

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 10/29/19**

TO: Grant County Media

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# WRITTEN OFF

**DOCUMENTARY SCREENING SPONSORED BY THE GRANT COUNTY HEALTH DISTRICT  
FOCUSES ATTENTION ON OPIOID CRISIS THROUGH UNIQUE FIRST-PERSON ACCOUNT OF  
ADDICTION**

*Film Tells Gripping Tale, Challenges Stigma*

Join community leaders, Grant County Health District and the City of Moses Lake on November 21, 2019 at 6:00 PM at the Moses Lake Civic Center Auditorium for a film screening.

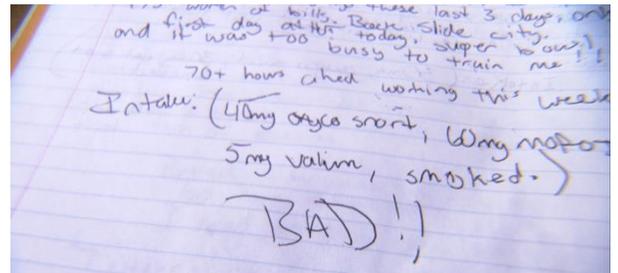
Accidental drug overdose is currently the leading cause of death in the United States for those under 50. Drug overdose deaths now exceed those attributable to firearms, car accidents, homicides, or HIV/AIDS. More Americans died from a drug overdose in 2017 alone than died in the entire Vietnam War. And yet those new casualties are rarely considered victims of disease. With the support of Rep. Ann Kuster, (D-NH), Co-Chair of the Bipartisan Heroin Task Force, the documentary film *Written Off* is challenging conventional thinking about addiction. By taking the viewer inside an individual's fight against opioids, through personal journals, *Written Off* combats stigma and humanizes the victim like the movie *Philadelphia* did for HIV/AIDS.



Matt Edwards and his mom Jane Funk, Image from *Written Off* ©2016 The Biscuit Factory



Jane and Matt's journal, ©2016 Rob



Matt's Journal, Image from *Written Off* ©2016 The Biscuit Factory

“The City of Moses Lake and Grant County Health District are eager to meet with the community to build a deeper understanding about this debilitating disease,” states Kevin Fuhr, Interim City Manager.

The film chronicles the life of Matthew Edwards, whose addiction to opioids began at age 15, after being prescribed pain medicine for a minor surgery. His grippingly honest writing reveals the secrets he tried so hard to conceal throughout a decade long struggle to escape addiction.

“Every day, there’s another story about the opioid epidemic, another overdose, another mug shot. But these stories often work to reinforce the stigma of addiction instead of humanizing it,” explains filmmaker Molly Hermann, who wrote, directed and co-produced *Written Off*. “Matt didn’t want to do drugs but he didn’t know how to get out. That struggle is right there in his own words, he chronicled every cc and milligram that went into body and every dollar he shelled out to get more, all as he tried desperately to get clean.” Like so many Americans, Hermann’s life was touched by addiction when her cousin Emily died of a heroin overdose at the age of 20.

Funding provided by the North Central Washington Accountable Communities of Health. “Behind every addiction there is a person fighting a deadly disease, often without sympathy or understanding. This is a story about secrets and lies, shame and stigma, that will challenge most of what you think about addiction as it has for many of us working in our community to make system changes needed to help those suffering from addiction,” states Theresa Adkinson, Health District Administrator.

**GCHD** In Association with **MOSES LAKE** **PRESENT**

**A SPECIAL SCREENING**  
Thursday November 21<sup>st</sup> 6:00 pm

Moses Lake  
City Hall Auditorium  
401 S Balsam Rd.  
Moses Lake WA 98837

**WRITTEN OFF**  
"THE JOURNALS WILL EXPLAIN EVERYTHING"

Join community leaders to witness a young man's battle with opioid addiction  
FREE PUBLIC SCREENING of the award-winning documentary film  
Childcare will be available at the venue (film not suitable for children)  
Duration: 1 hour 16 minutes  
"This gripping film will change the way you look at America's opioid crisis." – Jane O'Brien BBC News

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