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Neurodiversity Film Series, sponsored by Vermont Learning-Support Initiative, Begins at Catamount Arts February 6th

Hardwick & St. Johnsbury, VT... Vermont Learning-Support Initiative (VLSI) is pleased to present a series of films and conversations, on the theme of neurodiversity, at Catamount Arts over the next three months.

“What is neurodiversity? Well, in short, it refers broadly to people who think and learn differently. It’s a choice to see them in a more positive way,” said Bradford Smith, VLSI founder and director. “Just because someone’s brain is wired differently doesn’t mean that person is disabled or broken.”

The first film in the series, *Life, Animated*, is a 2016 documentary directed by Roger Ross Williams. It tells the remarkable story of a young man on the autism spectrum, Owen Suskind, who makes use of his fascination with Disney movies to understand the world around him, a world that includes his family, school, girlfriend, and his own apartment after graduation.

There will be six films in the series, screening on the first two Wednesdays of February, March, and April. All will be offered at Catamount with free admission and a post-screening discussion facilitated by Smith. Donations are welcome. VLSI is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit established in 2016, with its mission to support teens with learning and attention challenges who aspire to a college degree.

Smith, formerly an adjunct professor of writing and film at Johnson State College, draws on his life with his own neurodiverse child, a recent college graduate now working in education. “It was a life-changing experience for me, and made me realize how much human potential is being squandered when these young learners—as many as 1 in 5, a majority of whom want to go to college—can’t find a good path to that future.”

Those interested in learning about the other films in VLSI’s neurodiversity series can go to www.catamountarts.org/ or call 802.748.2600.