



**JUNE 9-11, 2017**  
TIFF Bell Lightbox, Toronto

Provoking dialogue on  
the power of sport to  
inspire social change

# CANADIAN SPORT FILM FESTIVAL



9<sup>th</sup> Annual CSFF • 23 films – 4 World premieres, 3 North American premieres, 11 Canadian premieres, 4 Toronto premieres

**Tickets and info: [sportfilmfestival.ca](http://sportfilmfestival.ca)**



*Front cover image courtesy of Crossing The Line*

Screening sponsors



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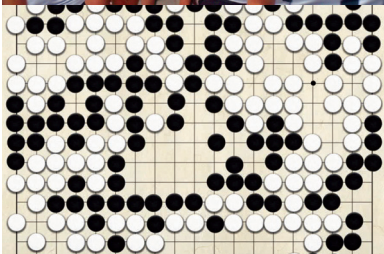
It's my pleasure to welcome you to the 9th annual 2017 Canadian Sport Film Festival. At CSFF, we highlight powerful human stories told through sport, physical activity, play, and dance that reveal the ways in which sport can be intimately connected to social justice and human rights. We are committed to provoking dialogue on the power of sport to inspire social change.

Since 2008 we have shared 200 films from more than 35 countries with thousands of filmgoers, who have interacted with storytellers and newsmakers. We also get young people active while engaging their creative minds, through our youth workshop, high school screening, and community outreach initiatives.

All of this would not be possible without our loyal audiences, hardworking volunteers, and dedicated board members. It's with gratitude for their efforts that I hope you enjoy the films.

Russell Field  
Executive Director





## Festival schedule

**Friday, June 9<sup>th</sup>**

**10:30am (High School Screening)**

Crossing the Line

**6:30pm (Opening Night)**

Keepers of the Game  
Screening with: Kuklos and The Crossing

**Location:**

TIFF Bell Lightbox  
350 King Street West

**Tickets:**

TIFF Bell Lightbox  
box office  
1 888 599 8433  
sportfilmfestival.ca

**Saturday, June 10<sup>th</sup>**

**11:30am**

The Surrounding Game  
Screening with: Harlem Knight Fight

**2:00pm (Family Screening)**

Salluit Run Club  
Screening with: The Boy Who Learned to Fly and Waterbabies

**4:00pm**

Requiem for a  
Running Back  
Screening with: Just Breathe

**6:30pm**

Hillsborough  
Screening with: A Cerebral Game

**9:30pm**

The Ground We Won  
Screening with: Heroes of the Demolition

**Sunday, June 11<sup>th</sup>**

**12:00pm**

Daddy Loves You  
Screening with: Peter Pacifica

**2:30pm**

Baglar  
Screening with: Prison Fight

**5:00pm**

Olympic Pride,  
American Prejudice  
Screening with Lebanon Wins the World Cup

**7:30pm (Closing Night)**

Crossing the Line  
Screening with: The Runner and Dryland



THE GOVERNOR GENERAL · LE GOUVERNEUR GÉNÉRAL



I am delighted to extend greetings to the audiences gathered for the 9<sup>th</sup> annual Canadian Sport Film Festival.

As an avid sports and physical fitness enthusiast, I am aware of the hard work and dedication athletes and coaches put into their chosen sport. Long before the day of competition, there are physical and mental hurdles to overcome, failures to endure and gruelling preparations to make.

It is this personal pursuit of excellence that is the focus of this festival. The films being presented shed light on the demands of time and energy, and on the passion and the sacrifices that are required to succeed in sport. They show the very human nature behind the superhuman feats of strength, speed and endurance.

I commend the organizers on their successful efforts and I wish everyone a memorable experience.

David Johnston

June 2017



PRIME MINISTER • PREMIER MINISTRE

June 9–11, 2017

Dear Friends:

I am pleased to extend my warmest greetings to everyone attending the 9th annual Canadian Sport Film Festival (CSFF).



