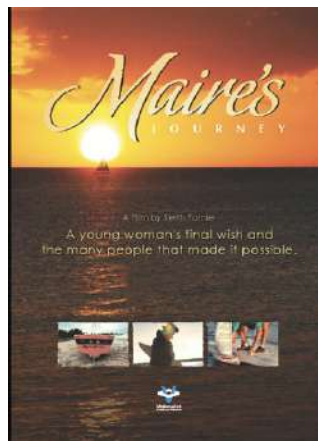
**Title:** Death is NOT the Answer (2017)

**Description:** A deep look into the complex world of depression and suicide.

**Length:** 120 minutes

**Broadcast:** Detroit Public Television/PBS

**Buy DVD:** <http://deathisnottheanswer.com/pdf/DVDform.pdf>



**Title:** Maire's Journey (2016)

**Description:** Follow Maire Kent as she sets sail on an epic journey to fulfill her dying wish.

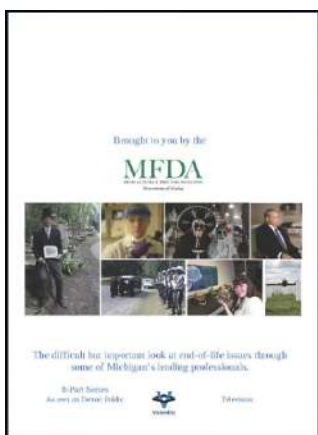
**Length:** 46 minutes

**Broadcast:** Detroit Public Television/PBS

**Awards:** Best Editing - DOUTAH International Film Festival

**Buy DVD:** [http://mairesjourney.com/pdf/DVD\\_Order\\_MJ.pdf](http://mairesjourney.com/pdf/DVD_Order_MJ.pdf)

**Streaming:** <https://mairesjourney.vhx.tv>



**Title:** The Embrace of Dying (2015)

**Description:** 8-part series on how we deal with the end of life

**Length:** 8 episodes - 30 minutes per episode

**Broadcast:** Detroit Public Television/PBS

**Buy series:**

[http://embraceofaging.com/Dying/PDF/TEOD\\_DVD\\_Order\\_Form.pdf](http://embraceofaging.com/Dying/PDF/TEOD_DVD_Order_Form.pdf)



**Title:** The Embrace of Aging: The Female Perspective of Growing Old (2013)

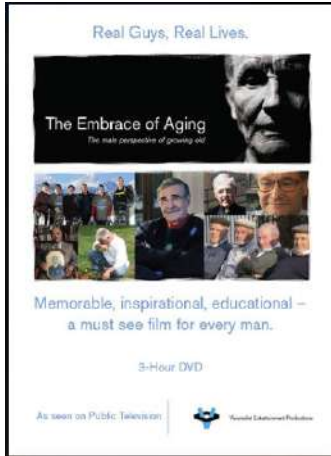
**Description:** 13-part series on women and aging

**Length:** 13 episodes - 30 minutes per episode

**Broadcast:** Detroit Public Television/PBS

**Awards:** Emmy Award - Best Director: Post-Production

**Buy series:** [http://embraceofaging.com/Women/embrace\\_female.html](http://embraceofaging.com/Women/embrace_female.html)



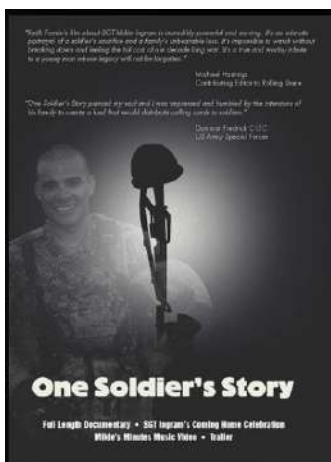
**Title:** The Embrace of Aging: The Male Perspective of Growing Old (2012)

**Description:** 7-part series on men and aging

**Length:** 7 episodes - 30 minutes per episode

**Broadcast:** Detroit Public Television/PBS

**Buy series:** [http://embraceofaging.com/Men/embrace\\_male.html](http://embraceofaging.com/Men/embrace_male.html)

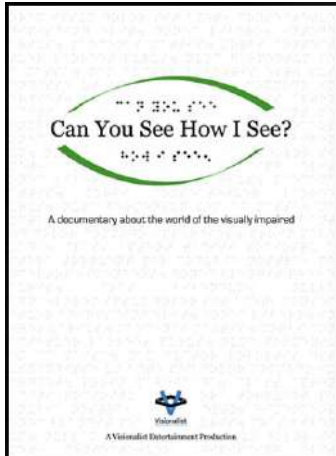


**Title:** One Soldier's Story (2011)

**Description:** The profound story of Sgt. Michael Ingram, Jr. and his legacy.

**Length:** 60 minutes

**Broadcast:** Detroit Public Television/PBS



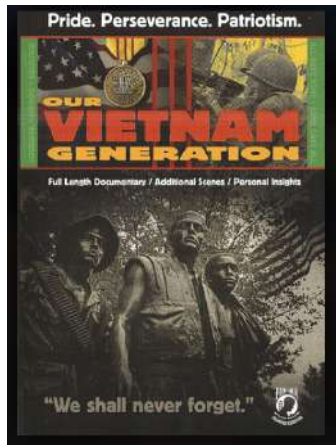
**Title:** Can You See How I See? (2011)

**Description:** An inspiring look into the life of those in our society who are without sight.

**Length:** 60 minutes

**Broadcast:** Detroit Public Television/PBS

**Buy DVD:** <http://www.canyouseehowisee.com>



**Title:** Our Vietnam Generation (2011)

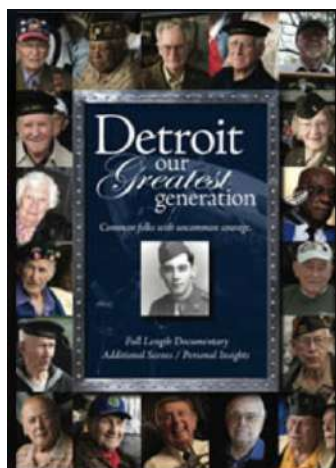
**Description:** A long overdue welcome home to the men and women who served during Vietnam.

**Length:** 110 minutes

**Broadcast:** Detroit Public Television/PBS

**Awards:** Emmy Award - Best Documentary Historical

**Buy DVD:** <http://ourvietnamgeneration.com>



**Title:** Detroit: Our Greatest Generation (2009)

**Description:** A tribute to our Michigan WWII veterans, both men and women, who fought for the freedom of our families and our country.

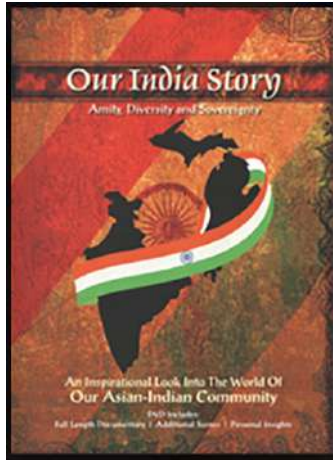
**Length:** 180 minutes

**Broadcast:** Detroit Public Television/PBS

**Awards:** Emmy Award - Best Editor

**Buy DVD:** <http://www.detroitgreatestgeneration.com>





**Title:** Our India Story (2008)

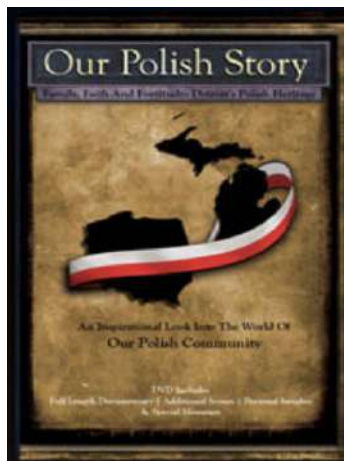
**Description:** Amity, diversity, and sovereignty - Detroit's Indian Heritage

**Length:** 60 minutes

**Broadcast:** Detroit Public Television/PBS

**Awards:** Emmy Award - Best Documentary Cultural

**Buy DVD:** <http://www.ourstoryof.com/india/index.html>



**Title:** Our Polish Story (2007)

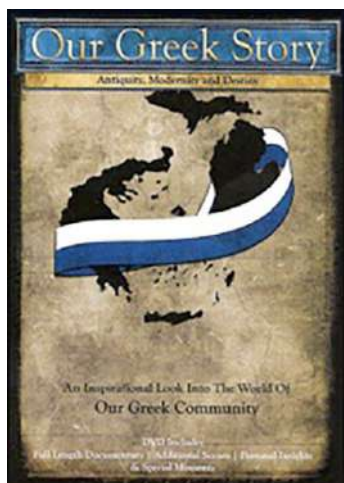
**Description:** Family, faith, and fortitude - Detroit's Polish Heritage

**Length:** 60 minutes

**Broadcast:** Detroit Public Television/PBS

**Awards:** Emmy Award - Best Director: Post-Production

**Buy DVD:** [https://v-prod.com/order\\_forms/Polish\\_DVD\\_order\\_form.pdf](https://v-prod.com/order_forms/Polish_DVD_order_form.pdf)



**Title:** Our Greek Story (2007)

**Description:** Antiquity, modernity, and destiny - Detroit's Greek Heritage

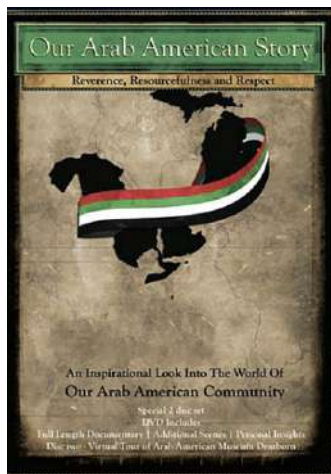
**Length:** 60 minutes

**Broadcast:** Detroit Public Television/PBS

**Awards:** Emmy Award - Best Cultural Documentary, Best Human-Interest Program Special

**Buy DVD:** [https://v-prod.com/order\\_forms/Greek\\_DVD\\_form.pdf](https://v-prod.com/order_forms/Greek_DVD_form.pdf)





**Title:** Our Arab American Story (2007)

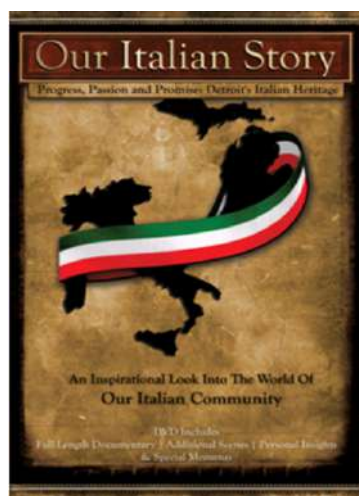
**Description:** Reverence, resourcefulness, and respect - Detroit's Arab American Heritage

**Length:** 60 minutes

**Broadcast:** Detroit Public Television/PBS

**Awards:** Emmy Award - Societal Concerns Program Special

**Buy DVD:** <http://www.ourstoryof.com/arabic/index.html>



**Title:** Our Italian Story (2006)

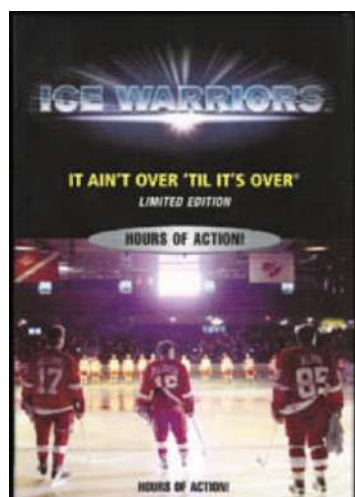
**Description:** Progress, passion, and promise - Detroit's Italian Heritage

**Length:** 60 minutes

**Broadcast:** Detroit Public Television/PBS

**Awards:** Emmy Awards - Best Human Interest Special, Best Director

**Buy DVD:** [https://v-prod.com/order\\_forms/Italian\\_DVD\\_form.pdf](https://v-prod.com/order_forms/Italian_DVD_form.pdf)



**Title:** Ice Warriors (2006)

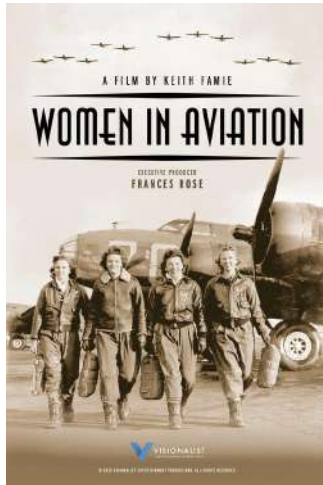
**Description:** An action-packed journey with the Red Wings Alumni team through Russia.

**Length:** 60 minutes

**Broadcast:** Detroit Public Television/PBS

**Buy DVD:** [https://v-prod.com/order\\_forms/IceWarriors\\_DVD\\_form.pdf](https://v-prod.com/order_forms/IceWarriors_DVD_form.pdf)

## **Documentary Shorts:**



**Title:** Women in Aviation (2022)

**Description:** Four Michigan female pilots tell the history of the courageous women that flew before them and reveal a bright future of possibilities for aspiring young girls in aviation.

**Length:** 11 minutes

**Broadcast:** Film festivals



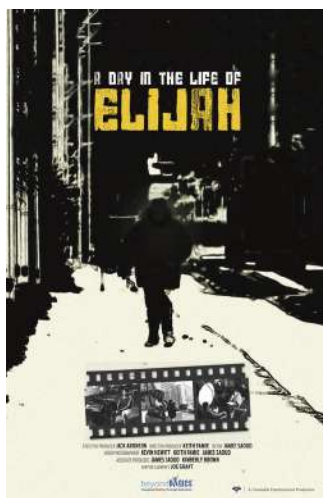
**Title:** Bear and Fred (2021)

**Description:** Michigan student, Hailey Callahan, visits Holocaust survivor Fred Lessing in his home after meeting him at the Holocaust Memorial Center. Fred shares his story of how his boyhood teddy bear was his only family while hiding in Holland and reads an excerpt from a children's book that was written about him and his bear. This story is featured in our hour-long film, Shoah Ambassadors.

**Length:** 12 minutes

**Broadcast:** Film festivals

**Awards:** Royal Starr Film Festival, International Independent Film Awards, Los Angeles Movie Awards



**Title:** A Day in the Life of Elijah (2017)

**Description:** Step into the life of 17-year-old Elijah Craft, from Detroit who shares his quest to learn how to read as a senior in high school after being tested to find out he was below a third grade reading level. Elijah's love for his mother and dedication to better himself is heartwarming and inspirational.

**Length:** 18 minutes

**Broadcast:** Film festivals

## **Food Network:**

**Title:** Keith Famie's Adventures in Cooking (2002)

**Description:** Television reality series hosted by Chef Keith Famie exploring culture and culinary dishes from around the world.

