

Palm Beach  
International  
Film Festival  
2013

Palm Beach  
International  
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2013

Montreal World  
Film Festival  
2012

# SWEET 16

A journey into teen Diabetes



View trailer at [Sweet16Film.com](http://Sweet16Film.com)

ID VISION FILMS INC. PRESENTS "SWEET 16" A FILM BY DAN SHANNON EDITED BY JAMES MALLOCH MUSIC BY CHRISTIAN FRAPPIER

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR & EDITOR KATIA SHANNON WRITTEN BY ISABELLE DEPELTEAU PRODUCED BY VIRGINIE VALASTRO

COORDINATION STEPHANIE LALONDE ANIMATION CHRISTOPHER MANCINI EXECUTIVE PRODUCER DAN SHANNON

Produced with the participation of



ROGERS  
Documentary Fund



Canadian  
Heritage

Patrimoine  
canadien



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ID VISION PRESENTS

DIRECTED AND SHOT BY DAN SHANNON SCREENPLAY ISABELLE DEPELTEAU EDITOR JAMES MALLOCH  
MUSIC CHRISTIAN FRAPPIER PRODUCER VIRGINIE VALASTRO EXECUTIVE PRODUCER DAN SHANNON

<http://sweet16film.com>

**Documentary – 78 MIN. & 52 min. – English, Canada**

**SYNOPSIS**

**Sweet 16** is a feature-length documentary delving into the complexities of teen diabetes. Filmed over 5 years in Canada, USA and Ecuador, the film chronicles the highs and lows of teens dealing with a devastating Type 1 diagnosis at such an important crossroad in their life. Some stories are tragic, others are hopeful. Our main protagonist, Katia, whose receives the news on the eve of her Sweet 16 birthday, takes us on a journey into the inner-world of teens, which is all about fitting in, body image, and ultimately issues of belonging. The film goes well beyond the simple question of diabetes; it invites the audience to engage in the universal story of growing up and overcoming one's personal demons. **Sweet 16** is a story of personal redemption; suggesting how one can come to accept and event thrive against all odds.

**THE STORY**

In April of 2007, Katia learned of her diagnosis, Type 1 diabetes, a few weeks before her 'Sweet 16' birthday. The news as it does for so many teenagers with this diagnosis comes as a bitter pill. 'Sure Insulin will save your life, and you will not die tomorrow because you live in a country with available medical facilities but, the immediate and mandatory immersion for the entire family into a completely different relationship to food, sleep, exercise and friends, is a pretty big adjustment'. The film **Sweet 16** chronicles Katia's journey, and leads us to a life-affirming coming-of-age story of self-exploration, where just when you think life has robbed you, you find it has yet so much to give, by learning to give yourself.

At the time of her diagnosis, Katia was very active in an intensive ballet program at school dancing 12 hours a week. A full and regular life for a teenager. Over the next year, Katia's anger was palpable, and her friendships and sense of self-worth became strained. When she entered Dawson College, she discovered the rowing team, a new roster of friends all working towards a common goal. This new chapter brought her back to her body, through vigorous training and healthy camaraderie. She travelled with the varsity team to the US and Europe. However, living the life of an extreme athlete as the rowing team required, she was to face additional challenges, and was once again being pitted against her body's limitations.

Meanwhile, she continually did volunteer work in various places for children with special needs, and found a camp of Type 1 diabetes kids in Ecuador looking for staff volunteers. Katia latched onto this, and raised the money necessary to make the trip in summer 2010 on her own. Once in Ecuador, Katia connects with key individuals who would shape her diabetes journey: Neil Donelan, supply manager of "Insulin for Life" Australia and Aracely Basurto, founder of "Fuvida", a non-profit organization offering resources to Ecuadorian families with a Type 1 diabetic child. The trip provides Katia with an essential reference point in understanding the vast differences between diabetes care available in North America and emerging nations such as Ecuador. Sweet 16 is a coming-of-age story, part road movie, part scientific journey into the latest hopeful research and treatments for a cure of Type 1 diabetes.





**Sweet 16** is shot over a period of 5 years by Dan Shannon director/cameraman, and Katia's father. Scripted by Isabelle Depelteau, Katia's mother, the film is an intimate, visually immersive and outward-looking portrait of one family dealing with Type 1 diabetes.

Shot in Canada, the United States and Ecuador, the film sets out to capture a snapshot of how different parts of the world deal with the disease, and how different social and economic circumstances greatly impact the outcomes and quality of life for individuals living with Type 1 diabetes.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

**"Sweet 16** is a 'point-of-view' documentary exploring the coming-of-age story of a typical teenager who learns she has Type 1 diabetes. In the beginning, Katia was hesitant to be at the center of a documentary film, as the day-to-day adjustments to the new condition were difficult for her. I think at that time she needed a father, not some guy with a camera in her face, as she was going through this. Taking things very slowly, Katia, who is also a film student at Concordia University, was eventually able to open up and expose herself to the world about this very personal change she was dealing with. Part road movie, part father/daughter crossed diaries, the film explores issues of identity, personal as well as family and social, in the context of such a diagnosis. Isabelle's and my approach to this film has been to intercut between adult and teenage narrative voices, each with their appropriate emotional anchors, as both parents and teens deal with the unfolding drama quite differently. The visual is a movement-oriented camera style we have developed over the years through several dance films we have produced."

"By focusing in on a teen experience of the disease, the story lends itself to wider questions about the role of the entire extended Type 1 community such family, friends, doctors/nurses, researchers and event government bodies. Diabetes is a killer, and many youth in particular, hide their condition from those around them. We hope this film can start a fresh dialogue about how we can come together to firstly help those dealing with the disease right now, but also to find a way to ensure we eradicate Type 1 in the next generation, via promising research currently underway."

