

## "THERE AIN'T NO FLIES ON US"

d. Tony Douglas, ph. Dennis Miller and Robert Fresco, ed. Jack Schoon, cfe. sd. Ian Hendry, sd. ed. David Leach, p. Tony Douglas, produced for the Ontario Society for Crippled Children, the Easter Seal people. This film was made possible by a generous grant from the Hospital for Sick Children foundation, p. manager, Elaine Jaques, p.c. Tony Douglas Associates Ltd. 1977, col. 16mm, running time 26 minutes.

**There Ain't No Flies On Us** is a film about sports and recreation programs for young people who are disabled or handicapped.

It's a film about having a good time with your friends, a film about camping, bowling, skiing, basketball, horseback riding and about the campfire songs we all remember from our childhood.

At the same time, it's also a film about the things you have to deal with when you are both young and also handicapped or disabled. The people in the film talk about these things in their own words.

For example, among the people we meet is a high school student named Carla Patterson, who had her leg amputated because of cancer. Like Nadia De Franco, in Beverly Shaffer's National Film Board film *I'll Find a Way*, Carla speaks candidly about being handicapped, and about how she prefers to be treated by others.

She explains "Nobody really wanted to talk, to say anything about my leg. My friends were so shocked when I talked about my fake leg. They were really surprised to hear me say anything."

Another young woman we meet in the film is Linda Sutton who has cerebral palsy which affects her walking. In one sequence, she tells how much she enjoys skiing with her friends.

"When I'm going down the hill," she remarks, "I don't really feel handicapped. I (just) worry about falling. I want to look as good as everybody



A reflective moment in *There Ain't No Flies On Us*

else. I'm enjoying myself and that's what I like about skiing.

"You don't," she says at another point, "want people to feel sorry for you."

In the film, which Tony Douglas made for the Ontario Society for Crippled Children (with funding from the Hospital for Sick Children Foundation in Toronto), we also meet David Fugeman. Like Linda Sutton, David has cerebral palsy. In his case it affects his speech as well as his gait. He talks, slowly and with an effort, about how much handicapped kids enjoy having some sport or activity that offers a change from daily routine. David enjoys building model airplanes and skiing.

We also meet Glenn Hibbert, who is handicapped by a weakness in the joints, the result of muscular dystrophy. In the film we see his refereeing a spirited game of wheelchair basketball. "I'm not as strong as other members of the team," he comments. "I do play about as many games as they do but just different sorts."

Glenn, like a number of his friends at Sunny View Public School in Toronto, appears in both this film and also in the *I'll Find a Way*. In fact, the two films complement each other admirably, with Beverly Shaffer's film concentrating on one person, nine-year-old Nadia De Franco, in particular, and with **There Ain't No Flies On Us** introducing

reducing the viewer to various energetic and engaging handicapped young people.

In another scene we meet several young bowling enthusiasts who are enjoying that sport thanks to a piece of equipment that enables them to aim at the bowling pins from their wheelchairs. This bowling sequence sums up, with a particular force and clarity, what this film is about.

The film is a remarkable piece of work — in purely cinematic terms and in terms of its message as a sponsored film. It's held together by a solid sense of structure; the editing is well-paced; the transitions work; and even the color quality and the camera angles enhance the overall effect.

The film successfully conveys its message about sports and recreation without creating the "distancing effect" that can occur when handicaps or disabilities are discussed abstractly such that the audience relates to labels instead of to disabled, fellow human beings. Through his characteristic honesty, openness and directness (qualities that are evident in his earlier films, such as in *I'm the Same as Everyone Else*, which he made for the Toronto Epilepsy Association), — Tony Douglas avoids "distancing" the subject matter — and subjects — of this film and abstains from the contrived sentimentality with which filmmakers often approach the handicapped. **Jaan Pill**