



RACING ON THE SPECTRUM

DOCUMENTARY PROJECT

Three Athletes on the Autism Spectrum Navigate Life's Sharpest Turns.

THE STORY

RACING ON THE SPECTRUM is a high-profile documentary and autism awareness project in early production.

NASCAR driver **Armani Williams**, Britcar racer **Bobby Trundley**, and two-time Radical Cup Champion **Austin Riley** were diagnosed with autism as children. Doctors warned their parents that a career and independence would be unlikely. But the young drivers continue to defy expectations as they compete for podiums in a sport that is as dangerous as it is glamorous.

Each believes they were born to race and that autism-related traits help them focus intensely, process rapid-fire sensory information and make crisp, safe decisions at breakneck speeds. Yet the pressures of competing in the high stakes world of professional racing—along with the challenges of entering adulthood with autism—test them at every turn.

Left to right: Armani Williams, Bobby Trundley, Austin Riley.



IMPACT

Racing on the Spectrum isn't just a story about coming of age with autism; it will be the centerpiece of a major public awareness and impact campaign.

1 in 36 children in the U.S. and 75 million people worldwide are identified on the autism spectrum. To ensure that everyone in our neurodiverse communities can reach their full potential, we need powerful, authentic narratives.

As a nonprofit producer, Citizen Film specializes in building strategic partnerships that harness the power of stories for impact. For *Racing on the Spectrum*, Citizen Film has partnered with executive producer **Kevin O'Connor**, who has extensive relationships in the global racing community which has a vast fanbase, and producer **Susan Schneider Williams**, whose film *Robin's Wish* about her neuroscience journey with her late husband **Robin Williams** (he was ultimately diagnosed with Lewy Body Dementia) offers a relevant impact model. Susan brought together organizations and experts with different approaches to neuroscience; she organized screening events to raise awareness and millions of dollars for neuroscience research. Susan will apply her proven audience-engagement strategies to *Racing on the Spectrum*, bringing together the diverse but fragmented autism neuroscience and care community.

The popularity of racing and of racing documentaries ensures a passionate core audience. Millions of fans already watch our racers perform, but few are aware of the drivers' neurological make-up or the societal roadblocks they face.



STAGES OF PRODUCTION AND FUNDING

Stage 1: establishing trust and collaboration with the drivers and their families, and filming the foundation of each driver's story through interviews and observational scenes with the drivers and their loved ones, is complete.

To complete Stage 1 in 2024, the filmmakers raised roughly \$250,000 of the total ~\$1.25M budget for a feature-length story.

Stage 2: filming the drivers and their families through a full racing season on and off the track is about to begin, and we hope you will consider joining the *Racing on the Spectrum* team.

To achieve the goal of filming key racing events AND pivotal life moments as they unfold over the course of a racing season, **\$400,000 must be raised by Spring 2025**. \$160,000 of this goal has already been raised thanks to generous commitments from Kent and Pamela Donahue, Kevin and Rosemary McNeely and the Douglas Drane Charitable Trust.

Your generous support will make filming critical races possible when the stakes are inherently dramatic. To present a rounded portrait, your support will also allow the production team to capture the ups and downs of relationships in the drivers' early twenties, as well as the struggles and triumphs of parents who are committed to supporting their children's journeys. Caring for their autistic young adult children is constant and intensive, though it comes with many rewards.

Here is a private upload of an exclusive 12 minute clip illustrating these themes with footage captured by Citizen Film during Stage 1:

vimeo.com/1023058249/5652c0ceb8



STAGE 2: DETAIL

- **\$250,000** will allow us to film six major racing events; for example, Armani Williams' NASCAR season opener in February at Daytona Speedway.
- **An additional \$150,000 will cover filming important life events (two production trips per driver) as they occur throughout the season.**
- An additional \$50,000 pledged by Kevin and Rose McNeely (their pledge for 2024 and 2025 totals \$100,000) is allowing Citizen Film to fulfill a commitment from PBS LearningMedia to nationally disseminate a *Racing on the Spectrum* short, along with a curricular guide supported by teacher trainings, that will generate classroom dialogues about fostering a culture of fairness, opportunity and respect for neurodiverse students in high schools around the United States. This allows us to test outreach and education strategies that will accompany release of the feature film. (To preview the PBSLM short, visit vimeo.com/1016331710/319d1eddf8)
- PBS is a valued Citizen Film partner, and we are also in discussion with alternative dissemination partners for release of the *Racing on the Spectrum* feature film. Completing Stage 2 of production and showing footage from Stage 2 is crucial for further advancing distribution talks with streamers including Netflix and Paramount Plus. The British showrunner of Netflix's wildly successful racing documentary project *Drive to Survive* and the Executive Producer of Paramount Global's documentary studio have both expressed enthusiastic interest. We will be reaching out to HBO and ESPN as well.

A full timeline of production and audience-engagement phases, and a detailed production budget of just over \$1.25M are available upon request.



NONPROFIT PRODUCTION COMPANY

For *Racing on the Spectrum*, Executive Producer Kevin O'Connor has teamed up with co-producer Susan Schneider Williams and Citizen Film director Sam Ball. Since 2002, **CITIZEN FILM** has created dozens of documentaries, guided by the belief that character-driven stories crafted with care and dignity can disrupt conventional thinking and foster active engagement in civic life. Citizen Film's work has engaged millions of people and has been showcased at many of America's most prestigious venues, from the **Sundance Film Festival** to the **MoMA-NY**. (By joining the *Racing on the Spectrum* team, we hope you will also join us for film premiere events.)

Citizen Film (EIN #81-0621889) is a 501c3 organization eligible to receive foundation grants; individual contributions are tax deduction eligible.

For information on all the ways you can contribute, contact Sarah Scannell (racing@citizenfilm.org) or 415-206-1880) or visit:

citizenfilm.org/project/support-racing-on-the-spectrum



“Autism ... offers a chance for us to glimpse an awe-filled vision of the world that might otherwise pass us by.”

—Dr. Colin Zimbelman, clinical psychologist

RACING ON THE SPECTRUM is a coming-of-age story about finding your own rhythm and purpose. It’s also a thrilling ride that celebrates the joy, camaraderie and community of competitive racing.



CONTACT

SAM BALL

Director / Producer

sam@citizenfilm.org / 415-378-3627

KEVIN O'CONNOR

Executive Producer / Producer

kevin@parcfermefilms.com / 415-971-1119

Contributions to Citizen Film, Inc. (501c3 ID #81-0621889) for this project are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law. Budget is available on request.

