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New Documentary Film is “Programming Hope” for families and individuals affected by autism.

Denver filmmaker **Jack Creamer** has recently completed a documentary about a unique company that’s spearheading a revolution in the world autism.

The film, **“Programming Hope”**, features the staff and students of the **nonPareil Institute** - a nonprofit technology company that is creating a new future for adults on the autism spectrum.

Headquartered in Plano, Texas - the **nonPareil Institute** (NPI) is dedicated to providing technical training and employment to individuals who have been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

The director of the film says, "Nonpareil means *'unparalleled, without match, or unequaled'* and that's what these students are. They're learning to write computer code and design video games and apps, and they're creating things that are being sold in the marketplace – in the iTunes and Google Play stores."

“More importantly they’re doing all this while learning to make friends and socialize – some for the first time in their lives. The program at NPI is giving them confidence and helping build self-esteem, and they’re learning to live independently.”

The documentary follows NPI and its students over the course of three years and tells the story of the unique group of people behind its success.

While NPI has been featured in national media, **“Programming Hope”** provides the first in-depth look at the organization - the creation of former professional race-car driver & technologist, **Dan Selec**.

Dan is no stranger to the technology community. As a technologist with a global e-commerce company Dan’s skills garnered him acclaim with his employers. But when his youngest son was diagnosed with autism, he knew he had to put his technology skills to work in a more personal way – to help provide a future for his son.

That’s when he was struck with the innovative and bold idea – for a place that could teach, employ and eventually provide housing for his son. It would be a place supported by the products built and marketed by its students.

Beginning with only one student and teaching out of his kitchen at home, Dan proved the concept that he could teach technology to young adults on the spectrum. And he continued to do it time and time again - one student at a time. Now, eight years later, with a proven curriculum and training methods established the growth of NPI is accelerating.

The Film

“Programming Hope” director Creamer says, “I had a personal interest in doing a film about the employment problem facing autistic adults. There are 50,000 people on the spectrum who are becoming adults every year, yet many of them are not able to find or keep a job and they may end up being supported by family or others their entire lives.”

“In researching the topic there was really no place I could find that was doing anything to deal with the problem in a substantial way. There were smaller programs here and there – but often they were providing unskilled or unchallenging jobs. Autistic adults are often highly intelligent, yet they may struggle at maintaining employment or at fitting in in a traditional work environment - for a variety of reasons.”

“When I found this place [nonPareil] it sort of all came together. It’s incredibly unique. They’re finding ways to utilize these student’s individual talents and skills - rather than putting them in situations that don’t work for people on the spectrum. NPI accommodates and works with their differences rather than ignore or try to change them.”

A successful Kickstarter campaign for the film proved to Creamer there was interest in the topic, and NPI proved to be the perfect place to highlight a serious topic in a positive and inspiring way. “Dan and Gary are ultimately just two parents who got together and decided to try to do something using their own talents and skills. Think what could happen if others did that. It would be amazing.”

“I’d like to reframe the way people consider a diagnosis of autism,” says Creamer. “There’s no question there are challenges, but just because someone is diagnosed on the spectrum doesn’t mean they can’t accomplish a lot. They have goals, and dreams and unique abilities – just like everyone else. But they see the world differently, and they communicate differently – but those differences can actually be a good thing - especially in fields like technology that require focus and creativity.”

“There’s tremendous opportunity to develop creative employment solutions – and we need to find all of those we can. We need to focus on the things that can be accomplished– not what can’t.”

Changing Perception

“The media often portrays the extreme ends of the spectrum – from ‘nonverbal’ on one end, to ‘savant’ on the other – but the majority of people are in the middle. These are gifted and intelligent people who may face often misunderstood communication difficulties or other issues related to living on the spectrum.”

“When those differences are recognized, and accepted – it makes all the difference in the world. And that’s what this film depicts.”

“No one is doing what these people [at NPI] are doing. There’s no place with such a wide range of people on the spectrum who are learning, working together and accomplishing as much as right here in Texas,” says Creamer. “This place is truly changing people’s lives. And that’s a great story to tell.”

More than 45 cities around the country have expressed interested in opening their own nonPareil campus. Expansion will take time and money, but they are currently working to launch campuses in **Houston, Ft. Worth, and Portland, Oregon.**

The film was recently screened to 4 sold out audiences in Dallas, Houston, and Columbus, Ohio with many more being planned in the coming months along with festival submissions for 2015-2016.

Visit programminghope.com or facebook.com/programminghope for more information.

Jack Creamer, is an Emmy® award winning videographer and editor based in Denver, Colorado. He grew up in Houston and is a 1991 graduate of Texas A&M University. This is his first documentary feature film. "Programming Hope" features an original music score composed by Chris Joye, and was shot primarily in the Plano and Frisco area over three years beginning in 2012. The film hopes to find release nationally in theaters and online in the near future.

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