Audiences and industry professionals alike are sure to appreciate the exciting and stimulating program at this year's edition of CSFF. This event is a wonderful forum for filmmakers and fans to share their passion for sport, cinema and storytelling. The many other activities planned for the next three days, including the youth workshops, will undoubtedly enhance the experience for everyone involved.

I would like to commend the organizers for their commitment to bringing people together through the medium of film. With so many talented individuals showcasing their work, this year's event is sure to be a resounding success.

Please accept my best wishes for a memorable experience.

Sincerely,

The Rt. Hon. Justin P.J. Trudeau, P.C., M.P.  
Prime Minister of Canada



Premier of Ontario - Première ministre de l'Ontario



June 9 – 11, 2017

### **A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER**

On behalf of the Government of Ontario, I am delighted to extend warm greetings to everyone attending the ninth annual Canadian Sport Film Festival at the TIFF Bell Lightbox.

I applaud the organizers of the Canadian Sport Film Festival for curating a vibrant and topical selection of films that showcase the power of sport and the fine art of storytelling. I am grateful for all you do to provide filmmakers from around the world with the opportunity to show their work and tell important stories that may not otherwise be widely heard in Canada.

I also want recognize all those who have helped to make this festival an event to remember, including the participating filmmakers, the generous sponsors, and the many enthusiastic supporters.

Please accept my sincere best wishes for an inspiring film festival, and for much continued success.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen Wynne".

**Kathleen Wynne**  
**Premier**



### **Message from the Mayor**

It is my pleasure to extend greetings and a warm welcome to everyone attending the 9<sup>th</sup> annual Canadian Sport Film Festival.

The performing arts are integral to the social and economic fabric of our city and are a platform that enriches and enhances the lives of many who love this genre of art.

I wish to welcome everyone to our city and encourage you to enjoy Toronto at this time of year as well as learn about our vibrant neighbourhoods.

On behalf of Toronto City Council, I thank the organizers of this event and offer my best wishes for a memorable festival and continued success.

Yours truly,



John Tory  
Mayor of Toronto



JUNE 9-11, 2017

*Greetings from the Honourable Eleanor McMahon  
Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport*

On behalf of the Government of Ontario, I would like to extend my warmest greetings to everyone attending the 9<sup>th</sup> annual Canadian Sport Film Festival.

As the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, I value the important role that cinema plays in telling our stories, strengthening our communities, and promoting cultural exchange.

The Canadian Sport Film Festival continues to profile a diverse range of subjects captured through the lens of sport. Through screenings, workshops and interactive opportunities, the festival presents stories from around the globe that broaden our notion of sport's ability to engage, inform and inspire.

Thank you to the organizers, supporters and volunteers for your hard work and enthusiasm. Your efforts are helping to enrich Ontario's cultural vibrancy.

I wish you all a wonderful 2017 festival.

All my best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eleanor McMahon'.

Eleanor McMahon  
Minister



Minister  
of Canadian Heritage



Ministre  
du Patrimoine canadien

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0M5



**W**elcome to the TIFF Bell Lightbox and the ninth annual Canadian Sport Film Festival!

**S**ince the start of motion pictures, sport has been a popular subject for film makers. Film has the power to take us behind the scenes of the winning match or perfect score, to explore sport's untold stories and distill the beauty of sport at its very essence.

**O**ver the next three days, the Canadian Sport Film Festival will screen features, documentaries and shorts that focus on the powerful personal and political stories behind sport. Featuring the work of a diverse mix of talented film makers from across the country and around the world, it promises to educate, challenge and entertain audiences.

**A**s Minister of Canadian Heritage, I want to thank the committed team of volunteers who make this Festival possible. Enjoy the films!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Mélanie Joly'.

The Honourable Mélanie Joly

**Canada**





# Michael Thompson

Chair, Economic Development  
and Culture Committee

Toronto City Councillor  
Scarborough Centre, Ward 37

March 27, 2017

Dear Friends:

It is with great interest and anticipation that I await the 9th annual Canadian Sport Film Festival at the TIFF Bell Lightbox in Toronto.

