

Case Study

Private Screening of "Blacks Can't Swim – The Sequel" Documentary for A2ndVOICE (Supporting Autism)



Introduction

A2ndVoice is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to supporting the needs of autistic individuals and their families while raising awareness and understanding of autism from various perspectives. With a strong focus on outreach to African, Caribbean, Asian, and Minority Ethnic Communities (ACAME) as well as Dual Heritage Communities, A2ndVoice works tirelessly to tackle prevalent taboos and myths surrounding autism. They strive to create a more inclusive environment through education, advocacy, and community engagement.

Recognising the critical need for improved access to swimming and water safety—particularly among underrepresented communities—A2ndVoice hosted a private screening of "Blacks Can't Swim - The Sequel" at the Ferndale Community Sports Centre. The screening served as a vital platform to address the significant challenges faced by autistic individuals in accessing swimming activities. By presenting this thought-provoking documentary, A2ndVoice sought to raise awareness about the barriers that prevent diverse communities, especially Black and Asian children, from engaging in swimming, a crucial life skill.

Statistics indicating that 97% of Black adults and 82% of Black children, along with 96% of Asian adults and 79% of Asian children in England do not swim, highlight the urgent need for community-focused initiatives. Additionally, autistic children are at an even greater risk, with Black children being seven times more likely to die from drowning than their White peers.

Objectives and Goals

The primary objectives of the screening event were to raise awareness about the accessibility issues surrounding swimming for autistic individuals and underrepresented communities, particularly within African, Caribbean, and Asian backgrounds. A2ndVoice aimed to inspire participants to engage in discussions about barriers to water safety and swimming, thereby fostering a sense of community and collective action. The screening also sought to empower attendees, encouraging them to advocate for more inclusive swimming programmes tailored to the needs of autistic children.

The Event

The screening took place at the Ferndale Community Sports Centre, providing an accessible and welcoming venue for attendees from the local community. Following the screening of "Blacks Can't Swim - The Sequel," a panel discussion was held, moderated by Ed Accura, the writer and producer of the documentary. He was joined by notable attendees, including Chair of the British Skin Foundation, Susanna Fataki (My Natural Afro Hair), Tony Holman, a coach and father of Sam Holman, is also the first Black autistic triathlete., and a representative from GLL. This panel allowed attendees to engage with the speakers, ask questions, and discuss the film's key themes.

The audience consisted of a diverse mix of community members, including families of autistic children, local educators, health professionals, and individuals from ACAME backgrounds. The atmosphere was charged with anticipation as participants gathered, motivated by a shared interest in improving swimming access and understanding the challenges faced by autistic individuals in aquatic environments.

Benefits to A2ndVoice

The screening event provided A2ndVoice with an opportunity to further their mission in several ways. Firstly, it raised the organisation's profile within the community, showcasing their commitment to advocacy and inclusivity. Additionally, the event strengthened partnerships with other organisations and professionals within the swimming sector, including GLL Better Gyms, which demonstrated a shared commitment to promoting accessibility in aquatic activities. Finally, the feedback and engagement from attendees allowed A2ndVoice to gather valuable insights that can help shape future initiatives and educational programmes aimed at supporting autistic individuals and their families.

Benefits to the Audience

Attendees of the screening gained important insights into the challenges faced by autistic individuals and underrepresented communities regarding swimming and water safety. The event fostered a sense of community among participants, encouraging them to share their experiences and concerns. Many left feeling empowered to advocate for change in their local areas, motivated by the relatable narratives presented in the documentary. The screening also provided a safe space for attendees to discuss fears and anxieties about swimming, enabling them to reflect on their personal experiences and the experiences of their loved ones.

Personal Comments

The impact of the documentary was clearly articulated through the personal comments of attendees. One individual expressed, "I never realised how significant the issue of swimming accessibility was for autistic individuals in our community." Another shared, "This documentary made me feel seen; it's important to have representation of autistic people in swimming." Several participants also highlighted the importance of addressing fears, with one stating, "I appreciate the focus on overcoming fears related to water; it resonates with my own experiences as an autistic person."

Additionally, comments such as, "I had no idea that so many Black and Asian people struggle with swimming; I thought it was just a personal choice," reflect a newfound understanding of cultural barriers. Many attendees expressed their thoughts on accessibility, saying, "I didn't realise that swimming could be seen as a privilege; it makes me think about accessibility differently." Engagement with the documentary's narratives encouraged further introspection; one participant noted, "Hearing personal stories really opened my eyes; I didn't understand how much fear and anxiety could affect someone's willingness to swim."

The screening also inspired commitments toward action, as participants reflected on the community aspect, with one attendee stating, "I loved how the documentary highlighted the importance of community support in helping autistic individuals learn to swim." This sentiment encapsulates the transformative effect the event had on attendees, many of whom expressed a desire to learn more about aquatic safety and engage their communities: "This documentary has made me more aware of the need for inclusivity in sports; I want to learn more about how I can help."

Impact Assessment

The screening of "Blacks Can't Swim - The Sequel" had a substantial impact on both the attendees and the broader community. Immediate feedback indicated that many participants felt inspired to advocate for

greater inclusivity in swimming programmes. The event successfully raised awareness about the obstacles faced by underrepresented communities in swimming, highlighting the need for tailored programmes that address these specific challenges.

By facilitating open dialogue and personal reflection, the event fostered a supportive community atmosphere where attendees felt safe expressing their thoughts and experiences. This sense of empowerment has the potential to translate into advocacy efforts that could lead to concrete changes in how swimming is approached within the local context, particularly for autistic children and families.

Conclusion

The screening of "Blacks Can't Swim - The Sequel" provided an important platform for raising awareness about the barriers to swimming faced by autistic individuals, particularly within African, Caribbean, and Asian communities. Through meaningful discussions and engagement, A2ndVoice reinforced the significance of inclusivity and accessibility in swimming, paving the way for ongoing advocacy and support for those affected by autism.

By bringing together community members, professionals, and advocates, the event inspired individuals to act and fostered a sense of camaraderie and shared purpose in striving for a more inclusive environment for all. The overwhelming response from attendees indicated a collective commitment to promoting swimming education and safety within their communities, ultimately paving the way for enhanced opportunities for autistic individuals to learn this vital life skill. This case study highlights the need for continued efforts to create environments where swimming can be safely accessed by everyone, regardless of their background or abilities.

About the Documentaries

The **Blacks Can't Swim** and **Changing the Narrative** documentaries have provided crucial insights into why a disproportionate number of people of African, Caribbean, and Asian heritage do not swim. These documentaries offer valuable perspectives through the lived experiences shared in the films.

These documentaries are essential viewing for anyone who would like to better understand how a lack of diversity and inclusion in aquatics has impacted individuals within ethnically diverse communities. By participating in these screenings, viewers will gain insight into the complex barriers to aquatic engagement, the opportunities and benefits that being able to swim can provide, and how participation in swimming and aquatics can be promoted within African, Caribbean, and Asian communities.

For organisations looking to fulfil their social responsibilities, especially those with a diverse workforce, these screenings present an opportunity to engage with important societal issues and encourage positive change within their communities. By fostering discussions around inclusivity and aquatic safety, organisations can contribute to enhancing community well-being and collectively work towards changing the narrative surrounding swimming participation.

For organisations interested in hosting their screening, private packages including a Q&A session are available via the link below, furthering the documentary's mission to raise awareness and advocate for aquatic justice.

Contact info@changingthenarrative.film to initiate change in your community and workplace. Together, we can foster a culture of understanding, safety, and empowerment for all.

For more information, interested parties can visit www.changingthenarrative.film