



## EASTERSEALS SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA LAUNCHES 2021 EASTERSEALS DISABILITY FILM CHALLENGE

**Now Accepting Submissions for the “Home Edition 2.0”**

**Judges Include Jim LeBrecht, Lawrence Carter-Long, Kat Coiro,  
Jillian Mercado, Col Needham, Lolo Spencer, Stephanie Thomas, and More**

LOS ANGELES, February 18, 2021 – Nonprofit disability services provider and resource [Easterseals Southern California](#) announced today that it is now accepting submissions for the **2021 Easterseals Disability Film Challenge: Home Edition 2.0**. Created in 2013 and launched in 2014, the challenge gives filmmakers – with and without disabilities – the opportunity to collaborate to tell unique stories that showcase disability in its many forms, inviting aspiring storytellers to creatively write, produce, and complete short films. It is a week-long filmmaking contest, open to all, that provides a platform for new voices in the entertainment industry.

Registration is [open now](#) through Monday, March 15, and the Film Challenge will take place from Tuesday, March 16 until Sunday, March 21. Finalists will be announced on Thursday, April 29, with the virtual Awards Ceremony set to take place on Thursday, May 6.

“We are looking forward to another successful home edition of the Easterseals Disability Film Challenge, and are so grateful to everyone who continues to make this possible,” said Nic Novicki, Founder of the Easterseals Disability Film Challenge. “We were overwhelmed last year by the dedication of our filmmakers who, despite the circumstances imposed by the pandemic, were able to create meaningful, authentic, and memorable works of art. We have no doubt that 2021 will deliver another spectacular collection of short films that showcase the talent and creativity in the disability community.”

Winners of the Easterseals Disability Film Challenge receive invaluable access to entertainment professionals, opening the door to an industry notoriously difficult to enter, as well as a variety of other priceless gifts to help them achieve their career goals:

- \$1,500 grants provided by NBCUniversal
- Dell Technologies Laptop
- One-year subscription to Adobe Creative Cloud – the entire collection of 20+ creative desktop and mobile apps including Premiere Pro, After Effects, and Photoshop
- One-year membership to [IMDbPro](#), the essential resource for entertainment industry professionals, including the IMDbPro Discover tool, which empowers members to find people based on a variety of key IMDb data, experience and expertise
- The winning films will be highlighted in a video playlist on the homepage of IMDb, the world's most popular and authoritative source for information on movies, TV shows and celebrities

## EMBARGOED UNTIL FEBRUARY 18, 2021 at 9AM PT / NOON ET

- Screenings at numerous Academy Award-Qualifying festivals, including the Heartland Film Festival, HollyShorts Film Festival, Bentonville Film Festival and NewFilmmakers LA
- One year membership to Film Independent
- Mentorship meetings with entertainment industry executives and talent

The Easterseals Disability Film Challenge will be judged by a wide selection of influential voices within the entertainment industry, who will lend their expertise to select the best films this year. They include: **Jim LeBrecht** (Director, *Crip Camp*), **Lawrence Carter-Long** (Film Critic), **Nicole Castro** (Managing Director, HollyShorts Film Festival), **Kat Coiro** (Director, *She-Hulk, Marry Me*) **Jenni Gold** (Director, *CinemAbility: The Art of Inclusion*), **Brett Greenstein** (Greenstein/Daniel Casting), **Jillian Mercado** (Model and Actor *The L Word: Generation Q*), **Col Needham** (IMDb Founder and CEO), **Mark Povaneli** (Actor, President, Little People of America), **Richard Propes** (Film Critic), **Gil Robertson** (President of the African American Film Critics Association), **Lolo Spencer** (Actor), **Stephanie Thomas** (Stylist), **Mara Webster** (Co-Founder & Head of Programming, In Creative Company), **Jennifer Wilson** (Nominations Manager, Film Independent), **Stacey Wilson Hunt** (Entertainment Journalist) and **Danny Woodburn** (*Seinfeld, Mirror Mirror*). Additional judges and special participants will be announced in the coming weeks.

Previous Easterseals Disability Film Challenge winners and participants have gone on to achieve great success within the industry, landing roles in major television shows and films including *New Amsterdam, Superstore, The Good Doctor, Loudermilk, Marry Me*, and *Moxie*, and earning accolades and grants from prestigious organizations all around the world!

The Easterseals Disability Film Challenge is made possible through generous support from **Adobe, Dell Technologies, IMDbPro (a service of IMDb), NBCUniversal, Sony Pictures, Sundance Institute, ViacomCBS, and WarnerMedia.**

For more information, visit: <https://disabilityfilmchallenge.com/>

Easterseals Southern California has also recently launched its “**Easterseals in Entertainment**” website and resource center. The site highlights Easterseals’ ongoing initiatives, which aim to change the way the world defines and views disability, using the Entertainment industry as an incredibly powerful tool to do so. The site also serves as a resource center, offering tools for finding actors and creators within the disability community, providing a Best Practices Guide for writers looking to bring authentic disability representation to their work and writers rooms, and much more! Visit <https://eastersealsinentertainment.org/>

To stay in the know on all things related to Disability Inclusion, follow:

Facebook:

[@EastersealsSoCal](#)

[@DisabilityFilmChallenge](#)

[@MediaAccessAwards](#)

Twitter:

[@EastersealsSoCal](#)

[@DisabilityChall](#)

[@MediaAccess4All](#)

Instagram:

[@EastersealsSoCal](#)

[@DisabilityFilmChallenge](#)

[@MediaAccessAwards](#)

### **About the Easterseals Disability Film Challenge**

As someone with a disability, actor, comedian and producer Nic Novicki launched the Disability Film Challenge in 2013 in response to the under-representation of talent with disabilities both in front of and behind the camera. Novicki created the challenge to give aspiring filmmakers the opportunity to showcase their work and provide them with meaningful exposure. In 2017, Novicki joined forces with Easterseals Southern California – the nation’s leading nonprofit supporting people and families with disabilities – to expand the event, now known as the Easterseals Disability Film Challenge. Learn more at [www.DisabilityFilmChallenge.com](http://www.DisabilityFilmChallenge.com).

### **About Easterseals Southern California**

For more than 100 years, Easterseals has been an indispensable resource for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. The services provided by Easterseals Southern California (ESSC) – in Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, Imperial, Kern, San Bernardino, Riverside and Ventura counties – make profound and positive differences in people's lives every day, helping them address life’s challenges and achieve personal goals so that they can live, learn, work and play in our communities. With 2,800+ employees, 60+ service sites and hundreds of community partnership locations, ESSC assists more than 13,000 people, providing adult/senior day services; autism therapy; child development/early education; employment services, veteran employment support; independent living options; and more. Join us in changing the way the world defines and views disabilities at [www.easterseals.com/southernca](http://www.easterseals.com/southernca).

### **Media Contacts**

Elyse Weissman / Lindsey Brown

SLATE PR

[elyse@slate-pr.com](mailto:elyse@slate-pr.com) / [lindsey@slate-pr.com](mailto:lindsey@slate-pr.com)