



**A DOCUMENTARY SERIES BY  
BRANDY YANCHYK**



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# INTRODUCTION

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## SHORT SYNOPSIS

Follow the lives of ten individuals as they share their journey to find meaningful employment and value in their lives.

## LONG SYNOPSIS

"The Working Originals" tells the stories of various individuals living with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and the challenges they face as they endeavor to find employment and meaning in their lives.

# CHARACTERS

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## EPISODE 1



### **KYLE MCDONALD**

Kyle takes great pride in his job at the Glendale Golf & Country Club. Born fourteen weeks premature, Kyle has a visual impairment and a developmental disability. His favourite things include golf, playing video games, and spending time with his friends. He loves his job at Glendale, where his positive attitude has helped him to become a valued member of the community.

**"My job at Glendale, I enjoy it. It's because, well I love golfing, for one. And I've gotten to know quite a bit of the members here so, by far one of the best jobs I've ever had."**



### **BRODIE HAMILTON**

Brodie has been working in the mailroom at Stantec for four years. Born with cerebral palsy, he was faced with great physical challenges in the first two years of his life. Brodie has overcome great odds with the love and support of his mother and twin brother. Although his job at Stantec is his first office job, his strong work ethic has made him a valued part of the team.

**"It's probably made me a little more stronger and I've overcome that kind of stuff in my everyday life and I've accepted it but also haven't dwelled on it."**

# CHARACTERS

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## EPISODE 1



### WENDY MCDONALD

Wendy is Kyle's mother and his greatest supporter. She credits him for being her greater teacher and believes that everyone should have the opportunity to know and love Kyle.

"There are thousands of Kyle's that are exactly the same, that are no less human than you and I, and deserve the right to be part of a community."



### KAREN HAMILTON

Karen is Brodie's mother. She is very proud of her son for all that he has accomplished and overcome.

"Brodie does have an intellectual disability but he's very high functioning and he's capable of learning a lot of things. I think things turned out pretty good given the way he started in life."



### BLAKE HAMILTON

Brodie's twin brother and best friend, Blake sees Brodie as his greatest inspiration.

"There just couldn't be a better brother to have really."

# CHARACTERS

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## EPISODE 2



### DAVID SOBIESKI

David works at Red Arrow Motor Coach in Calgary, Alberta where his happy demeanor and pride in his work are valued by both his co-workers and the customers he helps serve. Born with Down syndrome, David refuses to let the label of "handicapped" hold him back in life. His job at Red Arrow has been integral to developing his confidence and expanding his skill set.

**"Here's my work. I cleaned here and top. This is my office. Here's my seat."**



### CARMEN SOBIESKI

Carmen is David's mother. She is thankful for David's position at Red Arrow and hopes it helps him become more independent.

**"David was born Down syndrome. It was a shock for us but he has become the blessing of our lives."**



### PATRICK SOBIESKI

Patrick is David's father. He enjoys spending time with his son and feels lucky that the Alberta Association for Community Living was there to open doors for him.

**"I have to be humble with Dave, but he's an absolute pleasure to have around."**

# CHARACTERS

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## EPIISODE 3



### CODY STRASS

Cody went “straight to the top” when he started working at the Alberta Treasury Branch’s head offices where one of his primary responsibilities is cleaning the meeting rooms. Cody is known at work for his sense of humour and willingness to grow, not to mention his arm-wrestling skills! Unwilling to let his Down syndrome to define him, he takes great pride in his work and approaches everything he does with diligence and an upbeat attitude.

“I love being here. I am proud of myself.”



### TODD UDITSKY

Working as a shop hand at RAM Elevators & Lifts, Todd is known by his supervisor and co-workers for being on top of everything. Adopted at the age of seven, Todd’s early life resulted in numerous challenges to overcome, including Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder. The stability of his job and the support of his family have given new meaning to Todd’s life, allowing him to mature and grow into a responsible and reliable co-worker, a loving husband, and a valued son and brother.

“Where I am now, I’ve worked at for about ten years. They treat me with respect and I do the same thing to them.” OR “I’ve got caring parents who I care so much for, and a brother who I enjoy spending time with cause I’ve got a nephew and niece who I love dearly. Got a lovely wife at home and a cat too.”

# CHARACTERS

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## EPISODE 3



### **RUTH ANN CHAFFE**

Ruth Ann is Cody's mother. They share a great sense of humour and a lot of mutual respect and affection.

