

'Maire's Journey' complete as ashes reach eastern shore



Lisa Roose-Church , Livingston Daily 6:06 a.m. EDT October 12, 2016



(Photo: Visionalist Entertainment Productions)

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"Maire's Journey" tells the story of Maire Kent, who was diagnosed with cardiac sarcoma, a rare cancer of the heart. The 24-year-old woman, whose name is pronounced "Mary," lost her battle against the disease in 2013 and her dying wish was to have her ashes placed in a wooden sailboat so she could "go to the ocean."

"It was a big surprise to me and it's completely changed how I expected my life to be," Kent said about learning she had cancer in the film.

The documentary, a portion of which was filmed at Borek Jennings Funeral Home in Howell, has toured film festivals and makes its Michigan premiere Saturday at the Royal Starr Film Festival. It also will be featured at the Indie Lounge at Sundance.

Director Keith Famie of [Visionalist Entertainment Productions](#) will also release his companion book, "[Maire's Journey to the Sea](#)," at that time. The book has a detailed story about Kent's fight with cancer and what Famie learned from her. Two dollars of each sale go to the University of Michigan's Maire Kent Memorial Fund for Sarcoma and Cardiac Tumor Research.

In the documentary, Kent shares her fears and she explains that her final wish is based on a childhood book, "Paddle-to-the-Sea," which is a story about an Indian boy who carves a wooden model of an Indian in a boat that the boy wants to reach the ocean.



Maire Kent, who was diagnosed with cardiac sarcoma, wished to have her ashes carried out to the ocean. Her ashes are in the small wooden boat seen in the foreground. (Photo: Visionalist Entertainment Productions)

“It’s about how people pick him up and set him free,” Kent explains in the movie. “I want to do that. I want to go to the ocean.”

The documentary follows Kent’s boat’s 14,000-mile journey from the Great Lakes of northern Michigan to the Eastern Seaboard, and the “many people” who made it possible, including [George Wurtzel](#), a blind carpenter who built the 3-foot wooden boat carrying Kent’s ashes. Also in the boat were photographs of others who lost their lives to cancer and on the boat’s sail was Kent’s posthumous message:

“My name is Maire. I died of cardiac sarcoma cancer. This boat has my ashes in it, and I’m making my way to the ocean. If you find me, please set me back on my path. I will bless you from heaven. If I have reached the ocean, please let my brothers and sisters know. You can reach them on my Facebook page, [‘Maire’s Journey.’](#)”

In addition, Famie's movie, "[Death is Not the Answer](#)," will debut Nov. 6 at Emagine Royal Oak on North Main Street in Royal Oak. The two-part film debut, which includes scenes of veterans with the Pinckney Community High School cross country team, will air 8 p.m. Nov. 11 on PBS.



Visionalist Entertainment Productions film crew films a scene from the documentary "Maire's Journey," about Maire Kent, who died of cardiac sarcoma. (Photo: Visionalist Entertainment Productions)

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