See trailer at <http://sweet16film.com>

## ABOUT KATIA



Katia Shannon is presently completing a Bachelors of Fine Arts degree at Concordia University. Her dream is to tell stories that will touch her generation through the medium of cinema.

Graduating from high school with honours, she was awarded a Millennium scholarship for her humanitarian involvement and academic performance. Proceeding to CEGEP with an entrance award, she then received the Glay Sperling Award for achievement in her field of study, as well as the Gallagher Award for her leadership and performance in sports. Her first film was selected in the Young Cuts Festival as well as the En Route Festival

where it was broadcast on all Air Canada flights for a few months. Now featured in the Sweet 16 documentary, Katia dares to show the fragile and sometimes distraught side of herself as she learns to live with Type 1 Diabetes.



## DIABETES FACTS

- Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease in which the body's immune system attacks and destroys the insulin-producing cells of the pancreas.
- Type 1 diabetes is the leading cause of kidney failure, adult blindness, stroke, heart disease, nerve damage and amputation.
- Diabetes currently affects 246 million people worldwide and is expected to affect 380 million by 2025.
- Globally, every ten seconds a person dies from diabetes-related causes.
- Living with type 1 diabetes requires approximately 1,460 needles a year (based on four injections per day) and 2,190 finger pokes a year to test blood sugar levels.

Source: Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation's March 2009 Report.



## QUOTES FROM THE DOCUMENTARY

“There are 10 million vials of insulin produced worldwide each year... and 1 million vials are wasted for different reasons. Those 1 million vials could probably sustain 60 developing countries for a year.”

**Neil Donelan, Insulin for life Australia**

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It was pretty hard. I was 5 years old and I had to start injecting myself with insulin.”

**Tyler Mills, has type 1 diabetes.**

Photo Ecuadorian girl  
Receiving insulin



**Additional quotes**

“I didn’t want this disease to clip her wings and stop her from dreaming.”

**Isabelle Depelteau, Katia’s mother**

For additional images and high-resolution photos  
[www.sweet16film.com](http://www.sweet16film.com)



(photo Katia in Ecuador)

**CREDITS**

DIRECTED BY	DAN SHANNON
SCREENPLAY BY	ISABELLE DEPELTEAU
EDITED BY	JAMES MALLOCH
MUSIC BY	CHRISTIAN FRAPPIER
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY	DAN SHANNON
PRODUCER	VIRGINIE VALASTRO
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER	DAN SHANNON

**PARTICIPANTS**

ISABELLE DEPELTEAU, KATIA SHANNON, DAN SHANNON, VICTORIA SOBEY, DR. SYLVIE LESAGE, BADA ARIELLE RATIA, DUMEET RAVI, ERIN HILLHOUSE, MARIA DE LA CRUZ DOMINGUEZ, NEIL DONELAN, DR. SYED A.A. JAVAZ, TYLER MILLS, GEORGE ATHANS, SUZANNE LAPORTE, EMANUEL PAIGE, CHRIS JARVIS, DR. LAWRENCE ROSENBERG, DR. GEORGE TSOUKAS, ANTHONY SHANNON, ARACELY BASURTO CALDERON, ANDREA CABRERA BASURTO, PRISCILLA SHELL, RENZO LUQUE, NELSON MANUEL LUQUE, MARILYN VERNAZA SOLIS, MERCY I SONDOVAL SOLIS, FELIX ANDRES YANEZ MARTINEZ, LISA HEPNER.

**CREW**

Assistant Director	KATIA SHANNON
Production Manager	VIRGINIE VALASTRO
Production Coordinator	STEPHANIE LALONDE
Additional Camera	KATIA SHANNON
Location Sound Recordist	ANTHONY SHANNON
Assistant Accountant	STEPHANIE LALONDE
Assistant Production Coordinator	THI NGOC THANH LE
Executive in Charge of Production for CTS	BRUCE STACEY
Legal	REMY KHOUZAM, JOE SISTO

**POST PRODUCTION**

Director of Post Production	KATIA SHANNON
Editor	JAMES MALLOCH
Assistant Picture Editor	KATIA SHANNON
Recording Facilities	STUDIO PLACE ROYALE
Color Correction	ID COMMUNICATIONS INC.
Animation	CHRISTOPHER MANCINI
Camera & Post Production Services	ID COMMUNICATIONS INC.
Additional Cameras	ID COMMUNICATIONS INC.
Lighting and Grip Equipment	IDCOMMUNICATIONS INC.
Legal Services	KINÉ RECHERCHE INC.
	LUSSIER & KHOUZAM INC.
Data Wrangler	ÉTIENNE PROULX
Financing Services	SODEC-
	FINANCEMENT DES CRÉDITS D'IMPÔTS

Financing Services (Con'd)

Business Affairs Coordinator  
Insurance Broker  
INTERNATIONAL DISTRIBUTION

CAISSE POPULAIRE DE LA CULTURE  
CAISSE POPULAIRE DE LA MAISON  
RADIO-CANADA  
VIRGINIE VALASTRO  
MULTIMEDIA RISKS  
ID COMMUNICATIONS INC.

**FINANCIAL PARTNERS**



**Film Release details**

This film was made possible through the funding by Crossroads Television, Rogers Documentary Fund, the Canada Media Fund as well as Canadian and Provincial tax credits.

Sweet 16 will also feature an interactive smartphone app, and website connecting the diabetes community on topics related to the film. For more information about Sweet 16, please visit [www.T1Life.com](http://www.T1Life.com)

**The film's world premiere will be at The Montreal World Film Festival 2012**

**screening details please go to [www.sweet16film.com](http://www.sweet16film.com)**

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<https://www.facebook.com/Sweet16doc>