As a former athlete, and the father of two teenagers involved in sport, I am endlessly fascinated by the role sports play in shaping lives, uniting communities and offering hope where challenges are deep and daunting. By presenting unique, provocative and passionate human stories from around the world through the medium of film, the Festival will turn a critical eye to unique and profound narratives beyond the scoreboard and away from the crowds – the stories behind the stories.

I wish Canadian Sport Film Festival organizers the greatest success with this year's event, and offer a warm welcome to the many visitors who will be drawn to our city to attend.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Thompson", written over a white background.

Michael Thompson  
Chair, Economic Development and Culture Committee  
Chair, Invest Toronto  
Councillor, Scarborough Centre  
Ward 37

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# Joe Cressy 周凱捷

City Councillor | Ward 20, Trinity-Spadina

Canadian Sport Film Festival  
402-736 Dundas Street East  
Toronto, ON, M5A 2C5

March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017

## RE: 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Canadian Sport Film Festival

I am writing this letter to express my support for the 9<sup>th</sup> annual Canadian Sport Film Festival from June 9-11<sup>th</sup>, 2017, at the TIFF Bell Lightbox in Toronto.

Founded in 2008, the Canadian Sport Film Festival brings together the theatre of sport and the medium of film to tell unique, provocative and passionate personal and political stories from around the world. The three day festival will screen local and international films and aims to educate, inform, engage, and entertain the community. CSFF provides a safe environment for critical analysis and discussion about social issues and themes presented in the films. In addition, the festival will host local and international filmmakers and engage youth by using film and sport in innovative and collaborate workshops.

We are proud to have seen this event be successfully held in past years at TIFF Bell Lightbox. Since 2008, CSFF continues to enrich our local and international film community and industry. It is truly an honour for our city to host such extraordinary work of among the most provocative films from around the world.

I would like to thank the dedicated artists, organizers, sponsors and volunteer for their hard work to make this festival possible, and congratulate them on another successful year. Please feel free to contact me should you like to discuss in further detail.

Sincerely,

Joe Cressy  
City Councillor  
Ward 20, Trinity-Spadina

**FREE high school screening – Friday, June 9<sup>th</sup> 10:30am**

**Father Henry Carr Catholic Secondary School,  
1760 Martin Grove Road, Etobicoke, Ontario**



## Crossing the Line

Canadian premiere

*(2016, UK, documentary, 94 minutes, director: David Tryhorn)*

In 1984, an unknown teenager from South Central LA burst on to the global stage by winning an Olympic silver medal in the 400m hurdles. Three years later, Danny Harris became the first person in over a decade to beat the legendary Edwin Moses. Yet his failure to qualify for the 1988 Seoul Olympics led Harris into a period of depression and addiction. Orphaned at 14, Olympic star at 18, crack cocaine addict at 22, and finished at 30, this is the dramatic story of Danny Harris's rise, fall, and eventual redemption.

**FREE Youth Workshop  
Saturday, June 10<sup>th</sup>  
10:00am to 3:30pm**



## FREE Youth Workshop

The CSFF youth workshop returns offering kids aged 8-12 the chance to watch sport films for young people, make their own stop-motion animation films, and get active!

Participation in the workshop includes free entry to the Family Screening (2:00pm) – guardians are welcome free of charge – which will be followed by an interactive panel with filmmakers and athletes.

Opening night  
Friday, June 9<sup>th</sup> 6:30pm



*Jacelyn Lazore on the field*

## Keepers of the Game

Toronto premiere

*(2016, documentary, US, 82 minutes, director: Judd Ehrlich)*

Although lacrosse on Akwesasne Mohawk Territory has historically been the preserve of men, an aboriginal girls' lacrosse team is formed at nearby Salmon River High School in Fort Covington, New York. But the team faces ambivalence in their own community and the girls must prove that the game of lacrosse is their rightful inheritance. With more than just a championship on the line, the girls fight to blaze a new path for the next generation of Mohawk women, while honouring their people's traditions in a changing world.

Screening with:

World premiere

### Kuklos

*(2015, documentary, Switzerland, 7 minutes, director: Nikola Sanz)*

A little boy rides his bicycle around and around, all the while sharing his own philosophical thoughts on life.