**"When Cody first started working at Alberta Treasury Branch and I found out that it was right downtown in the corporate head office, we told everyone that Cody went straight to the top."**



### **BRUCE UDITSKY**

Bruce is Todd's father and the CEO of the Alberta Association for Community Living. He and his wife provided Todd with a second chance at life when they adopted him. Through his work with the AACL, Bruce has had a lasting impact on the lives of many people with intellectual disabilities.

**"If I hadn't met [Todd] by accident as a result of my work, the odds are quite clearly he would have ended up dead, on the streets, in jail."**

# CHARACTERS

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## EPISODE 4



### SARA SYMINGTON

Sara is very happy at her job in the City of Edmonton's Employee Service Centre where she says, "everything just clicks." Unwilling to be defined by her autism, Sara prides herself on her independence and will not be held back by her disability or the stigma that comes with it. She recognizes that her quality of life has improved greatly since she started working in this position where her meticulous attention to detail and quirky personality are highly valued.

**"Having a job makes me feel good, included in society because everybody else has jobs in society."**



### KATHLEEN SZECHCHINA

Kathleen is Sara's grandmother and she has played an integral role in Sara's life since she was born.

**"We've always understood that Sara was on the autism spectrum, originally back in junior high, they classified her as Asperger's and now she has many of the behaviours of someone with autism."**

# CHARACTERS

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## EPISODE 4



### MARK FARR

As the Disability Outreach Coordinator at the City of Edmonton, Mark Farr plays an important role in shaping lives. Through his work with the Abilities At Work program, he is able to help provide meaningful and fulfilling work opportunities for people with disabilities.

**"It's important for the City of Edmonton to be an inclusive employer because we want to make sure that we have a workforce that is reflective of the community we serve."**



### RENATE BURWASH

Renate is the Director of Employment Services for the Gateway Association, an organization focused on providing opportunities for a better life for people with disabilities and their families.

**"We think of ourselves as a very holistic organization, so what we do is we work with the job seeker really just to get to know them as best as we can."**

# CHARACTERS

## EPIISODE 5



### SEAN IRWIN

Diagnosed with autism and childhood schizophrenia, Sean has found the perfect fit in his position at the Whitemud Equine Centre. Calling himself a “jack-of-all-trades,” his calm demeanor is appreciated by both the animals he works with as well as his co-workers. After many years of struggling to find employment, Sean has found community, purpose, and joy through his job as well as a sense hope for the future.

*“I feel like I’m home now and not like I have holes poked through me. I felt very hollow, and I didn’t felt like I fit in, but now I do.”*



### TERRANCE JEFFERY

Thrilled to be working at the Bonton Bakery after years of hardship, Terrance has new aspirations to one day have a career as a baker. Having survived multiple bouts of pneumonia as a child, he was left with cognitive challenges that have impacted his ability to find lasting employment. After years of hardship, barely able to get survive on social assistance, he now has a sense of purpose, value, and an improved quality of life.

*“When I’m working, well then I’ve got a sense of purpose type of thing and I’ve gotta get up and do this, gotta do this. So you know it makes me feel a lot better when I’m working than when I’m not.”*



### COLLEEN IRWIN

Colleen Irwin is Sean’s mother. She hopes to help Sean build a strong foundation on which to build his future and is very happy he has found so much joy in his work at the Whitemud Equine Centre.

*“I know how it feels to watch a boy who is healthy, able-bodied and nice, just wasting away. I didn’t know what to do.”*

# CHARACTERS

## EPIISODE 6



### JUNAID ABBASI

Junaid was born breech and suffered from seizures at a young age, leaving him with developmental delays. He now works full-time as a labourer for Mammoet, an engineering and heavy lifting company. His contribution to his workplace is not just seen through his excellent job performance, his supervisors and co-workers are grateful for the happiness he carries with him and shares every day. He loves his job because it gives him a sense of place and meaning.

**"I work here Monday to Friday, five days a week. It's really good here. I like it."**



### NICOLE ALMBERG

Nicole takes her position on the production team at the Organic Box very seriously. Born with Down syndrome, she has a strong sense of self that her parents began to foster at a young age. Starting out at the Organic Box with little work experience, Nicole quickly showed that, with the right guidance and tasks, she is a hard-worker who brings humour and dedication to all that she does.