**Length:** (28) 30-minute episodes + (4) 60-minute specials

**Broadcast:** The Food Network



### **Episodes:**

Keith Famie's Adventures - Seattle - Ep. 1  
Keith Famie's Adventures - Bora Bora - Ep. 2  
Keith Famie's Adventures - Michigan - Ep. 3  
Keith Famie's Adventures - Wild Australia - Ep. 4  
Keith Famie's Adventures - Memphis - Ep. 5  
Keith Famie's Adventures - Mexico/s Mercados - Ep. 6  
Keith Famie's Adventures - Vietnam Rediscovered - Ep. 7  
Keith Famie's Adventures - Albuquerque Balloon Fest - Ep. 8  
Keith Famie's Adventures - Wisconsin Secrets - Ep. 9  
Keith Famie's Adventures - Makaloa, Hawaii - Ep. 10  
Keith Famie's Adventures - Baja - Ep. 11  
Keith Famie's Adventures - Jamaica - Ep. 12  
Keith Famie's Adventures - A Fish is a Fish - Ep. 13  
Keith Famie's Adventures - Quebec - Ep. 14  
Keith Famie's Adventures - Sturgis Race & Rally - Ep. 15  
Keith Famie's Adventures - Ultimate Resorts, Ultimate Foods - Ep. 16  
Keith Famie's Adventures - Philly - Ep. 17  
Keith Famie's Adventures - Toronto - Ep. 18  
Keith Famie's Adventures - Cooking with Mom - Ep. 19  
Keith Famie's Adventures - South Beach - Ep. 20  
Keith Famie's Adventures - Journey Home to Mexico - Ep. 21  
Keith Famie's Adventures - Denver - Ep. 22  
Keith Famie's Adventures - Cosmopolitan Australia - Ep. 23  
Keith Famie's Adventures - Bangkok to Hanoi - Ep. 24  
Keith Famie's Adventures - Key West - Ep. 25  
Keith Famie's Adventures - Milwaukee - Ep. 26  
Keith Famie's Adventures - Paris - Ep. 27  
Keith Famie's Adventures - Isle of Crete - Ep. 28



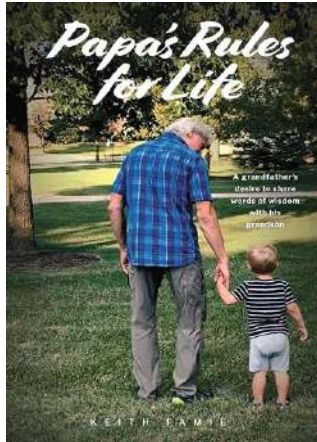
### **Food Network Specials:**

Keith Famie's Adventures - Africa – Special #1  
Keith Famie's Adventures - Tahiti – Special #2  
Keith Famie's Adventures - France – Special #3  
Keith Famie's Adventures - Greece – Special #4

### **WDIV/NBC Affiliate Specials:**

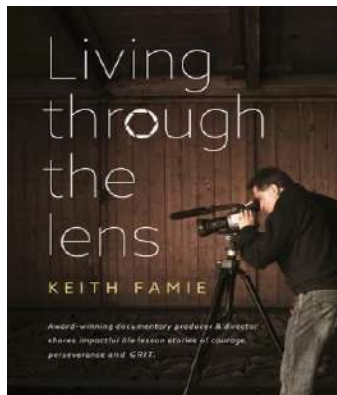
Journey Home to Mexico  
From Hanoi to China Beach: A Taste of the Exotic  
Famie's Wild Aussie Adventures

## Books:



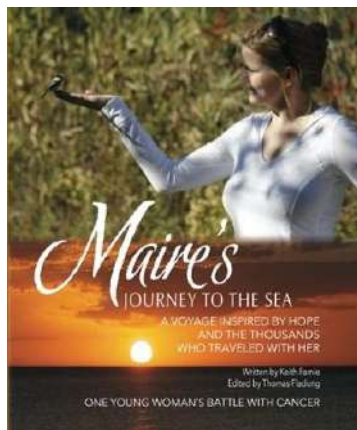
**Title:** Papa's Rules for Life (2021)

**Description:** A grandfather's desire to share words of wisdom with his grandson



**Title:** Living Through the Lens (2019)

**Description:** Famie shares poignant memories of his years in the public eye and those of his subsequent career as a filmmaker.



**Title:** Maire's Journey to the Sea (2016)

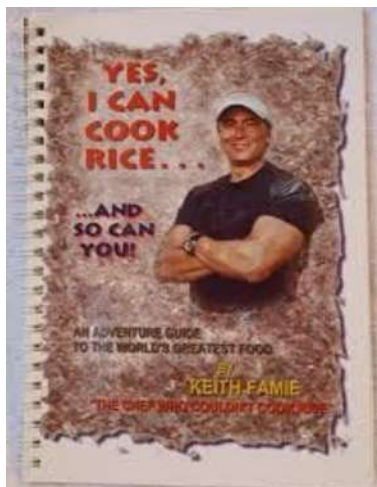
**Description:** What began as a documentary interview evolved into great friendship as 23-year-old Maire, who was facing a lonely final year on earth, found genuine care and concern in documentary filmmaker Keith Famie.





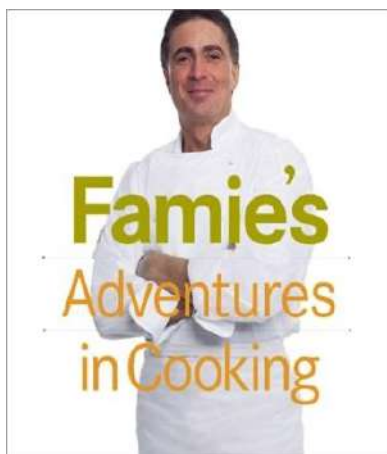
**Title:** You Really Haven't Been There Until You've Eaten the Food (2003)

**Description:** A whirlwind of adventure around the globe, sampling the food and culture from extraordinary places like Bora-Bora and the Australian Outback to North American cities, such as Memphis, Seattle, and Quebec. No matter the destination, Famie serves up a grand experience.



**Title:** Yes, I Can Cook Rice... And So Can You! (2001)

**Description:** As the infamous "chef who couldn't cook rice" in the Australian Outback on Survivor II, Keith Famie will have you know that he can dish out more than Uncle Ben's or Minute Rice. To prove it, Famie authored this fun cookbook to prove to the Survivor fan and world alike, "Yes, I can cook rice."



**Title:** Keith Famie's Adventures in Cooking (2001)

**Description:** The recipes in this cookbook have been simmering for many years and include dishes from the chef's early adventures in Michigan to such exotic lands as Vietnam, Spain, and Morocco.

# EMMY AWARD-WINNING VISIONALIST ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTIONS

WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1997 BY PRODUCER / DIRECTOR KEITH FAMIE. SINCE THESE EARLY YEARS, FAMIE AND HIS TEAM HAVE PRODUCED A WIDE RANGE OF PRIMETIME PROGRAMS.

## DOCUMENTARIES

- Ice Warriors (2005)** An action-packed journey with the Detroit Red Wings' Alumni team through Russia.
- Our Italian Story (2006)** Progress, passion and promise – Detroit's Italian heritage.
- Our Arab American Story (2007)** Reverence, resourcefulness and respect- Detroit's Arab American Heritage.
- Our Greek Story (2007)** Antiquity, modernity, and destiny- Detroit's Greek Heritage.
- Our Polish Story (2007)** Family, faith and fortitude- Detroit's Polish Heritage.
- Our India Story (2008)** Amity, diversity and sovereignty- Detroit's Indian Heritage.
- Detroit: Our Greatest Generation (2009)** A tribute to our Michigan WWII veterans, both men and women, who fought for the freedom of our families and our country.
- Our Vietnam Generation (2011)** A long overdue welcome home to the men and women who served during Vietnam.
- Can You See How I See? (2011)** An inspiring look into the life of those who are without sight.
- One Soldier's Story (2011)** the profound story of Sgt. Michael Ingram, Jr. and his legacy.
- The Embrace of Aging: Men's Series (2012)** 13-part series on men and 7-part series on women.
- The Embrace of Aging: Women's Series (2014)** 13-part series on women and 7-part series on men.
- The Embrace of Dying (2015)** 8-part series on how we deal with the end of life.
- Maire's Journey (2016)** Follow Maire Kent as she sets sail on an epic journey to fulfill her dying wish.
- Death is NOT the Answer (2016)** A deep look into the complex world of depression and suicide.
- Enlisted (2017)** Choice. Adventure. Growth. Why would one enlist in the military?
- Those on the Front Lines of Alzheimer's & Dementia (2018)** What can be done to stop this truly devastating disease?
- Those on the Front Lines of Cancer (2019)** Can the uncommon journey that cancer patients undergo result in anything positive?
- Blessed Solanus Casey's Journey to Sainthood (2019)** How does a humble boy from Irish immigrant parents rise to the rare and distinguished honor of beautification?
- Shoah Ambassadors (2021)** Bridging the chasm of the younger generation of today with that of the Holocaust generation through the exploration journey that two young non-Jewish individuals go on.
- Hospice Care in America Today (2022)** Where did Hospice originate? Why is this service so important for end of life care?
- Chromosomally Enhanced: What's Your Superpower? (2022)**  
A story of those living and thriving with Down Syndrome.
- Detroit: The City of Churches (2022)** The significance the many Detroit churches played on some of the most iconic moments in Detroit's history.
- Detroit: The City of Hot Rods & Muscle Cars (2023)** A celebration of the unique Detroit hot rod & muscle car community & how Motor City iron has circumnavigated the globe & shaped world culture.

## MICHIGAN EMMY AWARD WINNERS

- Taste of Taiwan (2006)**  
On-Camera Talent – Keith Famie
- Our Italian Story (2006)**  
Best Human Interest Special, Best Director
- Our Polish Story (2007)**  
Best Director: Post-Production
- Our Greek Story (2007)**  
Best Cultural Documentary,  
Best Human Interest Program Special
- Our Arab American Story (2007)**  
Societal Concerns Program Special
- Our India Story (2008)**  
Best Documentary Cultural
- Detroit: Our Greatest Generation (2009)**  
Best Editor
- Our Vietnam Generation (2011)**  
Best Documentary Historical
- The Embrace of Aging: The Female Perspective of Growing Old (2014)**  
Best Director: Post-Production
- Shoah Ambassadors (2021)**  
Best Director, Best Lighting, Best Editing
- Chromosomally Enhanced: What's Your Superpower? (2022)**  
Best Human Interest - Long Form Content
- Detroit: The City of Churches (2022)**  
Best Director, Best Editing, Best Photography, Best Lighting

## PRODUCTIONS IN 2023 / 2024

- Detroit: The City by The River:** A journey up and down our beloved Detroit River, to uncover the richness of the past and gain a better understanding of where the river's meandering course will take us in the future.
- Fork in the Road:** Step into the lives of children who are thrust into the world of foster care through a series of life circumstances they had nothing to do with.
- The Razor's Edge:** A day in the lives of those that live on the razor's edge of society who face poverty and survival every day with many calling the streets their home.
- Detroit: The City of Faith:** Shining the light on the Christian community and those early immigrants who made their way to the Motor City in search of the American dream.
- Detroit: The City of Chefs:** The unfiltered story of Detroit's culinary heritage.

## AWARDS & HONORS

2016 - **Maire's Journey**- DOCUTAH 2016 – International Documentary Film Festival–Winner

### 2021 - Shoah Ambassadors-

- Toronto Indie Filmmakers Festival - Best Feature Documentary - Winner
- SR Socially Relevant Film Festival NY– Honorable Mention
- Tokyo International Short Film Festival– Honorable Mention
- Austin Lift-Off Film Festival– Official Selection
- LA Documentary Film Festival– Official Selection
- Miami Jewish Festival–Official Selection
- Santa Monica Film Festival– Official Selection
- Malibu Film Festival– Official Selection

### 2022 - Chromosomally Enhanced: What's Your Superpower?-

- Grand Rapids Film Festival - Award Winner





# Client Endorsements

It has been an honor to have worked closely with so many leading organizations and members of our community.





STATE OF MICHIGAN  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE  
LANSING

RICK SNYDER  
GOVERNOR

BRIAN CALLEY  
LT. GOVERNOR

October 26, 2011

Mr. Keith Famie  
Visualist Entertainment Productions  
28345 Beck Road, Suite 404  
Wixom, Michigan 48393

Dear Mr. Famie:

On behalf of the state of Michigan, I would like to recognize and thank you for your valuable contribution to honoring the sacrifices of Michigan Soldiers through the documentary film "One Soldier's Story."

We greatly appreciate that you so generously contributed your time to produce and make public the emotional and inspiring story of Sgt. Michael Ingram, a fallen Michigan hero killed in action while serving his country in Afghanistan. The film offers a rare look at the emotional journey of a family facing the loss of a son by illustrating his life through his decision to join the Army, to the ultimate sacrifice he made for his country and the honors he received when his remains returned home.

We also recognize the film's contribution to the charity created in honor of Sgt. Ingram, called *Mikie's Minutes*, started by the Ingram family on behalf of their son. *Mikie's Minutes* is a division of *Others First*, a 501c3 tax deductible non-profit organization that provides free calling cards to members of the United States Armed Forces, enabling them to call their families anytime, anywhere.

Thank you again for your important work on behalf of our past and current service men and women.

Sincerely,

Rick Snyder  
Governor

cc Michael and Julie Ingram  
Patricia and Ron Kitts

RS/sb



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
LANSING

JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM  
GOVERNOR

JOHN D. CHERRY, JR.  
LT. GOVERNOR

December 13, 2009

Mr. Keith Famie  
Executive Producer/Director  
Detroit: Our Greatest Generation  
Visionalist Entertainment Productions  
28345 Beck Road, Suite 404  
Wixom, MI 48393

Dear Keith:

It is our great pleasure to congratulate you on the premier of your film "Detroit: Our Greatest Generation," and we want to thank you for recognizing and paying tribute to the contributions and sacrifices made by Detroit's WW II veterans.

Everyday, more than one thousand World War II veterans pass away, and in less than a decade, nearly all of these brave souls will be gone. As their voices fall silent, so do their stories. That is why your film, which captures their memories in their own words and preserves them for generations to come, is so important.

More than 60 years ago, these brave men and women defended democracy in a critical fight for freedom; and today, they continue to make our country and our state proud. Certainly, these patriots have earned and deserve our highest praise.

On behalf of the citizens of Michigan, we humbly salute Our Greatest Generation.

Sincerely yours,



Jennifer M. Granholm  
Governor



John D. Cherry, Jr.  
Lt. Governor

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

December 15, 2011

Mr. Keith Famie  
Suite 404  
28345 Beck Road  
Wixom, Michigan 48393

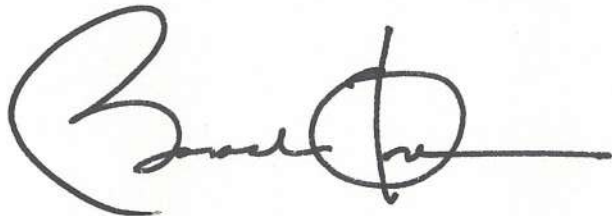
Dear Keith:

Thank you for sending me a copy of *One Soldier's Story*.

