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Award Winning Documentary, ALIVE INSIDE, Comes to Orlando

April screening benefit offers inspiration, education and a glimpse of the future by engaging an unexpected audience.

ORLANDO, FL--ALIVE INSIDE, an award-winning documentary about the power of music to help those living with dementia, is part of UCF Celebrates the Arts 2016 with a surprising new audience in mind – youth. The screening serves as a benefit to expand the intergenerational “Adopt an Elder / Build a Bridge” program throughout Central Florida and will include a Q&A session with filmmaker Michael Rossato-Bennett and renowned UCF Neuroscientist Dr. Kiminobu Sugaya.

UCF Celebrates the Arts is a free festival of performances and exhibits that demonstrates the impact of the university’s visual and performing arts on the community.

The ALIVE INSIDE screening event takes place at the DeVos Family Room at the Dr. Phillips Center for Performing Arts on April 8 at 6 pm. This event is open to the public and is free thanks to the generosity of Margery Pabst Steinmetz and The Pabst Charitable Foundation for the Arts. A Q&A session with the filmmaker and doctor, along with a special musical performance by participating UCF students follows the screening.

The film ALIVE INSIDE is a joyous cinematic exploration of music’s capacity to reawaken our souls and uncover the deepest parts of our humanity. Rossato-Bennett chronicles the astonishing experiences of individuals around the country who have been revitalized through the simple experience of listening to music. His camera reveals the uniquely human connection we find in music and how its healing power triumphs where prescription medication falls short. This stirring documentary follows social worker Dan Cohen (founder of the nonprofit [Music & Memory](#)) as he restores a deep sense of self to those suffering from memory loss and fights a broken healthcare system to reveal music’s ability to combat it. Rossato-Bennett documents family members who witness the miraculous effects of personalized music on their loved ones, and offers illuminating interviews with experts including renowned neurologist and best-selling author Oliver Sacks (Musicophilia) and musician Bobby McFerrin. An uplifting cinematic exploration of music and the mind, ALIVE INSIDE’s inspirational and emotional story left audiences humming, clapping and cheering at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival, where it won the [Audience Award](#).

Since its release, ALIVE INSIDE has fostered an explosion of over 2000 Music & Memory facilities across the country. A foundation emerged from an outpouring of interest and enabled Rossato-Bennett to further expand the vision of bringing music to elders. The Alive Inside Foundation's key program, "Adopt an Elder / Build a Bridge", includes youth and empowers them to become music detectives, finding songs that spark memories for dementia-afflicted individuals while cultivating empathy and explaining aging. Both the giver and receiver benefit from this compassionate exchange.

In November, 2015, Orlando became one of the first U.S. cities to embrace this exciting program. Linda Taylor, founder of the Creative Care Association (CCA), was inspired by the film to invite Encore at Avalon Park (a music-themed assisted living facility) to co-facilitate a pilot class. Students and administration from Avalon Park Middle School and the UCF School of Performing Arts came aboard enthusiastically.

After viewing the film, student volunteers from both the middle school and university completed special training with Dr. Sugaya, experienced simulated dementia, and were paired with individuals living with dementia whom they visit weekly to find special songs that trigger memories, stories and connection. The results have been fascinating and inspiring, with students and residents alike benefiting from their time together.

Beyond using music as a means to bridge generations, the Alive Inside Foundation sets its sights on discouraging aging stereotypes. Their ground-breaking program helps students learn to forge relationships with seniors and demystifies senior care communities. Participants are educated and empowered to make an impact on the future of senior care. The program is so impactful that many students have chosen to continue participating this summer after their school year officially ends. The proceeds of this event will be used to fund the expansion of the program to additional schools and community youth programs. The goal is to have every elder living with dementia adopted throughout Central Florida and for youth to detect and bring them their music.

As a result of the pilot program, Alive Inside Foundation and CCA have also partnered with UCF's Multi-disciplinary Neuroscience Alliance (MDNA), a think-tank comprised of researchers and educators dedicated to advancing cures for neurological conditions. Together, these agencies aim to inspire a movement that connects the generations through music and the arts, cultivates empathy in kids, and sparks aliveness in seniors.

This is part of a series of stories about the April 8-16 events at UCF Celebrates the Arts 2016. All events are free, but tickets are required for performances and entrance into the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts, 445 S. Magnolia Ave., Orlando. The full schedule and ticket information is at arts.cah.ucf.edu.

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