



*There are some things  
dementia can't touch.*

# GARDEN SHARK



INDIECAN ENTERTAINMENT INC.  
CANADIAN DISTRIBUTOR AVI FEDERGREEN  
info@indicanent.com 416 898 3456





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"Our job is to suspend reality for  
a moment. We're in a world  
where the rules don't matter,  
they're all made up."

- *chris gamble*




A decorative illustration in the top left corner featuring a grey shark swimming upwards, surrounded by various colorful flowers and green leaves. The flowers include a large orange one with a black center, a pink one, and a blue one. The leaves are in shades of green and blue.

*garden shark*

# SHORT SYNOPSIS

*Garden Shark* breaks through the hopelessness and loss of a dementia diagnosis by giving people living with dementia and their caregivers a new way to connect and find joy. It explores improv's ability to teach people to live in the moment, communicate, and learn to laugh in spite of their struggles.

*Garden Shark* highlights couples' individual experiences and shows how beautifully partners living with dementia respond to the risk free, playful and hilarious environment created by Inside Out Theatre's Village Improv for Alzheimer's program.

A decorative illustration in the bottom right corner featuring a pink flower with a blue center, a green leaf, and a small blue flower.

*garden shark*

# LONG SYNOPSIS

As our loved ones age we are taught how to physically care for them. We are not often taught how to communicate or engage with them in new, meaningful ways. For many who have had a loved one diagnosed with dementia, one of their first comments is related to the inability to communicate and engage with someone they love.

*Garden Shark* explores the healing power of improv as we follow Inside Out Theatre and their program, Village Improv for Alzheimer's, as they use improv to provide adults living with dementia a safe place to creatively express themselves. Improv is all about saying **yes** and being in the moment. Memory isn't required and in improv's failure-free environment there are no bad ideas.

The goal of the VIA Program is to bring an hour of life, laughter, joy and creativity into the lives of folks dealing with a really difficult part of their life. And to do it in a way that sets them up for success. The VIA program uses an understanding of a person's life story to create attachment, inclusion and identity. By feeling safe, supported and respected, people living with dementia can prolong their cognition by being meaningfully engaged in choices they make on a daily basis. Improv discovers and encourages new ways to communicate.

By teaching the ability to live in the moment, communicate, and learn to laugh in spite of their struggles, *Garden Shark* reminds us to be present and helps us uncover the joys that can exist after diagnosis. We don't lose people who have dementia, we just need to learn the skills necessary to find them again.

The page is decorated with colorful floral illustrations on the left side, including pink, orange, and blue flowers with green leaves. There are also grey shark silhouettes swimming in the water. The background is a light blue gradient.

*garden shark*

# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Garden Shark is a very personal film. My grandma, Barb, lived with dementia for over a decade and my happiest moments with her during that time were spent making each other laugh. A dementia diagnosis touches the lives of so many people and I want our audience to see how there can be joy and laughter during a time most commonly associated with grief and loss. At first the focus for the film was showing Inside Out Theater's Village Improv for Alzheimer's program. After meeting the participants and being invited into their homes, they shared their experiences along with those of their partners and the film shifted to center their personal journeys with dementia. It is their openness and vulnerability that allows us to see the resiliency and joy that can accompany the pain and loss of a dementia diagnosis. These folks are genuinely hilarious and it was often difficult for the crew not to laugh. We did a lot of research and outreach leading up to production. We had a small and consistent crew who all built a personal rapport with the folks with dementia and their caregivers. It was important to us that our subjects felt supported and cared for. What started out as a film about an improvisation class for people living with dementia turned into a portrait of our subject's everyday struggles and joys, while showing how improv can be used to support them in communicating and creating together.

*- anna cooley*



*garden shark*

# KEY CREW





director

## ANNA COOLEY

Anna Cooley seeks out projects with fascinating characters and a strong message. Besides *Garden Shark*, her recent work includes; director and producer of the short queer sketch comedy *Gender? I Hardly Know Them*, director of the documentary series *Le Côté Sombre de L'Aide Sociale* and director of *Marlene VR*.

Anna has worked in the film industry in many capacities, including cinematographer, production designer, producer and writer. Her cinematography work can be seen in *Clebs*, a short documentary and winner of the Crystal Bear for Best Short Film at the 2020 Berlinale.

Anna is an alumna of the Women In the Directors Chairs Story and Leadership Program, and the Academy Directors Program for Women. Anna is currently in development with the web series *Sophie the Exorcistas* director, co-producer and co-writer.





producer

# DAWN NAGAZINA

As an emerging Métis filmmaker, Dawn's innate curiosity draws her to places of vulnerability where her mission is to build empathy and inspire authenticity.