I am humbled by the legacies of our Nation's fallen heroes, and stories like this serve as reminders that our fallen service members live on in the acts of courage they inspired, the freedoms they protected, and the selfless principles they embodied. In their memory, we must fulfill our solemn obligation to serve America's troops and veterans as well as they have served us.

I will keep Sergeant Ingram's family in my thoughts and prayers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be Barack Obama's signature, written in a cursive style.



OFFICE OF THE CARDINAL

ARCHDIOCESE OF DETROIT

1234 WASHINGTON BLVD.

DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48226

August 11, 2008

Mr. Keith Famie  
Executive Producer  
Visionalist Entertainment Productions  
28345 Beck Road  
Suite 404  
Wixom, Michigan 48393

Dear Mr. Famie:

Thank you for your letter of June 11, 2008 concerning the well-deserved Emmy award for "Our Polish Story." I have seen the finished product and was most impressed with the results. You have made a tremendous contribution to Polonia and the community at large through telling a truly great story.

Asking God's continued blessings on your future endeavors, I remain

*"Our Polish Story"  
is a little treasure  
for me. Thanks  
and God Bless!!!  
ACM*

Sincerely yours in the Lord,

*+ Adam Cardinal Maida*

Adam Cardinal Maida  
Archbishop of Detroit

ACM/dlh





AMERICAN FRIENDS OF  
THE ROYAL FOUNDATION  
of The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge  
and Prince Harry

February 6, 2017

Mr. Keith Famie  
Executive Producer  
Visionalist Entertainment Productions  
28345 Beck Rd. Suite 404  
Wixom, Michigan 48393

Dear Keith,

Thank you very much for your generosity in producing the film of the inspiring American and British wounded veterans, Ivan Castro and Karl Hinett for the American Friends of The Royal Foundation! It is going to be a hugely valuable resource in our fundraising efforts as they prepare to run side by side in the 2017 Boston Marathon on April 17 and the Virgin Money London Marathon on April 23 in support of Heads Together, the campaign to end the shame and stigma which surrounds mental health, and to raise funds for the mental well-being of veterans on both sides of the Atlantic.

The American Friends of The Royal Foundation is committed to providing help to those who have served their nations in the Armed Forces, and especially those who may have been wounded or injured, or become sick, through their service.

As we build towards the Boston and the Virgin Money London Marathon in April we look forward to keeping you informed of Ivan and Karl's journey.

Thank you once again for your kind support.

With my very best wishes,  
Caroline Oddy

Caroline Oddy  
Executive Director

845 Third Avenue  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10022  
Email: [info@americanfriendsroyalfoundation.com](mailto:info@americanfriendsroyalfoundation.com)  
[www.royalfoundation.com/american-friends](http://www.royalfoundation.com/american-friends)

President:  
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Charles Andrews  
Emily Chen Carrera  
Mimi Drake  
Sir Lucian Grainge  
Virginia Rustique-Petteni  
John Studzinski, CBE





*Il Consolo d'Italia*

*Detroit*

10384  
December 6, 2006

Mr. Keith Famie  
Executive Producer  
Visionalist Entertainment  
P.O. Box 1080  
Novi, MI 48376-1080

Dear Mr. Famie:

I wish to congratulate you on the Flavors of Italy event which you hosted on Sunday, December 3rd. The festivities were well attended and most enjoyable.

In particular, I applaud your fine work on the documentary, "Our Italian Story", which had its premier screening at the event. It was an important retrospective of the thoughts and memories of our Italian and Italian-American community, which still maintains strong ties to Italy.

Thank you again for your kind invitation and my very best wishes to you for a very happy holiday season.

Sincerely,

Dr. Carlo Romeo  
Consul of Italy



**Detroit  
Public TV**



**Riley Broadcast Center**  
1 Clover Court  
Wixom, Michigan 48393

**TEL 248 305 3788**

**FAX 248 305 3988**

October 13, 2022

To: Whom it may concern:  
Re: Filmmaker Keith Famie

I am writing to provide record of my experiences in working with filmmaker Keith Famie and Visionalist Entertainment over the last 20 years. During that time, Keith and I have partnered on no fewer than 20 major projects – film and video production – as well as funding, filming, broadcasting and collaborating on content.

Throughout our time together, we have variously: broadcast his programs that he originated; worked together on funding and national distribution and have even hired his company to produce a major national public television on our behalf, which premieres next month on public tv stations nationwide.

Keith has always delivered a high-quality video product, reliable funding strategies and distributable works, on time and on budget. I wouldn't hesitate to work with Keith again in the future and we are more than grateful to have partnered with him in past.

If you require further information, please don't hesitate to contact me personally.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fred".

Fred Nahhat  
Sr. VP Production  
Detroit PBS  
[fred@dptv.org](mailto:fred@dptv.org)  
248-933-2633



April 26, 2016

Keith Famie, Executive Producer  
Visionalist Entertainment Productions  
28345 Beck Rd.  
Wixom, MI 48393

Dear Keith,

On behalf of everyone here at **Gilda's Club Metro Detroit**, I want to thank you for your poise, professionalism and the care you showed during the filming of "Everyone Needs a Place."

The complexities of cancer care make our 'home' for people facing cancer vital to their healing and wellness. While they are here, we take great care to not ever be intrusive during a time that is just for them. For that reason, we rarely film or photograph support groups or other more personal gatherings.

The courageous families we serve, however, understand that to provide our program at no cost to them, it's important for us to highlight the work we do.

We could not be more grateful for the sensitivity, warmth and professionalism your team showed the members who were in the Clubhouse during the two days of filming. The film is wonderful and conveys so perfectly why *everyone needs a place*.

Our mission is to ensure *no one faces cancer alone*. And we are extraordinarily proud to be surrounded by friends like you who share our passion to make a difference.

Thank you for believing in the vision Gilda Radner had so many years ago that continues to impact thousands of families in southeast Michigan. And thank you for your friendship to Gilda's Club Metro Detroit.

With gratitude,

Laura Varon Brown, Executive Director & CEO  
Gilda's Club Metro Detroit

Gilda's Club Metro Detroit is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation. Your gift is tax deductible to the extent provided by the law.

**Board of Directors**

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Tina Wheeler

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Joseph Gadon

**Executive Director & CEO**

Laura Varon Brown  
248.577.0800 ext. 17  
lvaronbrown@gildasclubdetroit.org

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\*Sherry Medsker  
\*Carol Silverman

\*Deceased

Tax ID: 38-3150211

3517 Rochester Road  
Royal Oak, MI 48073

Phone: 248.577.0800  
Fax: 248.577.0898

www.gildasclubdetroit.org



October 13, 2022

Ford Foundation

Just For Films

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of Keith Famie, Director of Visionalist Entertainment Productions.

I have become acquainted with Keith through his work on the City Churches project for over a year. The project includes the Basilica of Ste. Anne de Detroit as well as diverse number of historical churches in the City of Detroit.

This is a very worthwhile project. I support it and I hope that you will be able to support it as well.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Charles Kosanke". The signature is written in a cursive style and extends across the width of the page.

Rev. Msgr Dr. Charles Kosanke,

Pastor



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
Medical Center  
Detroit, MI 49201

In Reply Refer To: 553/11MH/SP

Dear Mr. Famie,

On behalf of Suicide Prevention Team, we would like to convey our appreciation to you for speaking at our recent Mental Health Summit. Your presentation was enlightening. We appreciate your willingness to answer questions and provide feedback on the difficult topic of suicide. You opened the door to conversation. We have received positive feedback on it from several of the attendees.

Your documentary Death is NOT the Answer will assist us in educating our veterans, staff, family members, and community on the important role we all play in preventing suicide. We appreciate your commitment on making this very important documentary.

We hope to work with you again in the future.

Regards,

Handwritten signature of Kimberly Kemler in black ink.

Kimberly Kemler, LMSW  
Suicide Prevention Coordinator

Handwritten signature of Teena Sawicki in black ink.

Teena Sawicki, LMSW  
Suicide Prevention Coordinator

Handwritten signature of Dawn Garner in black ink.

Dawn Garner  
Suicide Prevention Support Assistant

John D. Dingell Department of Veterans Affairs



# The Rainbow Connection

kids • wishes • hope

February 2, 2024

Dear Keith,

**The Rainbow Connection** would like to thank you for your continued support of our mission – granting wishes to children in Michigan with life-threatening medical conditions. For countless years, you have been a wonderful friend, partner and promoter of our work, and we truly appreciate the dedication that you have provided.

Granting wishes to children is a very special task, and without the support of you and our other community partners, we could not possibly create all of those magical moments for the Wish Children.

In recent films, you have highlighted some of our Wish Children as well as our mission to bring awareness to our organization – and we are so thankful for that.

We appreciate you, your team and your continued drive to share the mission of those that need it most. It has been, and always will be, an honor and a privilege to work with you! The Rainbow Connection is proud to have called you a Board Member, but more importantly, call you our friend.

Have a Rainbow-filled Day!

*Ingrid M. Todt*

Best regards,

Ingrid M. Todt





October 13, 2022

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

To Whom it May Concern,

Please accept this letter of recommendation for Keith Famie and Visionalist Entertainment Productions in Wixom. I have known Keith for more than 30 years. We first met when Keith was owner and chef of Les Auteurs in downtown Royal Oak, in which I wrote a day in the life feature about him in *The Daily Tribune* as a freelance writer in college.

I continued to cover his career, first during my 16 years as a business writer for *The Detroit News*, as well as editor today of *DBusiness* magazine. I rooted him on when he appeared on "Survivors," no small feat when you're stranded on a deserted island with nothing but your grit and wits to get you through. Truly, commendable.

From there, I have watched Keith and his team build an amazing film and production company, having garnered multiple Emmys and other film awards for their work. His latest film, "Detroit: The City of Churches," will be remarkable and serve to drive attention, awareness, and funding for churches built by generations of hardworking men and women, families really.

Keith has created wonderful films over the years, meets his fundraising goals, and has brought joy and education to so many people, from young to old and everyone in between. An American success story, to be sure.

Please feel free to reach out with any questions.

Thank you,

R.J. King  
Editor  
*DBusiness* magazine  
*DBusiness Daily News*  
*Tech and Mobility News*  
*Detroit 500*  
rjking@dbusiness.com



MAKING A DIFFERENCE, ONE TEEN AT A TIME.

October 30, 2016

Dear Keith,

I wanted to thank you and your staff for making such an incredible video to tell our story so that we are able to share it with the community. Everyone was so pleasant and easy to work with and the turn around time on creating our video was incredible.

As we have been able to share our story through video to the community has been an amazing experience and we have received such positive feedback.

Again, thank you for helping us tell our story!

Warmly,

Michelle Soto  
President/Founder

**WISH UPON A TEEN**  
36880 Woodward Ave #106  
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304  
248.792.2938  
[www.wishuponateen.org](http://www.wishuponateen.org)



RABBI E.B. FREEDMAN  
Director

6555 W. MAPLE ROAD  
WEST BLOOMFIELD, MI 48322

TELEPHONE  
248.592.2687

FAX  
248.592.2688

WEB SITE  
[www.jewishhospice.org](http://www.jewishhospice.org)

*Adding the Jewish Component to Hospice Care*

May 15, 2015

Mr. Keith Famie  
Executive Producer  
Visionalist Entertainment Productions  
28345 Beck Road, Suite 404  
Wixom, MI 48393

Dear Mr. Famie:

I am writing today to express our agency's gratitude for the documentary film work you've completed on the topics of aging and dying. In the past year, we have featured your work at two fundraising events, each of which were tremendously successful. We filled the room each time, gave covet to our honorees, and raised funds in excess of \$100,000. Our affinity group, the Grand Circle of Women, has also benefited from these outreach events by building the group's membership and by educating the attendees on the groundbreaking work being done by the diverse and interesting people you interview.

It is my greatest wish *The Embrace Of...* series will continue to find its way into the homes and hearts of people across the country. Your films give awareness and hope to those whose experiences or expectations of aging and dying are negative. The only way to change their perspective is through educational efforts, and your films make that effort easier for the rest of us who work in this business.

Sincerely,

Rabbi E.B. (Bunny) Freedman  
Director

No Jew Is Ever Alone





*Jack Krasula, President*  
28411 Northwestern Highway  
Suite 850, Southfield, MI 48034  
Phone: 248/945/1128  
Fax: 248/945-1129  
jack.krasula@trustinus.com  
www.trustinus.com

November 26, 2018

Mr. Keith Famie  
Visionalist Entertainment Productions  
28345 Beck Road, Suite 404  
Wixom, MI 48393

Dear Keith, Hunter, Ahna & Kevin,

Thank you very, very much for the phenomenal job you all did on the two videos! They simply are unbelievable!

Each of you are Hall of Famers in your craft!

Very seldom in life does something exceed its expectations. This project has!

God Bless!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jack', written over a large, light blue, stylized graphic element that resembles a thick, curved line or a partial circle.

October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022

To whom it may concern,

It is my pleasure to submit a letter of reference on behalf of Keith Famie and the fine staff of Visionalist Entertainment Productions, whom I have been acquainted with for over 40 years and in the last ten years have acted as a co-producer/contributor to a number of his documentaries. Keith's character and integrity are reflected in his documentaries and always portray the best in human nature, while at the same time, leaving the audience with a clear understanding of the subject matter and the message of hope through the real life experiences of others.

I am a sincere believer in the role Keith and his company Visionalist plays in telling the stories of just normal people doing extraordinary things, to change life for the better, for themselves and those around them.

I believe these types of stories need all of our support and I believe that Keith Famie and his staff at Visionalist more than fulfill their mission statement to bring these real life stories of hope and accomplishment to all of us.

Sincerely,  
Anthony Schimizzi





DETROIT ATHLETIC CLUB

241 MADISON AVENUE, DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48226

(313) 963-9200 www.thedac.com Fax: (313) 963-8891

July 24, 2015

Mr. Keith Famie  
Visionalist Entertainment Productions  
P.O. Box 1080  
Novi, MI 48376-1080

Re: "Embrace of Aging" Screening at Detroit Athletic Club

Dear Keith,

On June 12, 2014 the Detroit Athletic Club held a screening of your acclaimed "Embrace of Aging" film. When the lights went down, you captured the audience's attention right through to the credits. It was very well done. Our event centered on the screening with dinner and discussion, advertised as:

*Engage in a screening of "Embrace of Aging: the Female Perspective of Growing Old" by ten-time Michigan Emmy award-winning director and producer Keith Famie. Mingle with members during a strolling dinner, and enjoy a brief presentation by Dr. Lee-Ross who is showcased in the movie.*

Members and guests enjoyed the presentation and speakers as well as entertainment by Jill Jack, who also is featured in the film. The event was attended by 96 people and sparked good discussion and interaction among attendees.

I wish you much success with future screenings of your films.

