

Cambridge filmmaker crossing the country to share 'the power of deaf stories'

Alvin Witcher wants to show that you are more than your disability while documenting Canada's deaf community

June 5, 2025 | 3 min read [Comments](#)



Filmmaker Alvin Witcher.



By Joe McGinty Reporter

It all started with an 8mm film camera for Alvin Witcher, who was captivated by being able put his ideas onto film.

Witcher, who was born deaf, began filmmaking as a way to express himself, his ideas and his passions.

"It gives me the power to tell stories that matter - especially stories from the deaf community that are often overlooked," said Witcher.

"What stands out the most for me is the ability to turn an idea into something real and visual that can move people, educate them and shift their perspective."

Originally from Montreal, Witcher moved to Waterloo Region in 2011 and has been in Cambridge ever since.

Witcher's love for the screen started with "Star Wars" and took off when his parents bought an 8mm film camera in the 1990s.

"I used to play with it and make short films just for fun, and that's how my passion for filmmaking began," he said

"I've continued pursuing it as a career ever since."

His first setbacks included being turned down by companies like CTV and CBC, who he felt weren't ready to hire someone with disabilities.

The rejections motivated him to prove he had something to offer.

Now 50, he has embarked on a journey to capture what it means to be deaf in Canada and how others have overcome barriers in their everyday lives.

Travelling across Canada, Witcher plans to film members of the deaf community and prove to the world people are more than their disability and can still live a meaningful life.

"The reason I'm making this documentary is because I've seen many deaf children — from kindergarten to high school — who don't know what to do after school," he said.

"Some believe they can't get jobs, which isn't true. I want to broadcast real stories that show deaf and disabled people can do anything."

To help keep his dreams alive and pay for his travel, a GoFundMe was created that has already raised over \$1,300.

In a few weeks, Witcher plans to go to British Columbia to film a deaf barbershop owner in Victoria who has successfully run his business for several years.

He also plans to meet with an a professional fisherman who will demonstrate survival fishing techniques.

Later next year, he plans to release his film "A Deaf Legacy in Ontario: Gary Malkowski," which tells the story of the first deaf person elected as an MPP, in 1990.

"I received a grant from the Ontario Arts Council to support this important documentary. It is a major project and will be a 45- to 60-minute film scheduled for release in March 2026."

Despite the work and ongoing projects, Witcher still feels he is looked down upon in the industry, and is constantly trying to change the narrative as a deaf filmmaker.

"Many people underestimate my abilities simply because I'm deaf, so I've had to constantly prove that I'm just as capable as anyone else," he said.

"Access to interpreters, funding and opportunities can also be limited. Despite these barriers, I've stayed committed to my work and built my own path through passion, persistence and a strong belief in the power of deaf stories."

Through the lens of the camera, he hopes to show the stories of others, while at the same time proving that the person behind the camera has overcome his own challenges to live his dreams.

"Never give up on your dreams, no matter what challenges you face. It's OK to struggle — what matters is that you keep going," - " he said.

"Don't let others define your worth or your abilities. Believe in yourself, work hard and surround yourself with people who support you. Your story and your voice matter."

Joe McGinty is a reporter with the Waterloo Region Record.