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## **KidsPeace to Present Author Ron Suskind (*Life, Animated*) at ArtsQuest Center in Bethlehem Sunday, November 5**



**Open-to-the public event includes screening of documentary, demonstration of new app to facilitate communication for individuals with autism**

**BETHLEHEM, PA (October 18, 2017)** - In the best-selling book and Oscar®-nominated documentary film *Life, Animated*, Ron Suskind detailed his efforts to communicate with his son with autism using the boy's love of Disney movies. Now the Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist is seeking to put those breakthroughs literally in the palm of your hand, through the development of an app called "*Sidekicks*," which could revolutionize how parents and caregivers communicate with children with autism.

Suskind will discuss his experience and demonstrate the *Sidekicks* app in a special appearance in the Lehigh Valley on Sunday, November 5, 2017. The event is presented by KidsPeace, and hosted by ArtsQuest at ArtsQuest Center's Frank Banko Alehouse Cinemas, 101 Founders Way in Bethlehem, PA.

The event, which includes a screening of the documentary film and a reception hour starting at 4:30 p.m. on 11/5, is free to the public, but seating is limited and advance registration is required. Contact Gina Stano at [gina.stano@kidspeace.org](mailto:gina.stano@kidspeace.org) by October 31 to register for this free event.

(Please note: this event is NOT a sensory-sensitive presentation. It is intended for parents of children on the Autism Spectrum, educators, clinicians, and those who are interested in learning more about ways to support individuals diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder.)

In *Life, Animated*, Suskind relayed his family's experiences in raising their son Owen, who was diagnosed with autism at age 3, and how they discovered that his interest in Disney animated movies could be the foundation of communication between him and other members of the family. (See the trailer preview for the film [here](#).)

**(More)**

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The experience led Suskind to found a company to investigate the compensatory strengths of those with autism and others who are “differently-abled” due to distinctive neurology or sociocultural backgrounds, in order to build a next generation of augmentative technologies to lift and support these communities. The result is the “*Sidekicks*” app, which he will discuss and demonstrate at the November 5 KidsPeace event.

Ron Suskind is an author, lecturer and commentator on national and international affairs. As senior national affairs reporter for The Wall Street Journal, he won the 1995 Pulitzer Prize for Feature Writing. He has been a contributor to The New York Times Magazine and Esquire, and has authored a number of best-selling books on politics and national affairs in addition to *Life, Animated*.

For 135 years, KidsPeace has been building on its expertise to give hope, help and healing to children, families and communities throughout the United States. It provides a comprehensive range of residential treatment programs; accredited educational services; unique psychiatric hospital and foster care and community-based programs – including programs specifically for individuals with autism. Since its doors opened in 1882, more than 200,000 children have participated in one of the multitude of programs KidsPeace offers. [www.kidspeace.org](http://www.kidspeace.org)

ArtsQuest™ is a Bethlehem-based nonprofit dedicated to presenting music, arts, festivals, cultural experiences and educational and outreach programs that aid in economic development, urban revitalization and community enrichment. Through festivals such as its flagship event, Musikfest®; the Banana Factory Arts Center®; and the ArtsQuest Center and SteelStacks™ arts and cultural campus, ArtsQuest’s programming reaches more than 1.5 million people annually. For more information, visit [www.artsquest.org](http://www.artsquest.org).

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