Best regards,

J.G. Ted Gillary

Executive Manager

# ***SUE MARX FILMS***

October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022

To whom this concerns,

I am sending this letter in support of Keith Famie's request for funding.

I have worked with Keith on a number of important films. He is a very sensitive and talented writer/producer whose films have made and WILL continue to do so in our world.

Sincerely,

Sue Marx  
Sue Marx Films  
Recipient  
1987 Oscar  
"Young at Heart"

October 24, 2017

Dear Keith,

The Family Center is very pleased to work with you again by partnering with you on the upcoming documentary *On the Front Lines of Alzheimer's and Dementia*.

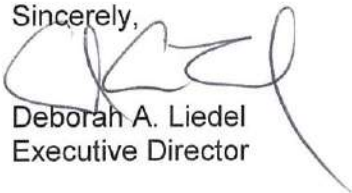
Our previous partnership this past September with you and Kevin's Song resulted in a very successful suicide awareness and prevention program including your film *Death is NOT the Answer*. The event generated very high attendance, and was a great resource for those seeking information on this tragic and confusing topic.

Now, your new film also relates directly to our mission of providing information and programs about life issues vital to today's families, including Alzheimer's. Many in our community are caring for aging parents or loved ones with some kind of dementia, and nationally the statistics are very significant: more than five million Americans are living with Alzheimer's, the most common type of dementia, and by 2050, that number may be as high as 16 million. Many people also face early onset Alzheimer's.

As a result, The Family Center is excited to work with you to help people learn about this very relevant disease with such wide reach and consequences. Together with our partners The War Memorial, The Grosse Pointe News and Pointe Magazine, we look forward to a private showing of the film's long-format trailer at The War Memorial December 6 at 6:30 pm. This event will provide an opportunity to increase awareness and dialog about the disease, and for attendees to learn about available support services, new diagnostics and research.

We also look forward to identifying additional ways we can work together. Thank you for helping The Family Center provide new solutions to existing and emerging challenges families face daily.

Sincerely,



Deborah A. Liedel  
Executive Director



Mr. Keith Famie  
Executive Producer  
Visionalist Entertainment Productions  
USA

Dear Keith Famie,

Thank you very much for sending the DVD copy of your documentary "OUR POLISH STORY." The film is very touching and bring us proud of our nation. It will be included into our film collection and used for educational purposes only.

With kindest regards,

*Edyta Chowaniec*

*Edyta Chowaniec*  
*zbiory audiowizualne- Archiwum/audiovisual collection-Archive*



Ann Arbor District Library

343 South Fifth Avenue  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104-2293  
Phone: 734.327.4200  
Fax: 734.327.8309

December 18, 2017

Dear Mr. Famie,

Thank you very much for bringing your film, "Death is NOT the Answer" to the Ann Arbor District Library on Friday, December 1<sup>st</sup>.

The topic of suicide can be very difficult to discuss, but it is a conversation that we, as a public library, want to help facilitate. Your film certainly helped do that; our Friday evening showing closed with a more than 30-minute discussion lead by our patrons. Thanks to the honest portrayal of the variety of people in the film, our attendees were encouraged to voice their experiences and frustrations, and a very organic and personal discussion ensued.

The film itself was very well put together, and included an agreeable balance of people that have somehow been affected by depression and thoughts of suicide. Members of the audience were reflective of those highlighted in the film, some of which cannot find that same willingness to discuss the topic of suicide and depression in their own communities. Teachers, survivors, siblings, parents and people of faith shared intimate stories and struggles with one another, all of whom who are looking for ways to combat this epidemic.

The Ann Arbor District Library is committed to serving all of its' patrons, and the film screening we collaborated on earlier this month was an excellent example of how that can be done respectfully. I was encouraged by the discourse that took place, and look forward to hosting other films and events surrounding this topic.

Best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Josie B. Parker".

Josie B. Parker  
Director, Ann Arbor District Library  
343 S Fifth Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48104  
[josie@aadl.org](mailto:josie@aadl.org)





380 South Bates  
(The Community House)  
Birmingham, Michigan 48009  
(248) 644-5832

June 8, 2017

Dear Keith,

On behalf of the Senior Men's Club of Birmingham, I would like to thank you for the superb presentation "Living Life Through the Lens" you gave on Friday June 2<sup>nd</sup> at The Community House. It was very enlightening and thought provoking to all our members. They were amazed at your wide experience and expert knowledge from the culinary world, to your achievements on "Survivor", to film directing and producing and the distinguished personalities you met along the way. We also wish to congratulate you on the 11 Emmys you have earned to date.

It is a pleasure to welcome you as a new member of the SMCB. We look forward to your participation in the Club and working with you on your new projects. Through the leadership of Malcolm Hendy, and in cooperation with our Special Events Committee, we eagerly anticipate viewing your new films, "Maire's Journey" and "Enlisted".

Thanks again for a memorable morning. Your presentation was one of the highlights of our 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year. Welcome to our team.

Richard A. Kamp  
President, Senior Men's Club of Birmingham

cc: Malcolm Hendy, Mike Clement, Tim McGee

■ April 10, 2017

College for Creative Studies  
201 E. Kirby  
Detroit MI, 48202

On March 29, 2017, eleven-time Emmy Award winning Producer and Director Keith Famie presented a lecture entitled *The Amazing Journey of Story Telling* at the College for Creative Studies in Detroit, MI. Keith began by recounting his own eclectic personal journey, from acclaimed restaurateur, to celebrity chef, to *Survivor* finalist, to host of his own Food Network series, to documentary filmmaker at Visionalist Entertainment. To begin his presentation, Keith posed a number of questions that are relevant for artists in all disciplines to consider: Why are you doing this? Whom are you serving? How do you get the job done? What qualities should great artists have? In the context of these questions, Keith showed trailers for four of his recent films: *Marie's Journey*, *A Day in the Life of Elijah*, *Death is not the Answer*, and *Grit*. These compelling human interest documentaries delve into the personal stories of people in Michigan who persevere in the face of difficult challenges and struggle to overcome daunting obstacles. "Everyone, everywhere, has a story," Keith said. "The number one rule is, See it, say it; Say it, see it." Keith provided detailed insight into the creation of the films, describing his artistic inspiration, the evolution of the narrative, and the technical aspects of the production process. Keith explained how the stories take on a life of their own during filming, and how he and his team often become emotionally involved with their subjects and personally affected by the relationships they form. Keith's presentation provided a valuable opportunity for students to engage with an accomplished professional artist whose own journey has covered wide-ranging territory. I enjoyed meeting Mr. Famie and learning about his work, and I recommend him as a guest lecturer.

Sincerely,

Douglas Malone  
Chair of Foundations  
College for Creative Studies

---

*Elizabeth Santer*  
*Executive Director Special Services*

---



September 22, 2023

Good evening,

I wanted to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude for your outstanding film *Death is Not The Answer*. Your work touched my heart and had a profound impact on the people who attended the movie screening on September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

The importance of addressing mental health issues, particularly those related to suicide ideation, cannot be overstated. This is especially true in the schools where our students can be exposed to pressures and stressors that can impact their mental health. Your decision to create a film that delves into this complex and often stigmatized topic is admirable. By shedding light on this critical issue, you have helped break down the barriers of silence and shame that too often surround mental health struggles. Your film serves as a symbol of hope for those who may be suffering in silence, letting them know that they are not alone and that help is available.

One of the most appealing features of the film was the diverse range of people you featured. The way you portrayed individuals from various backgrounds and walks of life was truly powerful. It made the film relatable to a broad audience and underscored the fact that mental health issues can affect anyone. This inclusive approach fosters empathy and understanding, which unified our audience.

I also greatly appreciated the inclusion of experts who provided critical information and hope throughout the film. Their insight and guidance not only educated the audience but also instilled a sense of optimism.

Thank you for your courage in tackling such a vital and often misunderstood subject matter and giving a voice to those who need to be heard.

I look forward to seeing more of your thought-provoking work in the future and the positive impact it will undoubtedly have on others-you are truly a gifted storyteller!

Best Regards,

*Beth Santer*

Beth Santer  
Executive Director of Special Services  
Northville Public Schools

*SANDLER FAMILY*

January 28, 2017

Dear Keith,

It is difficult to even put into words the gratitude we feel towards you and your incredible staff of professionals. We never imagined my mom's idea of creating a movie of her life would have become this incredible documentary of her life. Thank goodness she was able to see into the future and know that we needed her wisdom on video.

Keith, when mommy suffered the ruptured brain aneurysm on February 20, 2016 -I think I called you on February 21 and told you to not complete the movie. Against all odds of her not surviving, we all had a feeling that this lady was not finished with life yet. You started to send us clips of what you had filmed of her and those clips gave us hope to keep going. During her 40 days in a coma we watched those clips of her and even played them for her, as she lay in bed- completely unresponsive. That was a true blessing to us and we thank you for doing that for us.

This movie is a testament to our moms love for life, determination, zest, wisdom, courage, and love for her family. You and your crew took the time to get to know my mom and the entire family. This is a video that will be watched for many generations to come. You captured the essence of our mom and we cannot thank you enough for this gift that we will all treasure forever.

Love,

Robin & Gary, Amy & David, Andrea & Larry and Harvey the treasurer

# Media Support

We have developed an important relationship with the local media, enabling us to effectively introduce our films and engage with the community.





## Watch the trailer for upcoming documentary 'Detroit: The City of Chefs'



[Melody Baetens](#)

The Detroit News

Published Sept. 21, 2023

As the Detroit dining scene's future looks bright with new restaurants opening up on a nearly daily basis and local chefs getting name-dropped in national publications on the regular, a new documentary is in the works that aims to look back on our area's culinary past.

“Detroit: The City of Chefs” features interviews with major players who were a part of the restaurant scene in the second half of the 20th century. Director, producer and chef Keith Famie wants to tell the story of Michigan chefs de cuisine, master chefs, food critics, Schoolcraft College's culinary arts program and the impact immigrants had on the dining landscape.



Chef Luciano DelSignore is interviewed for “*Detroit: The City of Chefs*”, a documentary from Keith Famie. *Detroit: The City of Chefs*

## Documentarian Keith Famie Recruiting Sponsors for ‘Detroit: The City of Chefs’

By [Tim Keenan and RJ King](#) - October 13, 2023



CCS student Alexandra Martinescul created these clay figures of chefs Milos Cihelka and Dan Hugelier for “Detroit: The City of Chefs.”  
// Photo courtesy of Keith Famie

### Documentarian Keith Famie Recruiting Sponsors for ‘Detroit: The City of Chefs’

Wixom-based documentarian Keith Famie is offering an opportunity for businesses and foundations to participate in his newest film, “Detroit: The City of Chefs,” and support the work of the Entertainment Arts Department at Detroit’s College for Creative Studies.

The film, which will debut on Detroit Public TV/PBS in the fall of 2024, is now in production and includes clay look-a-likes of some of Detroit’s best-known chefs. CCS is in the process of creating 12 of these full puppet figures that will be used on a custom-created studio set so they can be stop motion animated.

CCS is dedicating a 15-week semester from January-May 2024 to creating an animated story that will open and close the 90-minute film.

“In order for this story to come to life, we need to gain the support from the business and philanthropy community, who are not only excited about Detroit’s and Michigan’s culinary heritage but also appreciate the creative design teachings of one of America’s most respected institutions — The College for Creative Studies,” Famie says.

For more information on how to donate to the film’s production, visit [detroitcityofchefs.com](http://detroitcityofchefs.com)

## “Detroit: The City of Churches” to Premiere on DPTV – PBS Dec. 12th

By Greek News - December 11, 2022



DETROIT, MI – The historic Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Detroit’s Greektown - home of the oldest Greek Orthodox parish [1910] in Michigan, Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky- is one of the city’s 17 iconic houses of worship featured in the 90-minute documentary “Detroit: The City of Churches” that will debut on Detroit Public TV (PBS) at 8 p.m. Dec. 12.

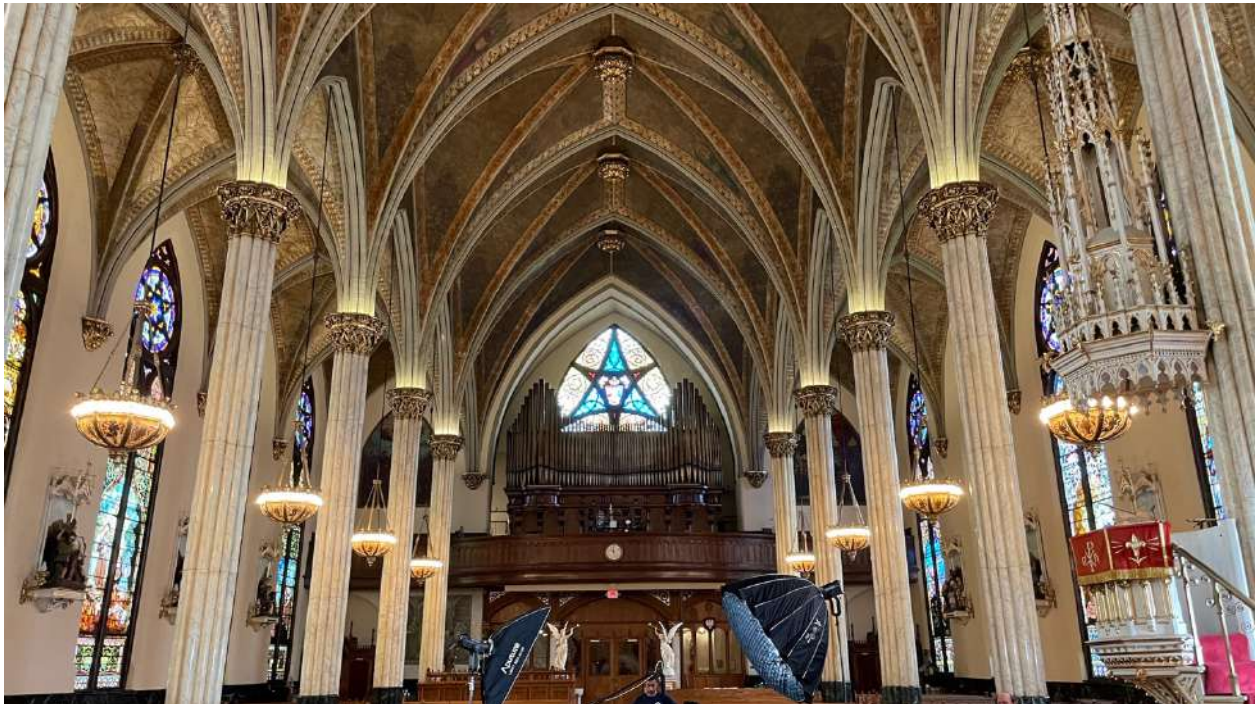
The latest work of Emmy Award-winning director/producer Keith Famie and his Visionalist Entertainment Productions team, introduced by longtime Detroit news personality Chuck Gaidica takes the audience on an in-depth look at Detroit’s history, one that is interestingly connected to iron and steel, from the perspective of its many churches.

