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AN INTIMATE LOOK INTO LIFE WITH A NEURODEGENERATIVE DISEASE, “MATTER OF MIND: MY PARKINSON’S” DEBUTS ON INDEPENDENT LENS ON APRIL 8, 2024

February 1, 2024

Three Individuals Navigate Their Lives with Resourcefulness and Determination in the Face of Parkinson’s Disease

(San Francisco, CA) February 1, 2024— The second in a series of three documentaries focusing on neurodegenerative diseases, “Matter of Mind: My Parkinson’s” will premiere on April 8, 2024, on INDEPENDENT LENS. From award-winning co-directors Anna Moot-Levin and Laura Green (“The Providers”), the intimate documentary follows three individuals—a political cartoonist, a mother turned boxing coach, and an optician—as they navigate their lives with resourcefulness and determination in the face of Parkinson’s disease.

“Matter of Mind: My Parkinson’s” will debut on PBS’s INDEPENDENT LENS on Monday, April 8, 2024, at 10 p.m. (check local listings). The film will be available to stream on the [PBS App](#).

Parkinson’s disease (PD) develops when nerve cells in the brain stop making dopamine. PD strips away motor abilities, causing a wide range of symptoms, from tremors and falling to dementia and depression. “Matter of Mind: My Parkinson’s” presents the poignant stories of individuals as they manage symptoms and treatments, along the way to living fulfilling lives. Each is a tale of determination where, through ingenuity and adaptation, they offer insight into what it means to live with a degenerative illness.

Peter Dunlap-Shohl is diagnosed with PD at the age of 43. As a political cartoonist, he contemplates his future and how he will continue to draw as his motor control declines. In his home state of Alaska, there are no Parkinson’s specialists, so he moves to Washington state for better care. He transforms his journey, with its comedic highs and somber lows, into a graphic novel.

Veronica Garcia-Hayes lives in San Francisco's Mission District. She was diagnosed with PD when she was pregnant. Twelve years later, she manages progressing symptoms while raising a preteen daughter. She channels her energy into physical fortitude, becoming a boxing coach and an advocate for exercise, one of the most powerful methods of slowing the progression of PD.

Juan Solano is a Puerto Rican optician. He owns a mom-and-pop eyeglass shop in Brooklyn's Bed-Stuy neighborhood, but worries for the business' survival as his PD symptoms grow more acute. In hopes of altering the disease's progression, he pursues deep brain stimulation, a surgery in which electrodes are implanted in the brain.

"People think of Parkinson's disease as an 'old person's' disease, but it can affect people in the prime of their lives," said director/producer Anna Moot-Levin. "We have been fortunate enough to be welcomed into these people's lives so that we can, hopefully, spur education and understanding by sharing their stories with the world."

Added Laura Green, director/producer: "Our partnership with ITVS and INDEPENDENT LENS has provided us with the opportunity to give voice to those impacted by the disease, as well as the the ability to really go in-depth, not just for this film but for the entire 'Matter of Mind' series."

"Parkinson's disease and others like it are often misunderstood, and that is why documentaries like 'Matter of Mind' are so incredibly important in humanizing its impact," said Lois Vossen, executive producer of INDEPENDENT LENS. "Films like this are crucial and we're proud to be bringing it to audiences through INDEPENDENT LENS."

The first installment of the documentary series from Moot-Levin and Green focusing on neurodegenerative disease, "Matter of Mind: My ALS," aired in 2023 on INDEPENDENT LENS and is currently available to stream on the [PBS App](#). The upcoming, third installment will be "Matter of Mind: My Alzheimer's."

The documentary received funding via ITVS's Series and Special Projects Initiative.

Visit the "[Matter of Mind: My Parkinson's](#)" page on INDEPENDENT LENS to learn more about the film.

About the Filmmakers

Anna Moot-Levin, Director/Producer

Anna Moot-Levin is an award-winning documentary filmmaker, producer, and editor with a passion for stories about health and healthcare. Her debut documentary, “The Providers,” aired on PBS’s INDEPENDENT LENS in 2019. She is also an associate producer of the Academy Award-winning documentary “Inside Job” (2010). She is based in Brooklyn.

Laura Green, Director/Producer

Laura Green is an award-winning documentary director and editor based in San Francisco. Her debut documentary, “The Providers,” aired on INDEPENDENT LENS in 2019. She edited “When I Write It,” which premiered at Tribeca in 2020, and the IDA award-nominated web-series “The F-Word.” She is an assistant professor at San Francisco State University.

David Alvarado, Producer

David Alvarado is a documentary director and producer focusing on science, technology, and human rights. His new project is about a legendary Chicano playwright and filmmaker, Luis Valdez.

Jason Sussberg, Writer/Producer

Jason Sussberg is a San Francisco Bay Area-based documentary filmmaker. He has produced and directed several theatrical documentaries that have broadcast on PBS and streamed on Netflix and Amazon. His work includes “The Immortalists” (2014), “Bill Nye: Science Guy” (2017), and “We Are As Gods” (2021).

ABOUT INDEPENDENT LENS

INDEPENDENT LENS is an Emmy® Award-winning PBS documentary series. With founding executive producer Lois Vossen, the series has been honored with 10 Academy Award nominations and features documentaries united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of independent filmmakers. Presented by ITVS, INDEPENDENT LENS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Acton Family Giving, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Ford Foundation, Wyncote Foundation, and National Endowment for the Arts. Stream anytime on the PBS App. For more visit pbs.org/independentlens.



ABOUT ITVS

Independent Television Services (ITVS) is the largest co-producer of independent documentaries in the United States. For more than 30 years, the San Francisco nonprofit has funded and partnered with documentary filmmakers to produce and distribute untold stories. ITVS incubates and co-produces these award-winning titles and premieres them on our Emmy Award-winning PBS series, INDEPENDENT LENS. ITVS titles appear on PBS, WORLD, NETA, and can be streamed on various digital platforms including the PBS App. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Acton Family Giving, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Ford Foundation, Wyncote Foundation. For more information, visit itvs.org.

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