

# Raising Matty Christian

## Christian de Rezendes discusses documentary

When Rhode Island-based director Christian de Rezendes was approached by a mutual acquaintance about making a documentary on the life of the recently deceased Matthew “Matty” Christian (1983-2009) of Canton, MA, who was born without full limbs or a tongue, de Rezendes was apprehensive about repeating the “emotionally grueling process” of making his award-winning documentary *41*, about Nick O’Neill, the youngest of the 100 victims killed in the 2003 fire at The Station nightclub in West Warwick, RI, which he co-produced and co-directed with Christian O’Neill, Nick’s younger brother. In the end, though, he said about *Raising Matty Christian*, “This was a very different film. This kid’s story needed to be told.”

Commissioned and funded by Matty Christian’s family, who supplied 12 hours of home video recordings and were interviewed extensively on camera, de Rezendes said, “For the movie to work, his parents, Allie and Jerry, had to be very open about negative aspects of their son’s life and they were. It was not all rainbows and unicorns. It wasn’t easy for them, because they were still in mourning.” The result is an unusually honest and frank portrayal that speaks to everyone, but especially to amputees, others with similar disabilities, and to their families, de Rezendes said.

The film, whose third public showing will be at the SENE Fest at 5pm on Saturday, April 26, 2014, is “getting a lot of great response from the disability community,” de Rezendes said. “The word ‘inspiring’ gets tossed around very loosely, but this film really is.” He is hopeful that the film, after its run at a number of festivals and other events, will attract the attention of distributors. “We’re getting some fantastic feedback,” he said.

*Raising Matty Christian* <http://www.raisingmattychristian.com>, 5pm, Sat, Apr 26, Columbus Theater (main level), 270 Broadway, Providence. Director Christian de Rezendes in attendance, \$10, <http://www.senefest.com/sat-film-screenings-500-915.html>