### The Crossing

*(2017, documentary, Greece, 11 minutes, director: Evripidis Karydis)*

Cleopatra is an open-water marathon swimmer training to cross Greece's Toroneos Gulf. The lack of support she receives from her husband reflects the persistence of patriarchy in the economic climate of contemporary Greece.



World premiere

Co-presented by

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NATIVE CANADIAN CENTRE OF TORONTO

Saturday, June 10<sup>th</sup> 11:30am



## The Surrounding Game

Canadian premiere

(2016, documentary, US, China, Japan, Korea, Canada, 97 minutes, directors: Will Lockhart & Cole Pruitt)

Go is the oldest board game still played in its original form. In East Asia, where the game has been studied and played for thousands of years, Go is hailed as one of humankind's great cultural treasures. Students as young as five begin studying in special Go academies, training for years for a slim shot at becoming a professional player. Across the Pacific, the American Go community, a ragtag group of gamers and aging hippies, lags far behind. In response, they launch a tournament to crown the US's first professional players.



Screening with:

Canadian premiere

## Harlem Knight Fight

(2016, documentary, US, 7 minutes, director: David Freid)

For Damion DiGrazia, a lucrative career at a top investment bank in Manhattan after graduating from Harvard and Columbia isn't enough. He also competes in the Armored Combat League – a sort of medieval fight club.

Screening sponsor

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**Family Screening**  
**Saturday, June 10<sup>th</sup> 2:00pm**



## Salluit Run Club

Toronto premiere

(2016, documentary, Canada, 32 minutes, director: Abdullah Kafashe)

Seven Inuit youth travel from their home community in the Canadian Arctic all the way to Hawaii to complete in a half-marathon. Their stories reveal the challenges of living in an isolated Northern fly-in village while also providing a window into the strengths these young people possess. The youth share what running means to them and how training for this event has affected their lives. In turn, they are now travelling to other Inuit villages in Nunavik (Northern Quebec) to share the film and their stories.

Screening with:

Canadian premiere

### The Boy Who Learned to Fly

(2016, animation, US, 7 minutes, directors: Limbert Fabian & Jake Wyatt)

From humble beginnings to international stardom, Usain Bolt overcame pressure, discovered the joy of running, and became the fastest man alive.



Screening sponsor

**ΔοΔ<sup>c</sup>**  
**Air Inuit**

Canadian premiere

### Waterbabies

(2015, documentary, US, 16 minutes, director: Nora Ballard)

Demanding physical strength and grace, synchronized swimming is a place where these teenagers train, compete, and learn who they are.



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Community partner

**Imagine**  
**NATIVE**  
original. indigenous.



Saturday, June 10<sup>th</sup> 4:00pm



## Requiem for a Running Back

Canadian premiere

(2016, documentary, US, 89 minutes, director: Rebecca Carpenter)

Lewis Carpenter was a running back for the Detroit Lions and Green Bay Packers before becoming a successful coach. When he died, his family was shocked to learn that Lew was the 18th NFL player to be diagnosed post-mortem with Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE), a degenerative neurocognitive disorder. In re-evaluating her often complicated relationship with her father, Rebecca Carpenter learns that depression, obsessiveness, forgetfulness, and an unpredictable temper are common side effects of CTE and perhaps of football itself.



Screening with:

Canadian premiere

## Just Breathe

(2015, documentary, US, 8 minutes, director: Ben Steinbauer)

As an under-graduate Beth struggled with mental health challenges while balancing school and competitive sports. But she has emerged stronger than ever, as the admired captain of the water polo team.

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Saturday, June 10<sup>th</sup> 6:30pm

# HILLSBOROUGH

## Hillsborough

North American premiere (2016 version)

*(2016, documentary, UK, 122 minutes, director: Daniel Gordon)*

On April 15, 1989, 96 Liverpool fans died at the Hillsborough stadium in Sheffield, crushed to death in an overcrowded stadium. Hundreds were injured and thousands more traumatised in a tragedy that captured international attention. In the aftermath, the local police covered up their failures in crowd management and the media sought to blame the fans. For 25 years, the victims' families and the survivors waited for the truth to be revealed. A two-year-long inquest into the disaster brought in a verdict in April 2016. Will justice finally be served?