Beyond her work on *Garden Shark*, Dawn has also recently lent her talents to co-produce the COVID-19 inspired short film *Rerouted*, and writing, directing, producing and acting in *Sixty Simple Seconds*, a 1-minute film anthology series.

She was chosen as a writer and director for the 2020 Herland Mentorship Program for her short narrative film, *The Superlative*, and she is currently studying acting at the LA-based Zak Barnett Studios.

Before pursuing film, Dawn worked in the Alberta energy industry as a professional engineer. She leverages her past experience and detail-oriented nature to create passionately-engineered productions.





The background is a solid teal color. Overlaid on this are two semi-transparent rectangular areas. The left rectangle is tilted and contains a dark teal silhouette of a shark swimming towards the right. The right rectangle is upright and contains a dark teal silhouette of a shark swimming towards the left. The text 'garden shark' is centered between these two rectangles.

*garden shark*

**FEATURING**



Ella & Tom

Al & Joyce



Sherry & John





Anna & Jack



Christine &  
Betty

Roger





Inside Out Theatre is a Calgary-based Deaf and disability theatre company equally invested in artistic excellence, community development and deepening our cultures' accessibility.

Their Village Improv for Alzheimer's (VIA) program is an innovative approach to person-centered creative care that fosters self-expression, agency, recreation and social engagement via improvised theatre and storytelling. VIA has been specifically developed for individuals living with dementia and designed around the idea of creating meaningful activity that preserves dignity and autonomy, validates perception, and focuses on in-the-moment strengths and aptitudes rather than memory recall.

At the centre of both the VIA program and improvised theatre is the principle that there are no wrong answers; all ideas can be built upon so everyone is celebrated for the creative and insightful people they are.

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w. <https://www.insideouttheatre.com/partners>





