

Novi film producer interviews local residents affected by cancer in new documentary

By Sharon Longman For MediaNewsGroup 17 hrs ago Comments

Keith Famie, 59, of Novi, is the executive director and producer of Wixom-based Visionalist Entertainment Productions.

He began documentary film-making for PBS in 2004 and, since then, has won 11 Michigan Emmy Awards for his films.

After his “Embrace of Aging and Dying” series that began in 2013 and his “On the Frontlines of Alzheimer’s and Dementia” film last year, he said he wanted to “focus on the disease that can take us out of the game and learn what can we do to stack the deck in our favor.”



Executive Director and Producer Keith Famie (left) interviews Dr. Eric Brown, a breast surgeon at the Comprehensive Breast Care Center in Troy.

He and his team have been working on a two-hour PBS film documentary “Those on the Front Lines of Cancer” for the past year and are in the final-production stages.

Despite advances in medicine, treatment and therapies, cancer still kills around 600,000 Americans each year and affects people of all ages.

“Cancer is a huge subject; there isn’t anybody who hasn’t been touched by it or knows somebody who has,” Famie said. “I’ve lost my friends to cancer, and I’ve had my own personal scares.”

Famie has conducted almost 100 interviews over the past eight months for the film. These include oncologists, researchers and surgeons who share what their cutting-edge research and experience has revealed, what is being learned about disease-modifying treatments and how researching patients’ genetics may change the way we approach cancer.

He interviewed doctors and researchers at the VA Medical Center in Ann Arbor, Royal Oak Beaumont, Henry Ford Health Care System, Ascension Providence Hospital, University of Michigan, Wayne State University, C.S. Mott Children’s Hospital, Children’s Hospital of Michigan, Moffit Cancer Center and Boca Raton Regional Hospital-Florida and the University of California-Berkley.

The documentary steps into the lives of those who have been diagnosed with cancer to learn how the journey affects them and their families and discover how complicated, emotionally draining and terrifying it can be to receive a cancer diagnosis.

Some of the subjects explored include diagnosis and prevention, environmental toxins, pain management, financial toxicity, lifestyle factors, advocacy and etiquette. The cancers mentioned include brain, breast, colon, leukemia, lung, pancreatic, prostate and skin.

“Probably the most important part of this film is we really give a voice to those who are facing cancer head-on currently or have lost somebody to cancer. Those are the real heroes of the film,” Famie said.

“We have extensive knowledge and understanding and now it’s really how do we apply it. How do we stack the deck in our favor to avoid a cancer incident?”

To watch the trailer for "Those on the Front lines of Cancer," visit vimeo.com/286589086#at=0. For more information, visit ontodaysfrontlines.com/cancer.