Screening with:

Toronto premiere

## A Cerebral Game

*(2015, documentary, US, 7 minutes, director: Reid Davenport)*

A filmmaker ponders his changing identity through the lens of baseball.

Co-presented by

 JAYU

Community partner

**BRITS**  
in  
**TORONTO**



Saturday, June 10<sup>th</sup> 9:30pm



## The Ground We Won

Toronto premiere

(2015, documentary, New Zealand, 91 minutes, director: Christopher Pryor)

A knock-about New Zealand rugby team – made up of salt-of-the-earth dairy farmers – is trying to reverse a long run of bitter losses. With pluck, determination, and no shortage of bawdiness and camaraderie, the men unite to inspire their small community. In the face of the hefty demands of farming and fatherhood, the Saturday game becomes the focus of the men's passions and the ground on which their worth is proved.



Screening with:

World premiere

## Heroes of the Demolition

(2016, documentary, Canada, 17 minutes, director: David Ridgen)

Demolition derbies are central to some communities in Eastern Ontario and Western Quebec. Competition between friend and foe, man and woman, Anglophone and Francophone takes on the epic fervency of a Shakespearean tragi-comedy with the cathartic impact of metal and the screaming of loyal fans.

Co-presented by



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Sunday, June 11<sup>th</sup> 12:00pm

## Daddy Loves You

Canadian premiere

(2015, documentary, Finland, 57 minutes, director: Ninni Rokosa)

Jussi Koivula was orphaned at age twelve before losing two siblings to alcohol and substance abuse. He found security and a purpose in a boxing ring. But while he was once a rising star in Finnish boxing, he is now 29 and recovering from a serious eye injury. As Jussi prepares for a fight that will determine the future direction of his career, he reflects on the sacrifices he is making to earn a living.



Screening with:

Canadian premiere

## Peter Pacifica

(2015, documentary, US, 33 minutes, director: Andy Gosche)

Peter Pacifica, an unofficial high school football mascot and super fan, attempts to attend his 500th football game after a scandal during his final year cheering for the team.

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Sunday, June 11<sup>th</sup> 2:30pm



## Baglar

North American premiere

(2016, documentary, Turkey, 80 minutes, directors: Berke Baş & Melis Birder)

Bağlar, a district within Turkey's largest Kurdish city, Diyarbakir, is at the centre of a decades-long struggle between the Turkish State and the Kurdish Rebel Movement. Gokhan Yildirim, a school teacher, started a sports club to offer an alternative vision for hundreds of local Bağlar youth. Now the men's basketball team dreams of reaching the national championships, while looking to rise above prejudice, poverty, and political turmoil.



Screening with:

Canadian premiere

## Prison Fight

(2015, documentary, Canada, 16 minutes, director: Robert Pilichowski)

Two men from opposite ends of the world have only one thing in common: Muay Thai kickboxing. One is trying to deal with the murder of his brother; the other is incarcerated in a maximum-security prison. They meet in the ring in Thailand.

Screening sponsor

Co-presented by

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Sunday, June 11<sup>th</sup> 5:00pm



## Olympic Pride, American Prejudice

Canadian premiere

(2016, US, 80 minutes, director: Deborah Riley Draper)

Jesse Owens was the star of the 1936 Berlin Olympics, winning four gold medals and challenging notions of Aryan supremacy. But he was not alone. Eighteen African-American athletes challenged Jim Crow America and represented a country that considered them second-class citizens. While America was torn over boycotting Hitler's Olympics, these men and women competed in an atmosphere of Aryan superiority and anti-Semitism, in a seminal precursor to the Civil Rights Movement.



Screening with:

Canadian premiere

## Lebanon Wins the World Cup

(2015, documentary, Lebanon, 23 minutes, directors: Tony Elkhoury & Anthony Lappé)

Two former enemies, a bookish Communist and a battle-hardened Christian who fought against one another in the Lebanese Civil War, share a love of Brazilian soccer and a hope for reconciliation.

