

Local cancer patients and survivors to be featured in Novi filmmaker's documentary

By Sharon Longman Special to The Oakland Press 11 hrs ago [Comments](#)



Oakland University student Megan Ritz, who is battling cancer, attended the Detroit Kite Festival's "Cancer, Go Fly a Kite!" with her family.

Photo courtesy of Keith Famie

Sunshine, blue water and blue skies provided the backdrop for the recent filming of Novi resident Keith Famie's PBS film documentary "Those on the Front Lines of Cancer" at Belle Isle in Detroit.

The filming took place at the Detroit Kite Festival's "Cancer, Go Fly a Kite!" More than 70 attendees decorated kites to honor their loved ones who lost their battle with cancer or those currently on their cancer journey. Film host JoAnne Purtan was on hand to film her closing to the documentary as well as fly a kite in honor of her mother and mother-in-law.

Television personality and Kids Kicking Cancer volunteer Lila Lazarus flew a kite in memory of Jamiah Williams, a young lady who appeared in the film who lost her battle with cancer. Many people from cancer support organizations attended.

The Visionalist Entertainment Productions team had stationary cameras and aerial drones to capture the memorable moments that will roll with the credits at the end of the film to the song from the Canadian Tenors "Lean on Me."

Keith Famie, 59, is the executive director and producer of Wixom-based Visionalist Entertainment Productions and has won 11 Michigan Emmy Awards for his films. He and his team have been working on the film for more than a year and are in the final-production stages, having completed about 100 interviews locally and throughout the country.

"I wanted the film to end with some level of inspiration and hope and community," Famie said. "It's a film that takes us through a lot of medical information, a lot of personal lives. At times it's going to be uncomfortable to watch just because of what people are going through, but at the end of the day, I want it to show that there's hope and inspiration within a community."

The film gives the viewer an inside perspective of what it's like for the patients, their families, their doctors, oncologists, researchers and surgeons. Doctors 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 they approach cancer.

Two of the children who were featured in the film have since passed away.

"This kind of stuff really brings it home, when somebody you're going to see in the film, at the end of the film, you're going to see their family flying a kite, because they did not make it," Famie said.

The film will premiere on Oct. 2 at the Emagine Theatre, 200 N Main St, Royal Oak. Tickets are not available yet, but will be through [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com). The film will air on DPTV/ PBS in late October.

For more information about the film "Those on the Front lines of Cancer" and to view a trailer, visit <http://ontodaysfrontlines.com/cancer>.



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Keith Famie

Detroit Kite Festival

Those On The Front Lines Of Cancer

Belle Isle