*garden shark*

# CREDITS

**WRITER & DIRECTOR** Anna Cooley

**PRODUCER** Dawn Nagazina

**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Kara Artym

**EDITOR & ORIGINAL SCORE** Chad Blain

**SOUND MIXER** Alex Mitchell

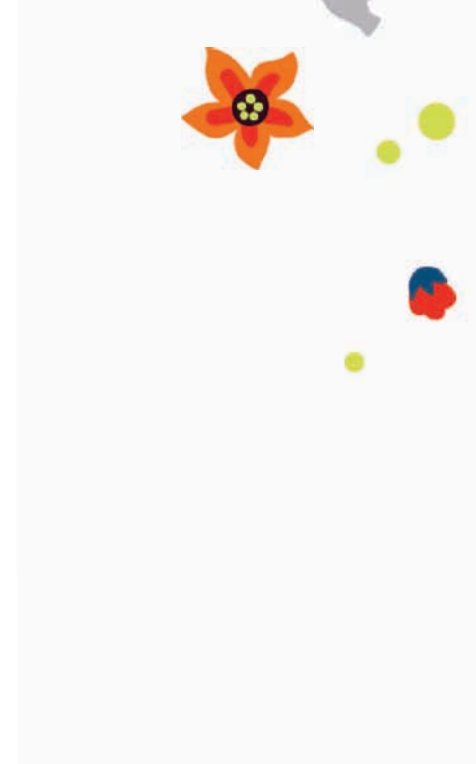
**ANIMATION** Locke Vincent

**EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS** Abigail Vanmerlin  
Lisa Poole  
Sean Hervo

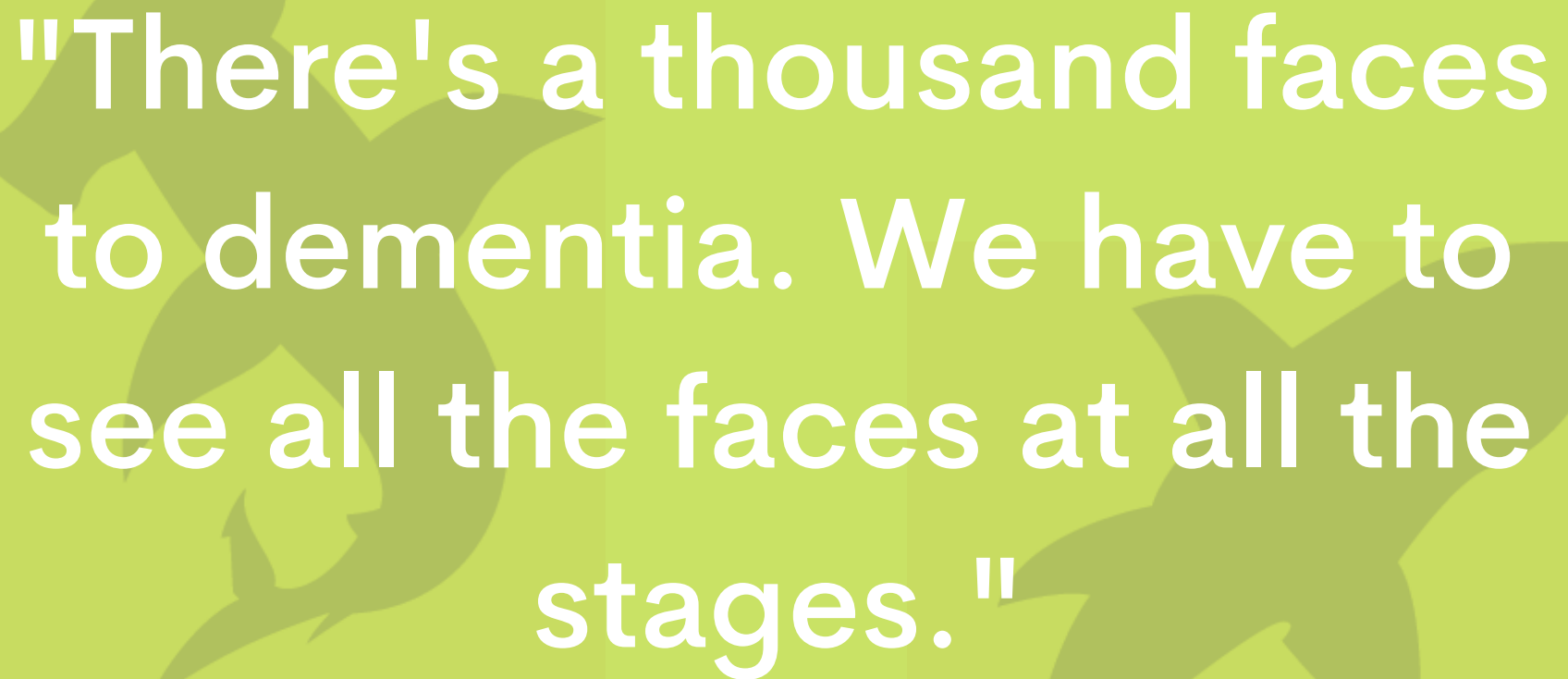
**NARRATION** Roger Marple

**VIA IMPROV FACILITATORS** Chris Gamble  
Jaqueline Russell  
Jeremy Park  
Michelle Brandenburg

**WITH** Dr. Cam Matamoros  
Col Cseke  
Karen Johnson-Diamond

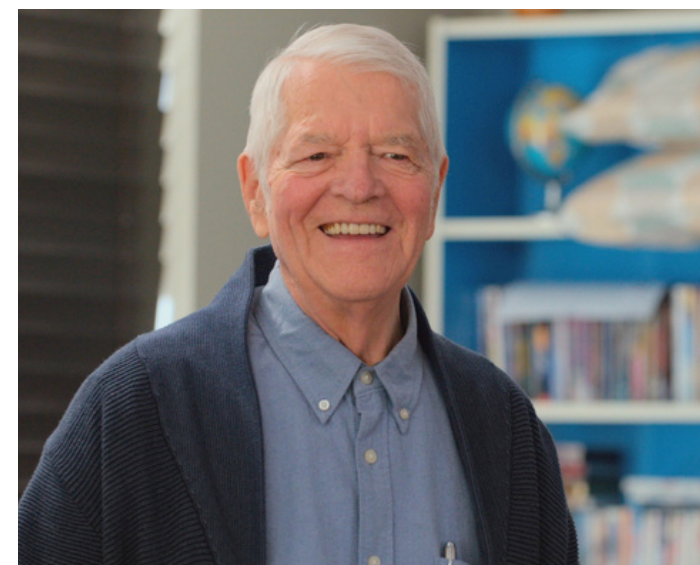






"There's a thousand faces  
to dementia. We have to  
see all the faces at all the  
stages."

- roger marpel







# Garden Shark

## A FILM BY

Azzume Productions

[IMDb](#) | [www.gardenshark.ca](http://www.gardenshark.ca)

## SOCIAL MEDIA

#gardensharkdoc

@gardensharkdoc

[Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#)

## CONTACT

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