Screening sponsor

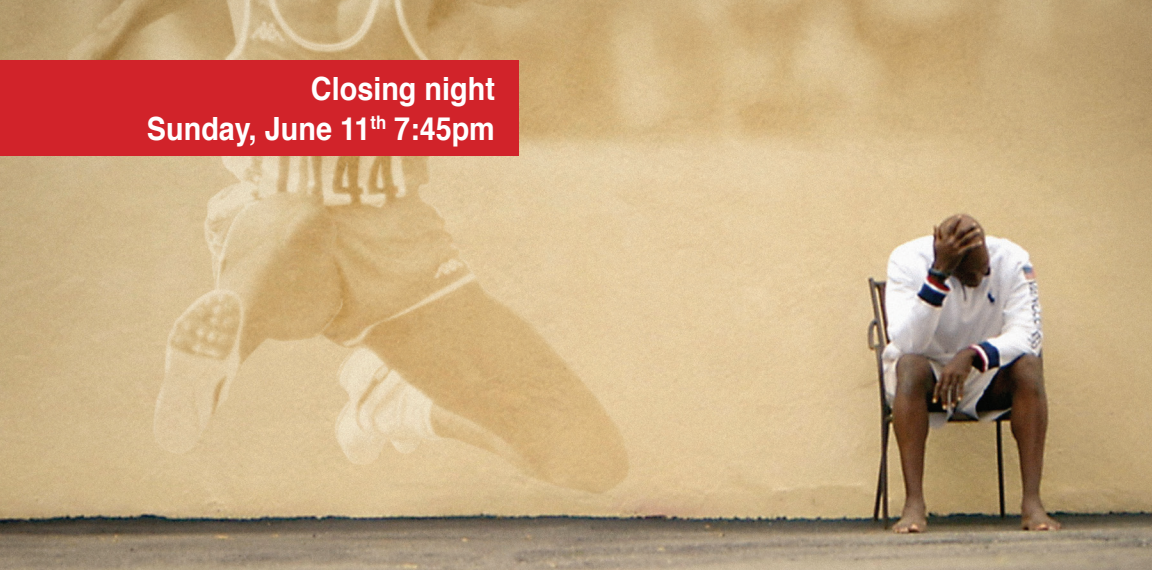
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FESTIVAL



**Closing night**  
**Sunday, June 11<sup>th</sup> 7:45pm**



## Crossing the Line

Canadian premiere

*(2016, UK, documentary, 94 minutes, director: David Tryhorn)*

In 1984, an unknown teenager from South Central LA burst on to the global stage by winning an Olympic silver medal in the 400m hurdles. Three years later, Danny Harris became the first person in over a decade to beat the legendary Edwin Moses. Yet his failure to qualify for the 1988 Seoul Olympics led Harris into a period of depression and addiction. Orphaned at 14, Olympic star at 18, crack cocaine addict at 22, and finished at 30, this is the dramatic story of Danny Harris's rise, fall, and eventual redemption.

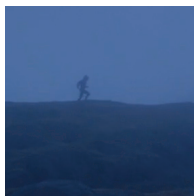
Screening with:

North American premiere

### The Runner

*(2016, documentary, UK, 8 minutes, director: Jon Drever)*

As a child, Ben Abdelnoor loved the outdoors and loved to run. Then one awful day, he broke his back. Defying expectations, Ben fought back from his injury to become a champion endurance runner.



Canadian premiere

### Dryland

*(2015, fiction, US, 22 minutes, director: Liv Prior Colliander)*

Reeling in the aftermath of her mother's suicide attempt, a young swimmer works through her trauma in the water while desperately trying to break the wall of silence at home.



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# The CSFF Team

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Russell Field

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Glenn Wells  
Neil Wright

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Russell Field  
Ben Rosenblum  
David Vella  
David Wells  
Glenn Wells

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Gilad Cohen

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Sponsor Circle

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Ashika Dhoolab  
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Touchwood PR

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The Spirit of the North



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