At one time, Detroit had more churches per square mile than any other city in the country, serving a population of multiple nationalities and many faiths. “Detroit: The City of Churches” captures the city’s early settlers, as well as the Underground Railroad, automotive boom, and civil rights movement to frame how Detroit’s spiritual leaders, their places of worship, and their congregations helped guide the city as it is known today.



## Highly anticipated documentary 'Detroit: The City of Churches' to debut this week

Gabriella Patti / Dec 8, 2022 / Arts



Award-winning filmmaker Keith Famie and his team set out to tell the story of Detroit through his new documentary, "Detroit: The City of Churches." The film will feature 17 different churches in Detroit, including Sweetest Heart of Mary Catholic Church, pictured above. (Photos courtesy of Keith Famie)

### **Veteran filmmaker Keith Famie's look at Detroit's spiritual heritage will air at 8 p.m. Dec. 12 on Detroit Public Television**

**DETROIT** — Since its inception in 1701, Detroit has been home to hundreds of churches and spiritual congregations. Throughout Detroit's history, these churches have remained stalwart reminders and players in the Motor City's strength and long, rich history.

Veteran filmmaker Keith Famie set out to tell the story of Detroit's history through 17 different churches in a 90-minute documentary special, "Detroit: The City of Churches." After months of

# Leelanau Enterprise

MICHIGAN NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

## PBS car documentary to film in Npt.

Thursday, September 22, 2022

By Meakalia Previch-Liu -- [mea@leelanaunews.com](mailto:mea@leelanaunews.com)



Darin Irvine and his wife, Lynelle, are seen next to the Cars in the Park founder George Irvine's car earlier this year. Irvine and his father's car will be featured in a segment for the upcoming documentary called "Detroit: The City of Hot Rods and Muscle Cars." A number of cars will drive into Haserot Park for the film segment the morning of Oct. 2 to highlight the Leelanau peninsula's collector car culture. Enterprise photo by Meakalia Previch-Liu

A new car documentary in the making set to release on Fathers Day weekend next year will feature a few familiar faces and places from the Northport area.

Keith Famie, metro Detroit native, director, and producer of the upcoming documentary called "Detroit: The City of Hot Rods and Muscle Cars," will be filming in the area at the end of the month, conducting interviews with local car enthusiasts like Darin Irvine, Bill Collins, Jerry Palmer, Keith Ashley and Dan McDavid. The segments highlight the Leelanau peninsula's collector car culture, but the entire project will ultimately capture the unique Detroit muscle car community and how Motor City iron has reached across the globe and shaped world culture.

The final two hour-long film will debut on Detroit Public Television (PBS) as a holiday special in 2023, and will premiere at the Henry Ford, with classic muscle cars and hot rods also on display. With media, community leaders, celebrities, and other supporters present, some of the proceeds from the premiere gala will benefit five local Michigan charities. There are plans to show the film at a location in Leelanau with details of when and where set to release at a later date.



# THE OAKLAND PRESS



Vietnam veterans from left, Robert Middleton, Doug Broquet and Purple Heart recipient David Gurtowsky ride in Perry Smith's red 1971 Oldsmobile Cutlass convertible during filming at the Woodward Dream Cruise for Keith Famie's new documentary, "Detroit: The City of Hot Rods & Muscle Cars." (Photo by Kelsey Gale/Visionalist Entertainment Productions)

By [Sharon Longman](#) | [sslstart@aol.com](mailto:sslstart@aol.com) |  
August 26, 2022

Keith Famie and his Visionalist Entertainment Productions team filmed for the documentary "Detroit: The City of Hot Rods & Muscle Cars" during the Woodward Dream Cruise with Vietnam veterans on Aug. 20.

The new film that will capture the story of Detroit's car culture, now in production by Famie and his team, accelerated filming during the 2022 Woodward Dream Cruise.

The two-hour documentary film is a historical tribute to Detroit's foundation in automation and its evolution, tracking down the original enthusiast, the first shade tree mechanics and car collectors. The love of steel and speed transcends generations, and it also defies the constraints of gender and background. The documentary is a celebration of the unique Detroit hot rod and muscle car community and how Motor City iron has circumnavigated the globe and shaped world culture, according to a press release.

Through this segment, the film introduced the Woodward Dream Cruise which will take the audience down memory lane on what it was like to cruise down Woodward in the 60s and 70s and today. The historical state police coordinated ten car procession was led by a 1965 Ford State Police cruiser escort with 20-year-old Troy from Rainbow Connection. Troy was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia (AML) in June 2021.

# New documentary takes car buffs for a spin

By: [Maria Allard](#) | [Roseville-Eastpointe Eastsider](#) | Published August 7, 2022



From left, veterans Don Kramer, of Mount Clemens; Art Meyer, of Clawson; Dave Zappa, of St. Clair Shores; Walter “Don” Gilbert, of Shelby Township; David Hoffman, of Fort Gratiot; Gerald Horn, of Fraser; Michael O’Neil, of Roseville; and Rich Tweedle, of Clinton Township, stand with their classic cars and hold photographs from their military days at Kennedy Memorial Park in Eastpointe July 21.

Photo by Patricia O’Blenes



The crew films Dave Zappa, of St. Clair Shores. Zappa served in the Army from 1969 to 1971. He drove his 1965 Chevrolet Chevelle Malibu SS Convertible for the filming.

Photo by Patricia O’Blenes

EASTPOINTE — A group of local war veterans got behind their steering wheels July 21 at John F. Kennedy Memorial Park in Eastpointe.

The military men sat down with local filmmaker Keith Famie to be part of his documentary, “Detroit: The City of Hot Rods & Muscle Cars.”

The veterans, who brought their cars with them, shared stories about drag strips, why they spend so much time under the hoods of their vehicles, and serving their country.

Executive producers of the film are Famie, and John and Carole Kulhavi. Famie is a producer, director and author with Visionalist Entertainment Productions in Wixom. He grew up in Farmington Hills and resides in Novi. Famie had a Ford Mustang and a Chevrolet Corvette while growing up.

According to a letter from Fred Nahhat, the senior vice president of production for Detroit Public TV, “Detroit: The City of Hot Rods & Muscle Cars” will premiere “centered around Father’s Day 2023.” According to the letter, there also will be a special preview screening for families, sponsors and those featured in the film.

“Muscle cars didn’t just change Detroit automotive culture,” narrator Chuck Gaidica states in the film trailer. “They reimagined it.”



## DBusiness Daily Update: Locally Produced Hot Rod Documentary Lands Tim Allen, Chip Foose, and More

By Tim Keenan and R.J. King - March 28, 2022



*Notable car guys Tim Allen and Chip Foose will be featured in the “Detroit: A City of Hot Rods and Muscle Cars” documentary. // Courtesy of Keith Famie*

### Locally Produced Hot Rod Documentary Lands Tim Allen, Chip Foose

“Detroit: A City of Hot Rods and Muscle Cars,” a documentary by local filmmaker Keith Famie, will include interviews with celebrity car enthusiast Tim Allen and designer Chris Foose, host of the “Overhaulin” television series and owner of Foose Designs.

Allen’s personal car collection includes an original Shelby Cobra, a 1968 Pontiac GTO, a Dodge Demon, 1932 V8 Ford, vintage and modern Mustang GT350s, a modern Ford GT, a 1996 Chevrolet Impala SS with the LT5 V-8 from a C4 Corvette ZR-1, 1968 Camaro “restomod,” and a modified Nova, and a Tesla Model 3, with which he says he has a “love/hate relationship.”

“I wanted Tim to share his vast knowledge of the impact Detroit had on the world of ‘let’s go faster,’ ‘let’s build it better,’” Famie says. “Allen’s real respect is for those who looked at an everyday ride and said, what if we do this or do that? Will it look better? Could it be faster? Will it handle smoother?”

The footage includes Allen driving his 1950s series 60 Cadillac. While doing so, he made sure Famie and his crew felt the power under the hood of his Caddy as they circled the neighborhood that houses his private collection.

The documentary also will include an interview with Foose, who got his start from watching his father, Sam Foose, a self-taught master welder, painter, and panel beater who displayed extraordinary mechanical skills.

“Throughout the interview, Foose was sketching and when our interview came to an end, he held up what took him a very short time to create: a tribute to Detroit with the line, ‘You know, whether it’s a muscle car, a hot rod, a pickup truck, no matter what it is. They all have one thing in common. They’re all born in Detroit,’” Famie says.

Home > Daily News

Daily News

# DBusiness Daily Update: Two New Keith Famie Detroit Documentaries Are in Production, and More

Our roundup of the latest news from metro Detroit and Michigan businesses as well as announcements from government agencies, including updates about the COVID-19 pandemic. To share a business or nonprofit story, please send us a message.

By **Tim Keenan** and **R.J. King** - January 11, 2022

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*Rev. Lawrence Rodgers of the Second Baptist Church in Detroit discusses the Underground Railroad for "Detroit: City of Churches." // Courtesy of Keith Famie*



# THE DETROIT JEWISH NEWS

Arts & Life

## Detroit Children's Choir Featured in *Shoah Ambassadors* Film

By Danny Schwartz · 07/29/2021 8:00 PM  28  0



*Members of the Detroit Children's Choir lay down tracks for the film's final song. (Keith Famie)*

The choir will be featured in the film singing and dancing through the streets of Detroit while they sing the closing song "Never Again," written by Curtis Bates, a singer-songwriter from Detroit.

Production on Keith Famie's *Shoah Ambassadors* Holocaust documentary film continued July 15 at Tempermill Studios in Ferndale, as the Detroit Children's Choir took part in a filming session of what will serve as the vocal tracks for the film's final scene.



HOT TOPICS: Coronavirus news Prep sports Dream homes Find us on Facebook Submit a letter Newsletters

## New documentary features local residents with Down syndrome

By Monica Drake [mdrake@medianewsgroup.com](mailto:mdrake@medianewsgroup.com); [@monica\\_adele](#) on Twitter 2 hrs ago Comments



Retired Brigadier General John G. Kulhavi and former Detroit Lions players Eric Hipple and Lomas Brown took part in the final day of filming of the documentary “Chromosomally Enhanced: What’s Your Superpower” along with local young adults with Down syndrome and first responders.

Photo by Kenny Ingle

Director Keith Famie of Novi and producers John and Carole Kulhavi of White Lake just wrapped up filming a documentary about the daily lives of children and young adults with Down syndrome.

The documentary “[Chromosomally Enhanced: What’s Your Superpower](#)” will premiere during the holiday season on Detroit Public TV. The entire production was on a closed set – adhering to safe COVID-19 guidelines.

Famie, the Kulhavis and the rest of the Visionalist Entertainment Productions team filmed the closing scene on Oct. 10 at the Willow Run Airport/Yankee Air Museum. Nine individuals with Down syndrome pulled a B-17 Yankee Lady Bomber with the help of first responders and retired Detroit Lions icons Eric Hipple and Lomas Brown. There was a parade of flashing lights and a tank with an enormous Michigan Special Olympics flag waving in the wind.

“The hope for this film is to give a voice to these individuals who may not always get a fair chance in life while also encouraging empathy from a society that might not fully understand what it is like to live and thrive with Down syndrome,” said Famie. He said that those featured in the documentary “have a sincere, caring, empathetic 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.” For more information, visit [www.whatisyoursuperpowerfilm.com](http://www.whatisyoursuperpowerfilm.com).



# Upcoming PBS Documentary Shines Light on Down Syndrome with Historic WWII Plane Pull

An upcoming documentary film by Keith Famie and his Visionalist Entertainment Productions team in Wixom will examine what life is like for individuals with Down syndrome and their families.

By **R.J. King** - October 13, 2020

f Facebook

Twitter

Pinterest

An upcoming documentary film by Keith Famie and his Visionalist Entertainment Productions team in Wixom will examine what life is like for individuals with Down syndrome and their families.

The film will feature Michigan residents of all ages and stages of life with Down syndrome, as well as community organizations that aid their families.

The goal is to premiere the film on Detroit PBS by the end of the year before it shows on other public stations around the state. The documentary also will likely be shared nationally through PBS online and via public television.



*"Chromosomally Enhanced: What's Your Superpower?", a film by Keith Famie and Visionalist Entertainment Productions, focuses on life for individuals with Down syndrome and their families. The film culminates with the individuals helping to pull a B-17 Yankee Lady Bomber plane at the Willow Run Airport. The pull took place on Saturday, Oct. 10. // Photograph by Kenny Ingle*

The premise behind the documentary, "Chromosomally Enhanced: What's Your Superpower?", which Famie came to realize after spending time with children and young adults with Down syndrome, is the conclusion that their superpower is that extra chromosome, which gives them the ability to see the world through rose-colored glasses.

A special scene for the documentary was filmed last Saturday at the Willow Run Airport/Yankee Air Museum in Ypsilanti Township. For the production, nine individuals with Down syndrome came together as a team to pull



# The Jewish News

Connecting the Jewish community since 1942

Arts & Life

## New Documentary Aims to Pass the Torch of 'Never Again' to a New Generation

By Madeline Halpert - 08/10/2020 2:30 PM 69 0



Local artists Curtis Bates and Hailey Callahan tour the Holocaust Memorial Center during the filming of "Shoah Ambassadors." (Photo courtesy of Keith Famie)

Filmmaker Keith Famie is producing a documentary that tells the story of the Holocaust through the personal expressions of young people.

On Jan. 13, 2020, Keith Famie watched Edith Maniker, an 89-year-old Holocaust survivor, speak to a group of high school students about her experience escaping Nazi Germany on the Kindertransport mission. Before the talk, Famie, an Emmy-award winning director and producer, knew nothing about the rescue mission. As he listened to Maniker speak, Famie looked around the room at the group of young students and wondered what they would take away from the conversation.

"Out of the 100 kids there, two to three years from now, how many of them will remember?" he said. "I thought, there have to be more ways to tell this story to the younger generation."

It was after the talk that Famie decided he wanted to take a different approach to a film he was already planning about Holocaust survivors: to share the story through the eyes of a younger generation learning about the tragedy. The educational experiences of the young people, or "ambassadors," will comprise an hour-long PBS documentary, *Shoah Ambassadors*, produced by Famie through his Visionalist Entertainment Productions company, as well as by Warren Rose, Marjory Epstein and the Marvin and Betty Danto Family Foundation. Famie is aiming for the special to air in winter.





# The Jewish News

Connecting the Jewish community since 1942

## 'Those on the Front Lines of Cancer' to Air on PBS

By Elizabeth Katz - 10/03/2019 11:57 AM  17  0

Survivors, educators, doctors help local producer/director Keith Famie produce an eye-opening documentary about cancer.

*Photos courtesy of Visionalist Entertainment Productions*

Almost 2 million people will be newly diagnosed with cancer this year, and almost 607,000 people will die from the disease, according to statistics from the American Cancer Society.

Local producer and director Keith Famie wanted to know what Michigan oncologists, as well as oncological clinicians and researchers from across the country, are doing to combat a disease that instantly brings upheaval to a person's life and the lives of their loved ones.

