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**Sag Harbor Cinema's "Projections" Series Presents
"Making Waves Together: Redefining Ability and Building Community
Through Adaptive Surfing" on Saturday, October 24th at 11am
at Sag Harbor Cinema in partnership with Flow Surf Academy
*Free Program Includes Film Screening & Moderated Panel Discussion***

Sag Harbor, NY — Sag Harbor Cinema continues its "Projections" series on Saturday, October 24 at 11am with "Making Waves Together: Redefining Ability and Building Community Through Adaptive Surfing," presented in partnership with Flow Surf Academy. The free program features a screening of Bryan Downey's documentary *The Athletes* (2026), followed by a moderated conversation with the filmmaker and representatives from Flow Surf Academy.

Flow Surf Academy empowers neurodivergent individuals to build confidence and forge lasting connections, supported by a close-knit community of near-peer volunteers and adult instructors. Filmed on the beaches of Montauk, Bryan Downey's *The Athletes* brings this work to the screen, celebrating the athletes at its center and the relationships that have grown around the program.

Following the screening, filmmaker Bryan Downey will join Flow Surf Academy's Montauk Program Founder and East Coast Director Bob Miller; Board Member, Parent, and Advocate Heather Hartstein; and athletes Shane Hartstein and Rocco Intonato for a conversation about the program and the community behind it. Mark Lubell, Sag Harbor Cinema's Executive Director, will moderate the panel and Q&A.

"I was being tossed and tumbled in the ocean with my camera, as if I were in a fast laundry cycle. It gave me a new appreciation for what the athletes were experiencing," said Bryan Downey. "But what really blew me away was the dedication of the young volunteers, from teenage surf coaches encouraging athletes to catch their first solo wave to younger mentors waiting in the shallows. The level of care and love for the sport was extraordinary."

“This documentary has provided a stage for not only the amazing near-peer model Flow Surf Academy Montauk provides,” said Heather Hartstein, “but also begins to illuminate the varied access points to consciousness that our Athletes have, helping to shift perspectives about what neurodivergent individuals can actually do.”

“I am thankful and grateful that this is what I get to do with my life,” said Bob Miller.

“Bryan’s film shines a light on the remarkable work Flow Surf Academy is doing right here on the East End,” said Lubell. “We’re pleased to bring this story to the Cinema and share it with our community, including students from local schools.”

The partnership extends beyond the October 24 public program, bringing *The Athletes* to students at Pierson Middle/High School and Sag Harbor Elementary School, with outreach also extending to other schools across the East End.

Sag Harbor Cinema founded the “Projections” series in 2021 with the goal to amplify the work of East End non-profit organizations and cultural initiatives by providing a space to have conversations and to build audiences using the Cinema’s facility, network, and digital presence.

It was created by Bill Collage, SHC Education Committee Chair, and is led by Dr. Meghan McGinley Arnone, SHC Director of Education & Grants Management.

This event is free to the public, but space is limited. Reserve a spot to attend this community program at sagharborcinema.org.

ABOUT THE FILM

THE ATHLETES

Directed by Bryan Downey

USA | 2026 | 34 mins | English

Filmed from mid-June to mid-August on the beaches of Montauk, Bryan Downey’s *The Athletes* offers an intimate look at Flow Surf Academy, where neurodivergent individuals, ages 5 to 30, take to the waves with the support of a dedicated local community of near-peer volunteers and adults. Through interviews with families, volunteers, lifeguards, and surf instructors, the documentary reveals the trust and personal connections at the heart of the program. Some volunteers begin as beach helpers at just five years old, returning summer after summer to become near-peer mentors and surf coaches. Against the backdrop of Montauk’s surf, Downey

captures a community where the ocean opens new possibilities and bonds formed on the beach extend far beyond the water.

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About Sag Harbor Cinema

As a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) community-based organization, Sag Harbor Cinema (SHC) is dedicated to presenting the past, present, and future of the movies and to preserving and educating about films, filmmaking, and the film-going experience in its three state-of-the-art theaters. The Cinema engages its audiences and the community year-round through dialogue, discovery, and appreciation of the moving image—from blockbusters to student shorts and everything in between. Revitalized and reimaged through unprecedented community efforts to rebuild the iconic Main Street structure after a fire nearly destroyed it in 2016, SHC continues a long historic tradition of entertainment in the heart of Sag Harbor Village. Visit sagharborcinema.org for more information.

About Flow Surf Academy

Flow Surf Academy is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering neurodivergent individuals through adaptive surfing. With programs in California and New York, the Academy brings athletes together with experienced near-peer instructors and a dedicated community of volunteers, fostering confidence and lasting connections in and out of the water. Rooted in the belief that every individual deserves the opportunity to experience the ocean, Flow Surf Academy celebrates each athlete's abilities and the community that grows around them. Visit flowsurfacademy.org for more information.