**"I am the one who is responsible for my job and I'm taking this seriously."**



### NASREEN ABBASI

Nasreen thinks of her son, Junaid, as a gift from God. She is grateful for the support Junaid has found at Mammoet and how it has helped him mature and grow.

**"Actually, there's lots of people who does not talk about the disabilities much. They keep it to themselves, like I don't know what they feel about it, but I do feel he is special to us; he is a gifted by God."**

# CHARACTERS

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## EPISODE 6



### LORI ALMBERG

Lori is Nicole's mother. Through her experience raising a child with Down syndrome she has learned the importance of seeing every individual as unique.

"We've always set the bar high with Nicole, we've always had high expectations."



### MARC BIOLLO

As the Chief Marketing Officer for Chrysalis, Mark is able to work closely with people with disabilities to provide training and vocational opportunities.

"This job is important to Junaid because it gives him meaning."



### VICKIE MANCINI

Vickie is the Manager for Employment Services with the Gateway Association. She worked with Nicole to find her the right fit at the Organic Box.

"[People with disabilities have] been opted out, really, of employment, and so that was her biggest barrier."

# CREATIVE TEAM BIOS

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## **BRANDY YANCHYK – PRODUCER, DIRECTOR AND WRITER**

**Brandy Yanchyk** is an award winning independent documentary filmmaker based in Edmonton, Alberta who has made seven television documentaries in the past six years. Her productions cover a wide range of social and factual genres and they have aired on channels including BBC World TV, CBC's Documentary Channel, Rogers OMNI TV, PBS and film festivals around the world.

Ms. Yanchyk is also a regular reporter/producer for BBC World's *The Travel Show* and has covered stories worldwide including Canada, Finland, Australia and New Zealand for a global audience of 76 million viewers since 2009.

She has also worked as a news reporter for CBC for over a decade and as a broadcast journalist at BBC World TV and the BBC World Service in London.

Her documentaries include *Finding Edge Road* (2015) (CBC's Documentary Channel), *Grey Glory* (2014) (CBC's Documentary Channel, OMNI TV), *Grey Ambition* (2014) (CBC's Documentary Channel, OMNI TV), *Oil Calling* (2013) (CBC's Documentary Channel), *Nature's Invitation* (2012) (CBC's Documentary Channel, OMNI TV), *Brooks - The City of 100 Hellos* (2011) (CBC's Documentary Channel, OMNI TV) and *Desert to Ice* (2009) (BBC World TV).



### SARAH TAYLOR – EDITOR

**Sarah Taylor** is an award winning editor who has been editing for over thirteen years. She has a wealth of broadcast and non-broadcast experience that includes network television series, magazine shows, and countless corporate and government video productions. In 2011, Sarah edited the documentary *Brooks - The City of 100 Hellos* which aired on OMNI TV, CBC's Documentary Channel and PBS. In 2012, she edited the documentary *Nature's Invitation* which has also aired on OMNI TV, CBC's Documentary Channel and PBS and the feature film *Truckstop Bloodsuckers*. In 2013 Sarah edited *Oil Calling* which has aired on CBC's Documentary Channel. Sarah is the lead editor of the sketch comedy series *Caution: May Contain Nuts* and the series *Delmar and Marta* airing on APTN, the UK based web series *Raptured* and is currently working on the CSA award nominated *Tiny Plastic Men*. She is also a member of the DGC. In 2014, Sarah edited Brandy Y Productions' *Finding Edge Road, Grey Glory* and *Grey Ambition* documentaries.



### SERGIO OLIVARES – DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

**Sergio Olivares** has worked as a cinematographer for over twenty-five years. He brings social justice awareness to all the projects that he records. Sergio's work has been shown on multiple networks including the CBC, TSN and the National Film Board of Canada,.

Sergio filmed the NFB films *Broke, Anti-Social Limited* and *Who Cares*.



## RORY LEE – ART DIRECTOR

**Rory Lee** is an Art Director and Graphic Designer based in Edmonton, Alberta. Rory has worked on multiple motion graphic and video design projects creating title sequences for Brandy Y Productions' six documentaries *Finding Edge Road*, *Grey Glory*, *Grey Ambition*, *Oil Calling*, *Brooks - The City of 100 Hellos* and *Nature's Invitation*. He has expertise in typographic design, design for video production, animation and motion graphics and has worked for a number of corporate clients.