"Cancer is frightening," he said. "It's this beast with the ability to morph itself. It makes it so difficult for oncologists (to treat) because it has the ability to change itself."

Famie, with the cooperation of approximately 100 people, including Jewish doctors, patients and leaders of cancer-focused service organizations from Metro Detroit, will release the three-hour documentary, *Those on the Front Lines of Cancer*, this month.

The full documentary will air on Detroit Public Television/PBS, Channel 56, in Detroit with the first hour showing from 9-10 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 10, and the remaining two hours from 9-11 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 17.

The documentary, produced by Famie's Visionalist Entertainment Productions company, is broken into 21 segments that include a look at specific cancers like breast cancer, blood cancer, prostate cancer and childhood cancers as well as segments on precision medicine, community organizations that serve those with cancer, the issue of opioids and marijuana in allaying cancer symptoms and financial toxicity related to paying for cancer care, among other subjects.





Daily News

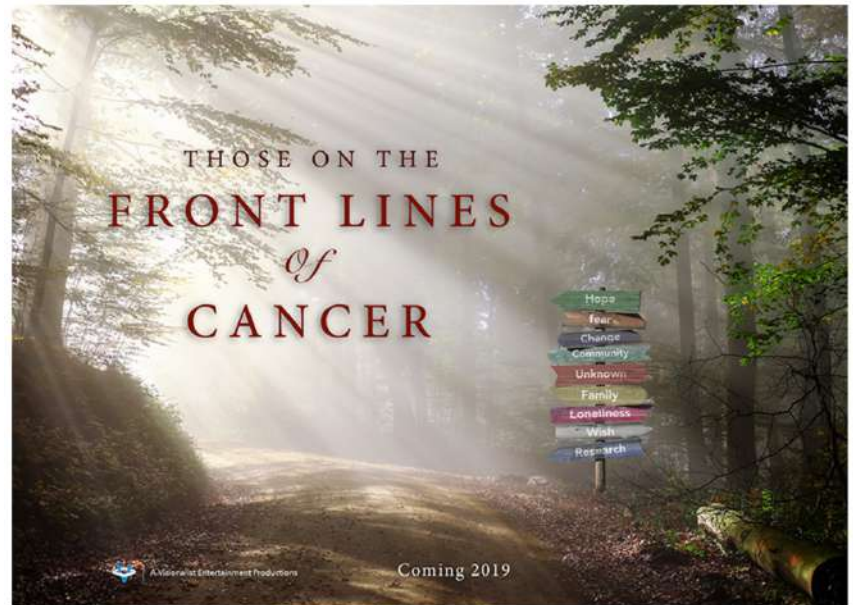
# New Detroit Public Television Documentary on Cancer to Premiere in October

"Those on the Front Lines of Cancer," a new three-hour documentary produced and directed by Keith Famie for Detroit Public Television/PBS, will premier Oct. 2 at the Emagine Theater in Royal Oak with a special showing for community leaders.

By **Tim Keenan** - September 24, 2019

"Those on the Front Lines of Cancer," a new three-hour documentary produced and directed by Keith Famie for Detroit Public Television/PBS, will premier Oct. 2 at the Emagine Theater in Royal Oak with a special showing for community leaders.

The premier of the film, produced by Famie's Visionalist Entertainment Productions in Wixom, will feature an 80-minute cut from the upcoming debut broadcast. The film will be hosted on PBS by JoAnne Purtan, morning host at WOMC-FM radio and a longtime Detroit television reporter and anchor.



"Those on the Front Lines of Cancer" will premier for community leaders on Oct. 2 at Emagine Theater in Royal Oak. // Image courtesy of Detroit Public Television

"Cancer affects all of us in one way or another," says Purtan. "I watched both my mom and mother-in-law battle ovarian cancer for years, and currently have friends facing their own cancer journey. This film provides hope, hope for new treatments on the horizon and hope for alleviating the financial toxicity that often accompanies a diagnosis. What an honor it is to work with Keith Famie and to be a part of such an important project."

# Cancer "go fly a kite," cancer patients and survivors apart of Detroit Kite Festival at Belle Isle



By Ingrid Kelley

Posted Jul 14 2019 10:05PM EDT

Video Posted Jul 14 2019 10:04PM EDT



**(FOX 2)** - "Go fly a kite, couldn't be better, it's like when you tell somebody you don't like you know, so go fly a kite," Carol Jackson said.

It's a powerful message for a powerful and sometimes deadly disease.

"Cancer, go fly a kite, it's alike get away, go send it up to heaven and all will be okay," said Emily

Grombala, sixteen year old Emily sending that bold message to brain cancer with her kite.

"It's a cool concept to do because it's like you are giving that pain and suffering up to God," she said. Wixom based Producer Keith Famie decided to gather cancer survivors and patients, so he could use the art of flying a kite to empower people touched by this disease.

On Sunday Famie, his production crew and a drone were spotted on Belle Isle getting footage of patients and survivors flying their kites as they looked up to blue sky.

"How do you end this film? Really significantly so why not tell cancer go fly a kite," Famie said. Famie has been traveling all across the U-S to collect material for his upcoming TV production called "Those on the Front Lines of Cancer."



## Novi film producer interviews local residents affected by cancer in new documentary

By Sharon Longman For MediaNewsGroup 17 hrs ago Comments

Keith Famie, 59, of Novi, is the executive director and producer of Wixom-based Visionalist Entertainment Productions.

He began documentary film-making for PBS in 2004 and, since then, has won 11 Michigan Emmy Awards for his films.

After his “Embrace of Aging and Dying” series that began in 2013 and his “On the Frontlines of Alzheimer’s and Dementia” film last year, he said he wanted to “focus on the disease that can take us out of the game and learn what can we do to stack the deck in our favor.”



Executive Director and Producer Keith Famie (left) interviews Dr. Eric Brown, a breast surgeon at the Comprehensive Breast Care Center in Troy.

He and his team have been working on a two-hour PBS film documentary “Those on the Front Lines of Cancer” for the past year and are in the final-production stages.

Despite advances in medicine, treatment and therapies, cancer still kills around 600,000 Americans each year and affects people of all ages.

“Cancer is a huge subject; there isn’t anybody who hasn’t been touched by it or knows somebody who has,” Famie said. “I’ve lost my friends to cancer, and I’ve had my own personal scares.”

Famie has conducted almost 100 interviews over the past eight months for the film. These include oncologists, researchers and surgeons who share what their cutting-edge research and experience has revealed, what is being learned about disease-modifying treatments and how researching patients’ genetics may change the way we approach cancer.

He interviewed doctors and researchers at the VA Medical Center in Ann Arbor, Royal Oak Beaumont, Henry Ford Health Care System, Ascension Providence Hospital, University of Michigan, Wayne State University, C.S. Mott Children’s Hospital, Children’s Hospital of Michigan, Moffit Cancer Center and Boca Raton Regional Hospital-Florida and the University of California-Berkley.



# OAKLAND PRESS

## SUBURBAN LIFE

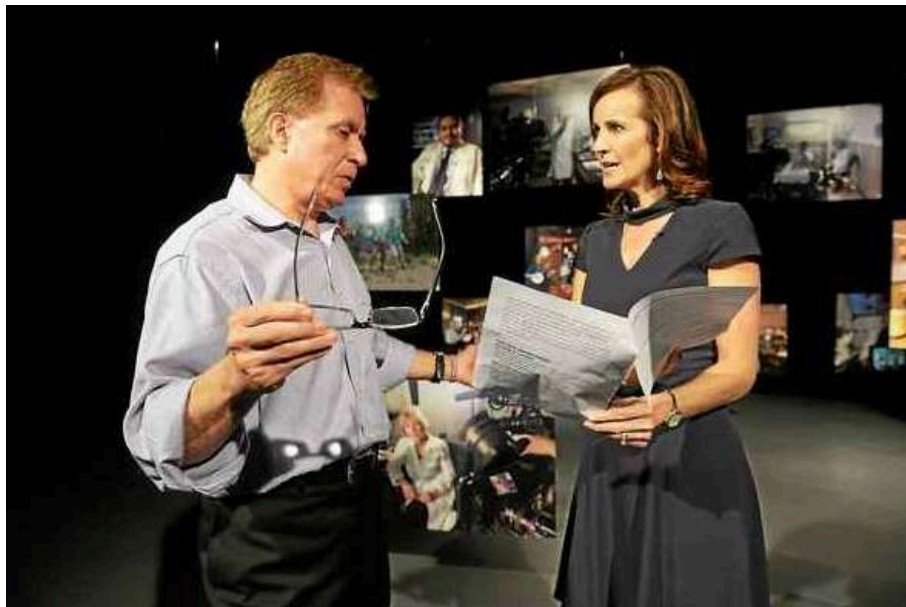
### Oakland County man memorializes father in documentary about Alzheimer's

By **Sharon Longman**, *The Oakland Press*

POSTED: 05/30/18, 11:43 AM EDT

UPDATED: 1 DAY AGO

0 COMMENTS



Joanne Purtan will emcee the premiere of Keith Famie's documentary "On the Front Lines of Alzheimer's and Dementia." Photo from Facebook

The premiere of Keith Famie's Visionalist Entertainment Productions new Public Television Documentary "On the Front Lines of Alzheimer's and Dementia," emceed by Joanne Purtan, is at 5:30 p.m. Sunday, June 3, at the Royal Oak Music Theater, 318 W. Fourth St.

The film features heartfelt stories and leading professionals from around the world sharing the work they are doing to better understand a pathway to help those diagnosed with multiple forms of dementia and the people who care for them.

Famie lost his World War II veteran father to Alzheimer's in 2003 and vowed he would one day create a film with the intention of helping society better understand and deal with it. For more information, call 248-869-0096 and visit <http://ontodayfrontlines.com/alzheimers>.

## A place to play: Hunting ranch caters to veterans, PTSD victims

Brad Kadrich, hometownlife.com Published 10:10 a.m. ET Nov. 10, 2017

Former Detroit Lions quarterback Eric Hipple was out at the Horny Hollow Hunting Haven doing some hunting, which is what the 1,000-some-odd-acre camp was originally intended to be used for.

While he was there with the owner, U.S. Army Brig. Gen. John Kulhavi (ret.), Hipple envisioned an entirely different use for the facility. With its amusement park-style amenities, large and comfortable living quarters and all the outdoor activities one could imagine, Hipple thought, the camp would make a perfect place for a retreat.



That's what he told colleagues when he went back to the Eisenhower Center, an Ann Arbor-based center dedicated to the treatment of traumatic brain injuries, where Hipple runs a program called After the Impact.

Hipple took a group of people — veterans, former players, first responders — out to the camp for a retreat that included lots of discussion and reflection, plus all the fun the camp's amenities offer.



"(The camp) was perfect for that," Hipple said. "It's got a housing situation that's warm and comfortable and a huge table where we could sit around and eat, come together and get to know each other."

That's pretty much what Kulhavi, a White Lake resident, envisioned as he transitioned the camp from its original hunting origins to the recreational camp it has become. Kulhavi and four partners bought the place, located in Mio, from the 77-year-old former owner in 1971.

First they bought 320 acres and then another 320 acres in the mid-1980s. Another 398 acres were added later.

The partners had an agreement: If any of them wanted out, they had to offer to let the others buy their share. That's how Kulhavi eventually ended up owning the whole thing.

He and his wife Carole have 14 grandchildren and the camp started adding things they would like. There's 10





# Grosse Pointe News

VOL. 78, NO. 47, 26 PAGES  
ONE DOLLAR (DELIVERY 86¢)

Your community newspaper since 1940

NOVEMBER 23, 2017  
GROSSE POINTE, MICHIGAN

Complete news coverage of all the Pointes

## On the front lines Filmmaker examines Alzheimer's, dementia

By Jody McVeigh  
Editor

Producer/Director Keith Famie recently set his sights on Grosse Pointe while filming his upcoming documentary, "On the Front Lines of Alzheimer's & Dementia."

The film is set for release next spring, but Famie will present an extended trailer during a private screening event 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 6, at The War Memorial, 32 Lakeshore, Grosse Pointe Farms. The event is sponsored by The Family Center, in partnership with The War Memorial, Grosse Pointe News and Pointe Magazine.

Famie, who has completed several series on topics ranging from veterans to women and aging, decided to focus a series on aging in general. With his "On the Front Lines" series, he plans to tackle issues such as poverty, drug abuse, cancer and others, but wanted to kick off the series with a look at Alzheimer's and dementia, "because I lost my father in 2003 to Alzheimer's," he said. "I'm glad I chose it, especially after talking with people for several months for this film. It's probably the No. 1 fear of most people — losing their cognitive sharpness, being a burden to their family. Clearly this is the big dog in the room when it comes to aging — losing one's sense of who we are."

Famie, 57, said most people age 40 and over know someone who has experienced some form of dementia.

"They've seen that chalkboard slowly erased, their existence fading away," he said. "It's frustrating, tormenting, embarrassing. They're robbed of their dignity."

Famie said the point of his film is not to "tell an old story new." Rather, he wants people to understand what strides have been made and what is being done about dementia. The film covers five dementias, including Alzheimer's, as well as

what it's like to have the disease, what it's like to be a caregiver, caregiving strategies, how cognitive decline takes place and more.

"How do we stack the deck as an aging population?" he asked. "What can we do collectively to find that sense of discipline, combined with education and new research, to live longer, healthier, cognitive lives?" "The aging person today is not the aging population of the Greatest Generation," he continued. "Baby boomers approach the aging process a little different. They're not staying with the status quo. They're approaching dying differently. They're questioning everything and that's pushing research and new ideas."

Famie said the film features ways people are getting active to prevent the onset of dementia, including through different types of yoga, music and other methods. During his Nov. 7 visit to Grosse Pointe, he stopped by the home of Denise Robison Mullen, 78, who is learning to play the banjo for the first time, in an attempt to stave off dementia.

"We've found learning to play a new instrument

skills. She just wants to play for her grandchildren — and maybe one day with Steve Martin — and hopes the newly acquired skill will benefit her health.

"Denise is all attitude," Famie said. "She has a great attitude about life. She exudes this ability to look at life with a wonderful attitude."

Famie also visited the Grosse Pointe Senior Men's choir practice to film a spot about socialization — another key to good health.

"That's why I want to feature men singing, not because they're fabulous singers — although they are impressive — but that they get together," Famie said. "We know men suck at aging. We work our asses off, then we become older, children leave the home and we find ourselves with just our mate and very little friendships that we've forged. We find ourselves lonely and tired and in some cases financially stricken individuals. The highest rate of suicide is among men age 55 and older."

"The senior choir is just an opportunity for men who are 70, 80, 90 years old to get together," he continued. "I asked them why they do it and they say they like the



Famie watches as Hewitt captures a shot of the

is incredibly complicated," Famie said. "As we age, our synapses are dying off. One of the fastest ways to create new synapses isn't doing a crossword puzzle every day; it's forcing the brain to do something it's never done before."

