



# News Release

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## **CNN's Oscar®-Nominated Film 'Autism Is a World' Makes TV Debut**

**CNN to Air Acclaimed Filmmaker Gerardine Wurzburg's Film about Autistic Woman on Sunday, May 22**

"Autism Is a World," a co-production of CNN Productions and State of the Art Inc., will make its television premiere as a *CNN Presents* documentary on Sunday, May 22, at 8 p.m. (ET) The film, nominated for an Academy Award® for Best Documentary Short Subject by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in February, is a candid and compelling look into the mind of Sue Rubin, a 26-year-old Los Angeles woman living with autism.

"Autism Is a World" combines Rubin's courageous writing with a sensitive, dramatic reading by actress Julianna Margulies. Brought to life through the powerful filmmaking of Gerardine Wurzburg, "Autism Is a World" offers a view of autism as it has rarely been seen—from the inside out. The film was produced and directed by Wurzburg. Jennifer Hyde was the supervising producer for CNN Productions.

"We were delighted to work with Gerry Wurzburg to tell the remarkable story of a true hero, Sue Rubin," said Sid Bedingfield, senior vice president of CNN Productions and executive producer of "Autism Is a World." "Her courage and eloquence are inspiring. She takes us inside the world of autism, allowing us to understand this mysterious disorder in ways we never have before."

"Imagine a life that in 26 years has spanned being labeled as retarded and becoming an honor student in college," said filmmaker Gerardine Wurzburg. "Imagine accomplishing all of this without the gift of speech. This is why it was such a privilege to work with Sue and her family on this production. Today, there are thousands of children facing the diagnosis of autism. For them and for their families, Sue's story is a beacon of hope."

Rubin has been on an extraordinary journey for 26 years. When she was 4, her unusual behavior led to a diagnosis of autism and contributed to the belief that she was mentally retarded. But at age 13, a new communication technique gave Rubin the ability to connect with the world and exhibit her considerable intelligence. Now, she is a junior in college, a tireless disabilities-rights activist and an articulate guide into autism.

Rubin wrote the documentary and is the viewer's guide into autism. By typing into a handheld communication device, Rubin explains her feelings and her actions, such as her need to clutch spoons or why she finds comfort in falling water; her relationships with other people; and how she copes with the tasks of daily living and the challenges of college.

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Rubin also describes some of her unusual behavior. She does not make eye contact when greeting strangers and instead may fixate on their shirt buttons. She cannot verbalize a person's name but may frequently repeat the same word or phrase. By discussing some of her behaviors, Rubin provides insight into this complex part of autism.

Rubin guides the audience through all that is special and usual about her life. From the racetrack where she goes to unwind to the classroom where her intellect shines and from a presentation at an autism conference to the challenges of paying bills or shopping, Rubin takes an unflinching look at the world of autism and the challenges she must face daily.

Selected *CNN Presents* programs will be aired as commercial-free classroom editions. For further information about on-line curriculum and airdates, please visit [www.CNNStudentnews.com](http://www.CNNStudentnews.com).

Free copies of "Autism Is a World" will be provided to 16,000 libraries across the United States, made possible by a grant from the Nancy Lurie Marks Family Foundation.

CNN, a division of Turner Broadcasting System, Inc., a Time Warner Company, is one of the world's most respected and trusted sources for news and information. Its reach extends to 14 cable and satellite television networks; two private place-based networks; two radio networks; wireless devices around the world; six Web sites, including CNN.com, the first major news and information Web site; and CNN Newsource, the world's most extensively syndicated news service.

State of the Art Inc. is a Washington, D.C.-based production company founded by Gerardine Wurzburg. In 2003, State of the Art and CNN Productions co-produced the documentary "President Kennedy Has Been Shot."

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