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## Makayla's Voice: A Letter to the World

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## Makayla's Voice: A Letter to the World

### Abstract

This is a film review of Makayla's Voice: A Letter to the World (2023), directed by Julio Palacio.

### Keywords

Autism

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### Author Notes

Monica Blizek is a retired mental health professional.



**Makayla's Voice: A Letter to the World (2023), dir. Julio Palacio**

"I'm not silent" captures the essence of this documentary about a courageous teenage girl named Makayla. Makayla was born with a rare form of autism. She is nonverbal in the sense that she can make sounds using her voice but cannot clearly communicate with words and sentences. The movie follows Makayla and her family as they search for ways to help Makayla release her voice. Makayla's parents have always believed that she holds vast potential. So, they have searched long and hard to find some way that will allow Makayla to share her inner world with others.

Finally, Makayla's parents find a speech and language therapist who introduces Makayla to Letter Board Therapy. When the therapist asks Makayla a question, she uses the letter board and points to the letters that spell out her answer. We find out that Makayla is filled with curiosity, poetry, deep feelings for herself and others, and that she describes how she sees her brain as a big sponge, soaking up the world. Makayla now uses this simple instrument to release her thoughts, feelings, fears, and dreams and share them with her family.

Makayla selected the person whose voice is used to narrate the film and read Makayla's "Letter to the World." She continues to work on verbal expression, forming words like "bye," for example. Makayla's parents have established the Makayla Moving Autism Foundation, the purpose of which is "to bring resources to families of color in the areas of Autism Education and Awareness." A simple laminated letter board opened a place inside a young girl that many believed to be permanently locked. And now we can hear Makayla's voice and she is definitely "not silent."

*Makayla's Voice: A Letter to the World* is another film from the Slamdance Unstoppable Program. The film gives us an example of courage and hope, and the strength of the human spirit. It also shows us how much we need to listen to people who are not like us. Not all human beings are alike, but we are all human beings, deserving of respect and kindness.