Mullen, who lost her husband of 44 years to Alzheimer's, isn't looking to hop onstage to show off her banjo-playing

camaraderie, they like the guys. They have a joie de vivre attitude about depth of life. You see the sparkle in their eye. I would say if they were not a part of the Senior Men's choir, they would not have it."

Famie's stop in Grosse Pointe is just a fraction of what the film explores. He continues to travel the state and the country to gather material for "On



PHOTOS BY RENEE LANDUYT

From left, Cinematographer Kevin Hewitt, Producer/Director Keith Famie, Associate Producer James Sauod and Associate Producer Kim Brown prepare to film student Denise Mullen and teacher Levi Hensen.

the Front Lines," which he plans to premier next spring at The War Memorial, with a performance by the Senior Men's choir.

In advance of the premier, he hopes the community gets a taste for what's to come at the screening event.

"It's a 24-minute trailer; it will be a two-hour film," he said. "People will walk away inspired, educated, touched. Many will ask how they can adopt what they've learned into their life. With cognitive decline, you need to do something 10 years before there's a symptom. This is all out assault on cognitive decline. I want people to take away from this to do the work now. Eat better now. Exercise now. Socialize now. I hope there's a sense of urgency that comes out of this film."

"I want the Grosse Pointe community to understand what we're doing and the significance of this film," he continued. "I love the fact I know what we do helps people. We're doing it so people understand. This is the most gratifying thing I've done in my life."

The Dec. 6 event also features resource tables, courtesy of The Family Center, which has been serving the community 17 years.

"The topic fits our mission well of serving our community through programs and resources vital to today's families," said Debbie Liedel, executive director of The Family Center. "Building a strong support system

is critical and that's what The Family Center can do best: help those in need of resources and referrals confidently find valuable information and trusted professionals."

After 10 years as director of The Family Center, Liedel said she too is leaning on its services.

"I never expected to need its services," she said. "My 92-year-old mother is challenged

Center is here to help," Liedel said. "Call us at (313) 447-1374, email us at [info@familycenterweb.org](mailto:info@familycenterweb.org) or visit our website at [familycenterweb.org](http://familycenterweb.org) for articles, videos and referrals through our Association of Professionals. Supported solely by community contributions, our matching gift opportunity has been extended through Dec. 31."



PHOTO BY RENEE LANDUYT

Denise Mullen is interviewed by Keith Famie as Associate Producer James Sauod stands by.

with dementia. Her memory, dignity and skills decline more each day. The path traveled in caring for a loved one is heart-wrenching, stressful and a mystery at times for the caregiver.

"This is why The Family Center takes great efforts in providing information through our prevention services," she continued. "Being prepared helps to navigate the road ahead more successfully and to ease some of the stress faced in caring for a loved one."

Registration for the Dec. 6 event is available online at [warmemorial.org/familycenter](http://warmemorial.org/familycenter). The community is welcome, but registration is required.

"Know The Family

### The Details

**Who:** Producer/Director Keith Famie, The Family Center, The War Memorial, Grosse Pointe News, Pointe Magazine.

**What:** "On the Front Lines of Alzheimer's & Dementia" extended documentary trailer.

**Where:** The War Memorial, 32 Lakeshore, Grosse Pointe Farms.

**When:** 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 6.

**Why:** This gathering will give the community an opportunity to learn about the film and offer their support.

**Info:** Register at [warmemorial.org/familycenter](http://warmemorial.org/familycenter) or call (313) 881-7511.

**The Family Center**  
Resources for Families, Individuals and Professionals



## 'Maire's Journey': Cancer victim's dying wish comes closer to fulfillment in CNY



Maire Kent's dying wish was to travel the world and raise awareness of sarcoma cancer.  
(facebook.com/mairesjourneytothesea)



By Geoff Herbert | [gohbert@syracuse.com](mailto:gohbert@syracuse.com)

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on July 18, 2014 at 10:13 AM, updated July 18, 2014 at 10:29 AM

Print

When a Michigan woman was diagnosed with cardiac sarcoma, it was the beginning of a journey. And though the brave Maire (pronounced "Mary") Kent lost her battle on September 27, 2013, her mission continues on today.

Kent's dying wish was to travel the world, calling more attention to the disease that took her life and so many others. She chose to be cremated and have her ashes put in a boat that would travel from Lake Michigan to the Atlantic Ocean, spreading awareness along its path.

## Film Maker Keith Famie Inspired by the Death of a Cancer Patient

By [Sarah Thomas](#) | July 31, 2014 9:53 AM EST



A 24-year-old [cancer patient](#) Maire Kent inspired the [Michigan](#) filmmaker Keith Famie for his documentary. Her October funeral served as its centerpiece. Famie is a 10-time Emmy-winning filmmaker.

Famie said, "I met her by chance, actually. I went to the hospital because I was having some chest pains and we ended up having the same doctor. Our conversations took off from there."

Kent was diagnosed with cancer in November 2012. She passed away by the end of September 2013. Famie was working on a documentary about the way

in which people deal with the end of their life, as a part of that he along with Kent decided to document the last part of her life and her final wishes.

The filming did not end. After the documentary he decided to shoot a 90-minute film on the journey on Kent's ashes from [Michigan](#) to [the Atlantic](#) sea. Kent, inspired by a children's book, "[Paddle to Sea](#)", in which a boy shapes a boat and lets it free in [the Great](#) Lakes wanted her ashes to go through a similar journey. Twenty four [year old](#) Kent wanted the ashes of her body to be taken from Lake Michigan to the Atlantic Ocean. "Cremate me and put my ashes in a boat. I want to go from Lake Michigan to the Atlantic Ocean," she told her family.

Her ashes, Famie said is placed in a 3-foot wooden boat, which is carved by George Wurtzel, a blind carpenter, as she wished, with all the other people's photos who have lost their lives to cancer in the boat. Kent's family also printed a personal message on its sail, as per her wishes. "My name is Maire. I died of cardiac sarcoma cancer. My ashes are enclosed in this boat and I am on my way to the ocean. If you find me, please send me back on my path. I'll bless you from Heaven."

Famie said, "The hope was that, with the help of strangers, she would have her dream come true. As it turns out, it was kind of like the Olympic torch. People wanted to be part of this journey." He said that almost everyone has been touched by cancer and has lost someone to cancer. It is certain that we all would die too, but rarely do we think what we want our lives to mean. The boat is on a 1,400 mile journey.



# Five Qs: Keith Famie on Filming Maire's Journey

BY IZZI BENDALL



Keith Famie, a 10-time Michigan Emmy award-winning director/producer in Novi, spoke with *DBusiness Daily News* about his latest documentary project, which tells the story of Maire Kent, who died of sarcoma cancer at age 24 and requested her ashes be sent to sea.

## 1. **DDN:** Tell us about *Maire's Journey*.

**KF:** The project started out as an interview for a documentary series I was working on (*The Embrace of Dying*). But, as time progressed, I ended up doing more interviews and it became apparent that her story should not be broken up into an episode of a series.

When Maire entered hospice — she clearly was not going to beat this — we had a lot of conversations about her desire to be cremated with her ashes (setting sail) in Lake Michigan. It was a way for her to see the world, which is something she never had a chance to do. Making a long story short, her ashes ended up in a small wooden sailboat built by George Wurtzel, a blind carpenter, and painted by an Odawa Native American. We had a ceremonial launch at sea with three Odawa women singing a strong women's song in their native tongue, with (Maire's) family standing by her side.

## 2. **DDN:** What type of reaction did you get when pitching the concept to people?

**KF:** Most of the time, you'd have to go, "Hello? Hello? You still there?" Because naturally, you think people had hung up on you because you just explained something that was totally ludicrous. People go, "Yeah, right, OK. That's a great fictitious story." But it's true. It's real. And what became so extraordinary about the journey was — as we had anticipated — Maire's story resonated with hundreds of people (as her boat traveled to other parts of the Northeast, including New York Harbor). Everybody has been touched by cancer in some way or will be, unfortunately, so Maire's journey became everybody's journey. People had their own moments of reflection, their own epiphanies about what they would if they were going to die, their own memories of loved ones they had lost. And the whole trip became this platform of discussion from young kids to people in their 60s and 70s. I think that's probably the most touching part about what we did in this production.



# 24-year-old cancer victim inspires after death

By Nick Valencia, CNN  
updated 3:40 PM EDT, Tue July 29, 2014

## STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Maire Kent had cardiac sarcoma, a rare and aggressive form of cancer
- She made a plan to send her ashes on a tiny boat from the Great Lakes to the Atlantic
- Filmmaker Keith Famie documented the boat's journey and how strangers helped out
- "I promised her that we'd get her there. And we did," Famie says

(CNN) -- It was about eight months into her fight with heart cancer that 24-year-old Maire Kent knew she was going to die.

In November 2012, Kent was diagnosed with cardiac sarcoma, a rare and aggressive form of cancer. By the end of September 2013, she was gone.

But it's what happened in the final weeks of her life that made her friends and family feel as if she's still around.

"I met her by chance, actually," filmmaker Keith Famie told CNN. "I went to the hospital because I was having some chest pains and we ended up having the same doctor. Our conversations took off from there."



Famie happened to be working on a documentary about how people deal with the end of life. So he and Kent decided to document the last leg of her life and her final wishes.

Inspired by her favorite children's book, "Paddle to Sea," in which a boy carves a wooden boat and sets it free in the Great Lakes, Kent turned to her family and said, "I want to do that. I want to go to the ocean. Cremate me and put my ashes in a boat. I want to go from Lake Michigan to the Atlantic Ocean."

"She wanted to create a dialogue about cardiac sarcoma," her older brother Geoff Kent told CNN. "Her dream was to be a nurse, because she loved helping people. She knew she wasn't going to live to achieve that, so this was her way of helping people after she died. We all know someone with cancer."

Sarcoma is a rare type of cancer, and cardiac sarcoma even rarer, according to Dr. Monika Leja, a cardiologist in Ann Arbor, Michigan, who treated Kent, a former Army private.



"It can grow from any part of the body, even connective tissues. It usually happens to very healthy, young, individuals," Leja told CNN. "A purely genetic disease that's rapid growing. It's kind of like having a ticking time bomb in your body and no one is recognizing it."

Three weeks before Kent's life ended, the plans to get her ashes to the Atlantic Ocean began. And Famie was there to document the whole thing.

"It was just a little 3½-foot boat carved out of wood by a totally blind carpenter. That's what she wanted to have her ashes put in," Famie said. "The hope was that, with the

help of strangers, she would have her dream come true. As it turns out, it was kind of like the Olympic torch. People wanted to be part of this journey."



## **SOUTHFIELD**

February 20, 2013

# **Documentary about embracing aging premieres in Southfield**

## ***Local filmmaker explores pain and privilege of maturing men***

*By Jessica Strachan C & G Staff Writer*

SOUTHFIELD — It hit local director and producer Keith Famie like it does any man his age — there’s more time behind a person than ahead of them at a certain point.

For Famie, born and raised in Farmington Hills, it was when he was about 50 years old. Now 53, the Emmy-award winning filmmaker says he confronted several issues with his new documentary, “The Embrace of Aging,” premiering this weekend in Southfield.



**“The Embrace of Aging: The Male Perspective of Growing Old” will premiere in Southfield this weekend.**



“Everyone will tell you it’s like someone hit a light switch; oh my gosh, I’ve lived more than half my life already. In fact, the years ahead of me are going to be the most difficult,” Famie said. “But with that, with aging, comes great wisdom and experience, so you learn to embrace it.”

Famie and his crew spent two years surveying everyone from health gurus to

April 24, 2012

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THE INTERNET NEWSPAPER: NEWS BLOGS VIDEO COMMUNITY



**Debra Ollivier**

Contributing editor and writer at large, Huff/Post50

## Keith Famie, From Celebrity Chef To Filmmaker Focused On Aging

Posted: 04/24/2012 9:34 am

Keith Famie began his career as a chef, lived in France, worked all over the world, had restaurants, won food and wine awards, became a celebrity chef on The Food Network, and ended up on "Survivor: The Australian Outback." (He was the last one voted off.) But when his father died from Alzheimer's nine years ago, Famie had a proverbial wake-up call.

"My father's death had a significant impact on me in a whole range of ways," said Famie. "I was holding his hand for the last moment, when he took his last breath. I had a lot of bitterness and anger. The guy had lived this long life and I thought to myself: 'So this is it? Right here? This is the end?' It was so curious and bizarre, too. He was done. Gone. History."



At that point Famie, pushing 50, decided to change his life completely. "I was done being that travel chef guy. I wanted to do something more significant with my life. I wanted to do something that would help people tell their stories." Famie, who had his own production company and knew how to produce and direct, went on to shoot a number of Emmy-award-winning documentaries on a range of human interest subjects, including immigrant stories, the challenges faced by Vietnam vets and the world of the blind.

But as he aged, said Famie, "I'd watch my teenage son grow up bigger and stronger than me and I started thinking: 'What is it *really* like to grow old? What's it really like on a deep level?' I decided to go on a quest to find out." The result is a three-part series currently in-progress for PBS Michigan dedicated to exploring the many aspects of aging.



# Film about fallen soldier

■ Sergeant inspired charity to get calling cards to troops.

By Catherine Kavanaugh  
 Daily Tribune Staff Writer

**ROYAL OAK** — Sgt. Michael Ingram Jr. returned home to Michigan on a cold, rainy day as Patriot Guard riders stood in salute of the soldier killed in action on April 17, 2010, while serving in Afghanistan.

This month a procession of 60 Patriot Guard riders will gather again in his honor, this time arriving at 6:20 p.m. June 29, to Imagine Royal Oak, 200 N. Main St., to celebrate a new film about his sacrifice.

Filmmaker Keith Famie



Submitted photo

**The late Sgt. Michael Ingram served with the U.S. Army in Afghanistan, where he was killed in action. His family comes to terms with his death in another documentary by Keith Famie that will be screened June 29 at Imagine Royal Oak.**

and Visionalist Entertainment Productions will premiere a one-hour documentary called "One Soldier's

Story" that tells the story of Sgt. Ingram and his family.

The premiere also will introduce the public to Mikie's

Minutes, a charity created by the Ingram family in honor of their son. Mikie's Minutes is a division of Others First, a nonprofit organization that provides free calling cards to members of the U.S. armed forces, allowing them to call their families anytime, anywhere.

The first batch of 12,000 minutes to U.S. Army soldiers serving in Afghanistan already has been delivered and the footage is included in the documentary.

"I knew the U.S. Army Special Forces could rapidly distribute these cards across Afghanistan to the places where Mikie would have wanted his cards to go," Lt. Col. Fredrick C. Dummar of Fort Bragg,

**See SOLDIER, Page 5A**

## SOLDIER: Subject of new movie

Continued from Page 1A

N.C., said in a release.

Rick Frazier, founder of Others First, will talk about the mission of Mikie's Minutes. Also, singer Steve Pichan will perform "Mikie's Minutes," a song he wrote for the film, and the VFW Acorn Post #1669 Honorary Color

Guard will participate.

