

## **Stockton to Host Free Screening and Dialogue on Film about Olympic Boxer Claressa 'T-Rex' Shields in Hammonton and Manahawkin**

***For Immediate Release; with Claressa 'T-Rex' Shields photo***

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**Contact: Maryjane Briant**  
**News and Media Relations Director**  
**Galloway Township, NJ 08205**  
**Maryjane.Briant@stockton.edu**  
**(609) 652-4593**  
[www.stockton.edu/media](http://www.stockton.edu/media)

**Galloway, N.J.** - Stockton University and WHYY Philadelphia will present two free preview screenings and community dialogue on the documentary, "T-Rex: Her Fight for Gold," the coming-of-age story of boxing phenomenon Claressa "T-Rex" Shields, who won the Olympic gold medal for women's boxing in 2012.

The film will be shown on **Wednesday, July 6** from noon-2 p.m. at Kramer Hall, Stockton University's instructional site at 30 Front St., Hammonton, N.J., and on **Thursday, July 28** from 2-4 p.m. at the Manahawkin Instructional Site, 712 E. Bay Ave., Manahawkin, N.J.

Shields, of Flint, Michigan, was just 17 when she won the gold medal — the first time women were allowed to box in the Olympic games.

She was 13 years old when it was announced that women would be allowed to box in the 2012 Olympics. Although she'd only been boxing for two years, her coach, Jason Crutchfield, predicted she would be there — and that she would win gold. It was an audacious dream for Shields, whose prior aspirations included having 10 kids by the time she was 26.

Growing up, Shields' father was in prison, her mother struggled with addiction, and Shields bounced between homes. To accomplish her dream, she would need a stable life. Coach Jason and his family took her in, housed her and kept her focused.

Co-directors Drea Cooper and Zackary Canepari and producer Sue Jaye Johnson met Shields and Crutchfield before she qualified for the Olympics and filmed them for the next two years as they navigated the pressure of Olympic competition, family drama, and Claressa's attempts to find love and support in the neglected city of Flint.

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When Shields stands on top of the podium in London, clutching her gold medal and laughing uncontrollably, she, like many around her, thought her struggles were behind her. But back home, as Shields and Crutchfield watch fellow athletes receive recognition and endorsements, no one comes forward to support her, raising questions about race, class and gender bias.

Agents suggested she should soften her image. “She’s not going to do that,” says co-director Canepari. “She’s raw and honest. And stubborn. She wants to succeed on her own terms.”

This film screening will be followed by a community discussion facilitated by Stockton staff member and adjunct instructor Diana Strelczyk.

The event is free, but attendees are requested at: [www.stockton.edu/servicelearning](http://www.stockton.edu/servicelearning).

For more information, email [Diana.Strelczyk@stockton.edu](mailto:Diana.Strelczyk@stockton.edu) or call 609-652-4256.

The film’s broadcast is timed to coincide with Shields’ return to the Olympic boxing ring at the Rio de Janeiro games this summer. The film premieres on Independent Lens on Tuesday, Aug. 2 from 10-11:30 p.m. ET on PBS. (Check local listings.)

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