

## Pass It On®...

### Including Everybody Means Everybody.

*How Inclusion Films is making movies using crew with developmental disabilities.*

Annemarie Carrigan is your typical millennial. She has dreams and plans; she is self-confident and wants to make a difference in the world. And she has Down syndrome. She talks openly about her father being a little too overprotective, but she does smile as she says it, and childhood photographs of the two show just how close they are.

Annemarie has an intuitive sense of what a good story is. Growing up, she says, she felt isolated and yearned for the chance to express herself.

In an interview, Joey Travolta, who founded Inclusion Films, asked Annemarie what her dream job would be. Annemarie answered confidently, “To be a journalist.” Joey hired her on the spot to write a review of “Carol of the Bells,” a story of inclusion and understanding featuring the young actress Andrea Fay Friedman, who also has Down syndrome.

Annemarie was ecstatic. She begins her review with a personal insight: “I instantly related because of my own issues with acceptance, isolation and loneliness.” The movie features some complex emotions featuring overprotective parents, anger, resentment and forgiveness. Annemarie dissects these emotions in a very tender way, seeing the perspective of the overprotective parent and their worries that grow out of love, and the perspective of the child who wants to be independent yet still loves her parent. Annemarie’s emotional intelligence leaves us all wondering if we can be a little more patient—taking the time to feel what others are feeling before we react.

Annemarie’s journey continued when she was asked to star in the movie “Normie,” a powerful story that challenges what it means to be normal. It’s won several awards at independent film festivals and made Annemarie somewhat of a celebrity. But it’s the learning experience she cherishes most. “The first day I filmed ‘Normie’ was the very first time I let everything out and spoke about how I felt,” she recalls. “It was like an emotional volcano exploding ... it felt great to tell

the truth. I really want to help people who are fighting loneliness, too.”

Inclusion Films teaches writing, filming, editing; everything you need to know to make a good film. Joey Travolta does it in a way that focuses more on his students discovering their own story, building confidence and having a chance to participate in the world around them, rather than just being a bystander. These neurodiverse individuals — who are sometimes viewed only by the disabilities they live with — offer insights many of us might miss. Turns out that when life brings challenges in one aspect, you are often compensated in others.

As we make room for everyone to tell their stories, we each play a bigger part in our own.

**Inclusion...[PassItOn.com](https://www.passiton.com)**

By The Foundation for a Better Life®

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