"This really is about Mikie's legacy and about one soldier making things better for those who follow him," Lt. Col. Dummar said.

In addition, Marine Corpsman and Vietnam veteran David "Doc" Maloney, a poet and author of "Purple

Hearts/Broken Hearts," will address the audience.

Doors open at 6:30 p.m. for the "One Soldier's Story" premiere. To reserve a seat, call (248) 869-0096. Admission is a \$20 donation to "Mikie's Minutes."

**For more information, go to [www.mikiesminutes.com](http://www.mikiesminutes.com).**



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## OAKLAND COUNTY

# Vietnam documentary to premiere at Fox Theatre

**T**he Keith Famie Visionalist Entertainment Productions documentary, "Our Vietnam Generation," will premiere at 7 p.m. Jan. 28 at the Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit.

This new film, directed and produced by nine-time Emmy Award-winner Keith Famie, honors the Vietnam veterans for their service to the United States.

The premiere event will feature U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam Michael Michalak, U.S. Army Capt. Ivan Castro, the Michigan National Guard

126 Army 26-piece band led by singer/songwriter Stewart Franche in a special sound off to each branch of the current military and music paying homage to the era. Paul W. Smith of WJR-AM (760) will emcee, and the Michigan Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall will be on display in the lobby of the Fox Theatre throughout the evening.

The debut will open with the national anthem sung by 50 children from the Cornerstone Concert Choir and "Rock Me," a special chant performed by 50 Chandler Park Academy ROTC high school students.

There will be a special production of "One Soldier's Story," a 20-minute documentary about U.S. Army Sgt. Michael K. Ingram Jr. of Monroe who was killed in the line of duty in Afghanistan on April 17. The film portrays Ingram's life, his decision to join the Army, his ultimate sacrifice he made for his country and the honors he received when his remains were returned home.

### VETERANS AFFAIRS



SHARON LONGMAN



Photo courtesy of Visionalist Entertainment Productions  
**Diane Cameron of Rochester stands in front of the Vietnam Traveling Wall. She appears in Keith Famie's documentary film "Our Vietnam Generation," which premieres Jan. 28 at the Fox Theatre in Detroit. She also was the drummer and leader of an all-girl rock 'n roll band called the Pretty Kittens that toured Southeast Asia, including 150 shows in Vietnam where they would perform in clubs for noncommissioned officers and enlisted men.**

Information will be included about "Mikie's Minutes," an organization paying tribute to Ingram that provides calling cards to soldiers abroad to call home.

The evening will close with a candlelight vigil in honor of the 2,654 Michigan men and women who died for their country in Vietnam, during which the 100 members of the Perfecting Church Choir led by the Rev. Marvin Wynans will sing "Amazing Grace."

Tickets for the film documentary are available beginning at \$25 and \$35 at Ticketmaster, at the Fox Box Office or by calling Visionalist Entertainment

Productions at 248-869-0096. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. The Fox premiere will benefit the Veterans Memorial Park of Detroit and Red Cross of Michigan.

"Our Vietnam Generation" will air on Detroit Public Television at 9 p.m. Feb. 21, and then premiere at Fort Bragg in North Carolina and at a special event in Naples, Fla., in the spring.

Bob Gillette, founder of American House Senior Living Communities, is a co-executive producer of the film and the title presenting sponsor.

For more information and updates, visit [www.ourvietnam-generation.com](http://www.ourvietnam-generation.com).

### Quilters meet

The Desert Angels Miracle Quilts group will meet from 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday at the Oxford Public Library at 530 Pontiac St.

Group Director Carole Carroll says the meeting room has lots of space and the lighting is good. There will be no eating or drinking in the room.

Volunteers may drop in and do not have to stay all day. They can bring their sewing supplies and machine, if they choose to. The group will continue to have a monthly meeting the second Saturday of each month at Independence Village in Oxford.

The nonprofit organization will provide a donation form for taxes for any donations of a completed quilt, a quilt top, fabric, batting or gift cards. The group continues to grow and expand and now has volunteers in the Tri-County area, Florida, Arizona and Ohio.

For more information, call Carroll at 248-321-8669 or e-mail her at [www.miraclequilts@att.net](http://www.miraclequilts@att.net).

### Sewing for veterans

A Sew Much Comfort sewing event will be 10:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Jan. 28 at Haberman Fabrics, 905 S. Main St., Royal Oak.

Sew Much Comfort is a volunteer organization that makes adaptive clothing customized to accommodate medical devices and situations to fit service personnel with injuries.

Sewing volunteers are asked to contact Pat Quintero to register for the event and to use a Janome sewing machine. They may bring their own machine and are asked to bring a sewer's kit. All sewing volunteers are welcome.

For more information, call Pat Quintero at 248-546-0038 or e-mail [patquintero@comcast.net](mailto:patquintero@comcast.net) and visit [www.sewmuchcomfort.org](http://www.sewmuchcomfort.org).

### Cookie sale benefits troops

Daisy Scout Eva Leinbach, 5, from Lake Orion Troop 74458, will be selling Girl Scout cookies for donations to help fill Miracle Boxes for Desert Angels Inc. to send to our troops.

Her mother, Camille, says Eva's grandfather served in Vietnam, and her father served during Desert Storm. Eva has two family friends who will be leaving in February to serve as military policeman in Afghanistan. Eva says "it feels good to help" and she "hopes that the troops will be excited to eat cookies."

Eva will sell cookies through Monday for the Miracle Boxes. For more information or to purchase a box to donate, call Camille Leinbach 248-760-2128 or e-mail [camille@skincaretoryoursoul.com](mailto:camille@skincaretoryoursoul.com).

### American Legion Riders

The American Legion Riders Chapter 14 from Troy collected \$1,420 to donate to the Marine Corps League Toys for Tots Program in Oakland County.

Toys for Tots representative Derek Foster was presented the check by American Legion Riders Director Steve Stevens and his group including Dale Frushour, Road Captain Ron Sheffield, Treasurer Alice Jackson, Assistant Director Randy Jackson, Ann Marie Stevens, Terri Forrester and Gary St. Jean.

The next meeting will be at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday at 1340 W. Maple Road, Troy. For more information, call 248-362-2077.

The Oakland Press is interested in all veterans events in Oakland County. Please send info in the body of an e-mail with subject line "Veterans Affairs" to Sharon Longman at [ssistart@aol.com](mailto:ssistart@aol.com). Allow two weeks' notice for scheduled events and include a phone number for readers to call for more information.



## Famie travels to Vietnam on mission as part of film project

Published: Friday, February 19, 2010

Keith Famie's new documentary film, "Our Vietnam Generation," will feature the voices and images of Michigan's Vietnam veterans, and this week, Famie is traveling to Vietnam on a mission as part of the project.

Famie, of Novi, hopes the film will cause people to reflect on that war and give Vietnam veterans the appreciation for their service and respect that he believes they deserve. He also hopes that Vietnam veterans' response to the film will be to hold their heads higher than they have in the past. The film serves as a thank you and welcome home.

"It's time that our Vietnam veterans have an opportunity to feel proud for the service that they gave," Famie said. "Many of them ended up in a war by way of the draft, not by way of choice. They did the best that they could in unbelievable circumstances and performed amazing heroic acts together in a place that was not favored by a large sector of society, for obvious reasons. To this day, they still harbor ill feelings about that time in their lives."

In the film, Famie pays tribute to all veterans, including his big brother, Randy Famie, a resident of Waterford Township who served on the aircraft carrier USS Ranger from 1963-67.



Photo courtesy of Keith Famie and Visionist Entertainment Productions This is Marine Jennifer Spooner in Baghdad, June 2005. The Spooners will accompany Keith Famie on a trip to Vietnam Feb. 26 to revisit the Au Shau Valley for the documentary Our Vietnam Generation



## Image captures 720 vets

### Film to feature Michigianians who fought in WWII

I love this photo. I love knowing that 720 World War II veterans from Michigan, all in their 80s and 90s, assembled for it six weeks ago at Willow Run Airport. I love knowing that 400 of them regrouped in various locations afterward to sign it.



NEAL RUBIN

I love knowing that the White House has taken an interest in it, even if it's unclear whether President Barack Obama will receive his copy while he's in Warren today. And I hate knowing that two of the men who posed have since died — but that's one of the reasons I love this photo.

"We see these feeble guys having a hard time walking, or they're carrying oxygen tanks," says Keith Famie, 49. "When they were 19, they were flying bombing missions or parachuting behind enemy lines."

Famie, the chef-turned-filmmaker, is producing a documentary called "Detroit: Our Greatest Generation." It's about the men and women who left Detroit and went out and won the war, but it's also about the people who stayed behind and made this the Arsenal of Democracy.

It's budgeted at \$300,000, and he's so far removed from that figure that he spent Friday and Saturday at an art fair in Plymouth hawking T-shirts. He made \$700.

Then on Sunday, one of Obama's staffers sent him an e-mail. State Rep. Alma Wheeler Smith, D-Salem, and U.S. Rep. John Dingell, D-Dearborn, have been lobbying hard to put a poster-sized reproduction of the picture and signatures in Obama's hands. For one thing, he should have it, and for another, it might shake loose some sponsorships.

Deadlines will be tight Tuesday, the staffer said, but it's a definite maybe. And if today doesn't work out, at least Famie knows the film is on the presidential radar screen. He can't really afford to fly the poster to Washington, D.C., but if the chance arises, he'll go sell some more T-shirts.

They're available at [www.detroit-greatestgeneration.com](http://www.detroit-greatestgeneration.com), along with some film clips.

"Shame on us," Famie says, "if we can't find a way to tell this story."

It's not just that there won't be a better time. If he can't do it now, there might not be any time at all.

nrubin@detnews.com  
(313) 222-1874



A dense grid of handwritten signatures in various colors, representing the 720 veterans who posed for the photo.



The original 4- by 6-foot version of this poster will hang at the Yankee Air Museum.

Robert Hassan



# WEST BLOOMFIELD Eccentric

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Despina Kartakis returned to Crete to revisit the courage of her native land.

## Survivor tells saga of courageous homeland

BY CHRIS KASSEL  
CORRESPONDENT

Since the death of her beloved husband 13 years ago, Despina Kartakis has lived alone. But in some ways, the 71-year old West Bloomfield resident has been living alone — within her memories — since May 21, 1941.

Until this year, she considered many of these memories too horrifying to share.

Born in Crete just prior to World War II, Kartakis was a preschooler in the small seaside village of Galatas when the Nazis invaded the island following their victory in mainland Greece. Throughout the attack, transport planes dropped 8,000 German paratroopers over Crete, and the resistance of the islanders, fighting back with bird rifles and farm implements, is legendary. Unfortunately, Nazi retaliation



Despina Kartakis at the grave of her parents, Manuel and Maria Tapinakis, in Galatas, Crete.

was swift and consummate, and the dive bombers that arrived to dispatch the Galatas snipers forced Kartakis, her younger brother Yanni and her father Manuel, to seek shelter in a natural cave behind the parish church of Panagia.

"That's when my young life was altered," Kartakis recounts, eyes misting, subconsciously touching her legion of scars. "That's when everything changed."

A bomb detonated within feet of the cave and Yanni, then 4, was killed instantly and Despina's father was badly wounded. The same blast of shrapnel tore through Kartakis' upper body and destroyed her jaw, leaving her only enough strength to crawl out through the bomb crater where she soon lost consciousness. Found by mop-up crews and believed dead, she was buried in a hastily dug grave — later, alerted by her pet dog, survivors discovered that she was still alive and brought her to a hospital in nearby Hania. Considering her beyond saving, doctors offered no medical attention beyond an injection to painlessly end her life. But as Kartakis relates, "My family refused, but the doctor pushed them aside and gave me the needle anyway. For the second time,

Please see **HOMELAND, A10**





Despite the hour and the below-freezing temperatures, patrons of St. Florian Roman Catholic Church in Hamtramck gather around a symbolic bonfire on the steps of their church on Easter Morning.

Photo by Ben Logan

## Polish Spirit

### New film traces ethnicity's journey into metro Detroit

By ELIZABETH H. VOSS  
Special to The Oakland Press

**P**olish immigrants helped build Detroit and their stories deserve to be told, according to Keith Famie.

"What was it like to come to Detroit without any money or family? How did they survive? It's about fortitude and it's about heroics," says the local chef turned filmmaker.

For his "Our Polish Story" documentary, airing 7 p.m. Saturday on WXYZ-Channel 7, the Novi resident interviewed dozens of Poles in metro Detroit and traveled to Poland visiting Auschwitz and another lesser known Nazi concentration camp called Majdanek. He worked over eight months with production teams from his Wixom-based Visionalist Entertainment Productions and Kinetic Post in Southfield.

"The story is about respect and admiration for elders because they are the pioneers," Famie, 47, says.

"When they're gone, their stories are gone. We're celebrating their lives in this documentary."

After Germans, Poles make up the second largest ethnic group in metro Detroit, says historian

#### About the show

"Our Polish Story," an hour-long documentary about the Polish community in metro Detroit, will air 7 p.m. Saturday on WXYZ-Channel 7. Learn more about the making of "Our Polish Story" and "The Story of" series at [www.ourstoryof.com](http://www.ourstoryof.com). Find more about the Piast Institute at [www.piastinstitute.org](http://www.piastinstitute.org). For information about Detroit history books and genealogy workshops and seminars by Ceil Wendt Jensen, go to [www.mipolonia.net](http://www.mipolonia.net).

affairs in Hamtramck. "There are half a million Poles in metro Detroit," says the 69-year-old historian who has taught at Heidelberg College in Ohio, Southwest Minnesota State University and Madonna University in Livonia.

"They literally created neighborhood after neighborhood from farmland."

Polish immigrants came in three major waves — between the Civil War and 1900, from the turn of the century to 1914, and after World War II, Radzilowski says.



Photo by JOE VAUGHN

At Auschwitz concentration camp, film crew members Kevin Hewitt (foreground, from left to right), Ben Logan and Keith Famie interview an Auschwitz survivor (background from left to right), Zofia Szostak of Huron Township and Zofia Abramczuk, a Polish childhood friend whom Szostak hadn't seen in 60 years when the two were separated.

"In some auto factories, they were the majority," he says. "Polish was the language of the assembly line. When the (United Auto Workers union) was organizing in the 1930s, they went on Polish radio."

Some resented the immigrants. According to a survey done in the early 1960s, discrimination against Poles was second only to prejudice against African-Americans, Radzilowski says. Born and raised in Hamtramck, he remembers being stopped by police when he drove through Grosse Pointe, which had a Realtor point system to keep out Poles, Italians, blacks, Jews and Asians until the discriminatory

practice was struck down by the Michigan Supreme Court in 1963.

As a new generation of Polish people went to college and rose in socioeconomic status, prejudice against the ethnic group faded in the 1950s and almost disappeared by the 1970s and '80s, explains the historian.

Poles should learn more about their own family histories, says Ceil Wendt Jensen, who also appears in the film. After retiring from a 30-year career as a high school teacher, the 57-year-old Rochester Hills resident became a certified genealogist. She has traced