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ETHAN SAYLOR MEMORIAL FILM FESTIVAL AWARDS ANNOUNCED
Members of the Down Syndrome Community Recognized for
Outstanding Achievements/ Service

Annapolis, MD, January 3, 2017 – The Road We’ve Shared and The International Down Syndrome Coalition (two organizations who advocate for and with people with Down syndrome and their families) will acknowledge two individuals and a Maryland non-profit organization for excellence at the first Ethan Saylor Memorial Film Festival being held January 14 & 15th in Annapolis, Maryland.

The Ethan Saylor Legacy Award: Awarded to the producer/director, star, or organization who has used film in the past year to create positive change for those who have Down syndrome.

Jesse Suchmann – “Spring Break Zombie Massacre”

Sam and Mattie dreamt of making an epic zombie movie. Sam’s older brother Jesse decided to help them make it happen. In order to make their dreams come true, Jesse called on his friend [Robert Carnevale](#) to direct the film, and created a [Kickstarter campaign](#) to fund it. The campaign was so well designed that 1,494 people donated and over \$68K was collected. The project has attracted an enormous amount of attention from the media. Sam and Mattie have appeared in several news outlets including [Time](#) and [People](#), and they even got to do root beer shots with [Conan O’Brien](#). The Ethan Saylor Legacy Award goes to “Spring Break Zombie Massacre” and producer Jesse Suchmann for creating positive change through awareness. The production team set an example of what can be accomplished with a little bit of faith and support. They showed the world how important it is for allies of people with disabilities to really listen and encourage their hopes and dreams – even when it involves fighting off the undead! We look forward to watching the documentary about their magical trip into zombieland – *Sam & Mattie Make a Zombie Film!*

Outstanding Actor/Actress: An actor or actress who played a leading role in a film in the past year.

Connor Long

A Maryland native, Connor now lives in Colorado and he's one of the busiest people we know! His acting credits and the list of awards he's won is impressive to say the least. Any young actor would have to work hard to transition from a serious role like Radek in the short film by Sarah Lotfi, "[Menschen](#)," to the comedic lead of Michael in "Learning to Drive." Connor made it look easy and managed to win awards while doing it! He won a best actor award at the 2013 [Filmstock Film Festival](#) for his work on "Menschen" and an "Award of Excellence" for acting in "Learning to Drive" from the Southern Shorts Awards film festival. He's been on stage, screen, runway, the internet, and television – with his current gig being a reporter on [Denver7 news](#). But Connor is not just an actor. He's also an accomplished athlete and serious self-advocate. He wins awards for those pursuits as well – including [Self-Advocate of the Year](#), 2016 from The Arc of the United States. The Ethan Saylor Memorial Film Festival Outstanding Actor 2016 goes to Connor Long for his work on "[Learning to Drive](#)," but we also commend him on his commitment to his career and his community.

Outstanding Technical Support: A person or organization who has helped support people with Down syndrome to achieve their dreams behind or in front of the camera.

ArtStream

ArtStream is a Maryland non-profit organization whose mission is to "bring to individuals with disabilities creative and performance opportunities that help them gain the confidence to engage with the world." Using a process called Barrier-Free Theatre, the teaching artists at ArtStream have developed six Inclusive Theater Companies in Arlington, Gaithersburg, and Silver Spring.

[A few statistics](#) show their success:

- 74% Retention rate in tuition classes (Students in FY14-15 who took at least one class in FY15-16)
- 3,000 Individuals empowered in ArtStream programs each year
- 2,477 Audience members at Inclusive Theater Company performances (19 performances)
- 5,000 Volunteer hours

ArtStream's program of courses like puppetry for teens, inclusive music and movement, and super social Saturday blend the therapeutic with a touch of magic. The Ethan Saylor Memorial Film Festival Outstanding Technical Support Award recognizes the work being done here in Maryland at ArtStream to help people with Down syndrome and other disabilities reach for the stars!

For more information visit: www.SaylorFilmFest.com

The Ethan Saylor Memorial Film Festival – "Lighting the way forward with hope."

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If you would like more information about this topic, please contact Stephanie Holland at Stephanie.Holland@SaylorFilmFest.com or visit www.SaylorFilmFest.com.