

ENTERTAINMENT

Tara Notrica talks about the award-winning documentary ‘Second Chance’

By **Markos Papadatos** Published August 17, 2021



'Second Chance' film. Photo Credit: Matthew White, 4th Coast Productions

Tara Notrica chatted with Digital Journal's Markos Papadatos about being a part of the award-winning documentary "Second Chance."

"Being a part of it was an incredible experience," she said. "I always knew I wanted to share my story but was unsure how I would accomplish that. The film wasn't planned and just happened in a short period of time. I connected with Matthew White (director), and I feel confident to say that he fell in love with what I shared during our first phone conversation. Within a few short weeks, filming began."

Notrica continued, "Working with White, Brian Gerlach (co-director), and Parker Bement (Director of Photography) was truly wonderful and so natural. We all got along so well, and they became like extended family during the shooting process. The film involved interviews with my family members, lifelong friends, my Transplant Doctor (Dr. Sergio Giral, MSKCC), my New York State Senator (Senator John Brooks), my Health Advocate (Michael Gatto), and people in the music industry. It was fantastic and almost surreal."

The Long Island International Film Expo not only selected the film for screening but also honored them with an award for Best Original Song (also titled "Second Chance") and the "Alan Fortunoff Humanitarian Film Award." "We couldn't be more proud and ecstatic for these incredible recognitions/accolades for our work," she said.

She shared that "Second Chance" is a unique film because it tells the story through original music. "We created a soundtrack for the film which helps to tell the story of our experiences as I prepared for, underwent, and recuperated from an allogeneic bone marrow transplant with major complications. The songs include topics such as overcoming hardships, bullying, gun violence, and getting a 'Second Chance' at life. 'Second Chance,' our Feature, Award-Winning Song, is available on Spotify, iTunes & Apple Music. The additional songs will be released over time," she said.

Her daughter, Samantha (Sammi Sing2) was 14 years old during the time of filming. "At the age of 13, she co-wrote and recorded her first original song called 'Brave The Storm' which is included on the soundtrack. During the months leading up to filming, filming, and post-filming, Samantha continued to co-write and record a total of 11 original songs," she said.

"Samantha would spend months of Friday and Sunday nights in Robbie Rosen's (American Idol Finalist) home studio with Robbie and me (when available) writing and recording so many very powerful and inspirational original songs. At times, I was in complete awe and amazement at her maturity and composure. There were times I was all choked up or shed a few tears as I listened to Samantha sing. She was such a young child singing at times about the unknown fate of her mother when she could have been out socializing with friends. This experience instead was in her heart and soul," she said.

Prior to becoming very ill, Notrica was a special education teacher for many years. "I continued to work until my Mast Cell Disease completely overtook my body. I remember on one of my last days of work, I had to be taken to the hospital. I knew the end of my career was very near, but I vowed I would never stop teaching. I promised I would continue educating, just in a different capacity. The 'Second Chance' documentary continues to fulfill the vow I made almost 16 years ago," she said.

As a transplant patient, she never knows what tomorrow may bring her. "I try not to plan too far ahead but instead look at increments of time. I continue to work hard on my recuperation. My bone marrow transplant required me to be hospitalized for both my son's high school graduation and my daughter's middle school graduation. In May of 2022, my son is planning on graduating from college, and in June of 2022, my daughter is planning on graduating from high school. I pray constantly that I'll be able to see them receive their well-deserved diplomas," she said.

"Additionally, during one of our screenings, I spoke during a Q&A session. It was suggested that I try to become a guest speaker at different events to share my story, hence continue to educate. I'm so hopeful that I will have the opportunity to do so," she said.

Throughout her journey, she was constantly reminded that her situation could have been disastrous. "My children may not have fared well educationally, emotionally, physically, or socially, and our family unit could have crumbled. In hindsight, we were able to overcome some of life's greatest obstacles through perseverance, optimism, and family bonding while channeling our deep expression of emotions through music," she explained.

"With love, strength, courage, determination, fortitude, an abundance of support, the best medical care, and a little luck, my husband and I will hopefully celebrate 25 years of marriage in July of 2022, and together we raised two beautiful, kind, caring, hardworking, determined, motivated, responsible, selfless children. That to me defines success," she said.

"'Second Chance' is a multi-layered, inspirational/human interest documentary," she said. "Our purpose of the film is to show the importance of family relationships, raise awareness about rare diseases, educate about the bone marrow transplant process, encourage more people to become bone marrow donors, to raise awareness about NYS Bill S1377/A5755-2021-2022, to provide inspiration and to show how music has healing powers."

"We're very proud to share that we've screened worldwide in the film festival circuit and have won several awards including Best Original Song, Best Original Soundtrack, Women in Film, Disability Issue, Performative Documentary, Best Inspirational Feature, Best Director, and the 'Alan Fortunoff Humanitarian Film Award,'" she said.

"We're very hopeful to get a widespread distribution deal that will allow us to continue to share our documentary with the world. Lastly, we all hope to recruit the music community, the acting/filmmaker community, the medical community, the rare disease community, the pharmaceutical community, the broadcasting community, the publishing community, our elected officials, and any other community that will help us save all mankind with love and life," she concluded.



In this article: Documentary, Expo, Film, Long island, second chance, Tara Notrica

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Markos Papadatos is Digital Journal's Editor-at-Large for Music News. Papadatos is a Greek-American journalist and educator that has authored over 15,000 original articles over the past 15 years. He has interviewed some of the biggest names in music, entertainment, lifestyle, magic, and sports. He is a five-time consecutive "Best of Long Island" winner, and in the past two years, he was honored as the "Best Long Island Personality" in Arts & Entertainment, an honor that has gone to Billy Joel six times.

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