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Two documentaries put faces on mental illness



"Walking Man" follows Mark Norwine and his son Eric as they walk the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail and reveal personal experiences with depression. Photo provided.

The documentaries seek to inspire in their own ways, with *Expressing the Chaos* arguing that the old age and memory loss cannot suppress a creative mind, and *Walking Man* subjects Mark Norwine and Eric Norwine mining their personal experiences to remove the stigma attached to mental illness.

With *Expressing the Chaos*, director Jonathan Gruber celebrates the life of an empathetic artist who painted to communicate the suffering of others, including those killed during the Holocaust. He offers a revealing glimpse into what drove Beerman and her working processes. Dementia has certainly had a negative impact on Beerman, but it has not diminished her love of and desire to make new art — even if it is not on the scale of the work that gained her acclaim.

The editor of the Palm Beach International Film Festival opening-night film, *Welcome to Me*, Josh Salzberg makes his directorial debut with *Walking Man*, which follows Mark Norwine and son Eric as they walk the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail from Kansas City, Mo., to St. Louis on behalf of the CHADS (Communities Healing Adolescent Depression and Suicide) Coalition. While the walk serves as an opportunity to spread the word for a great cause beyond high school students, the Norwines take advantage of their time to bond and share their harrowing experiences with depression with each other and anyone willing to listen. It's also hard to avoid shedding a tear when Mark Norwine reveals the circumstances that led to his diagnosis of bipolar affective disorder at 52.

If Mark Norwine's story proves anything, it's that it's never too late to receive help to manage mental illness.