

## 'Ping Pong Summer' to premiere at Sundance

Written by Staff Report

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**OCEAN CITY** — “Ping Pong Summer,” an independent film shot in Ocean City last year, will be featured at the Sundance Film Festival, its producers announced.

The movie was filmed last September and October throughout Ocean City. The coming-of-age story, set in 1985, is about a ping pong-obsessed teenage boy named Rad Miracle on a family vacation to the resort. Written and directed by Maryland native Michael Tully, the movie’s world premiere will come Jan. 18 at Sundance, held in Park City, Utah.

“Even though Sundance takes place at a Utah ski resort, we anticipate a big group from the Eastern Shore will attend the film’s premiere. Our hope is to turn Park City into Ocean City,” said George Rush, a producer of “Ping Pong Summer,” in a news release about the film’s festival selection.

The movie was one of 118 selected out of more than 4,000 domestic and international submission.

Rush said in an email that their goal was always to premiere at a major festival that serves as a marketplace for independent films, “and Sundance is the premiere marketplace, so we are very pleased,” he said. “Our hope is to find the best distribution partner at Sundance and that the film gets as wide release as possible.”

“Ping Pong Summer” stars Susan Sarandon, John Hannah, Lea Thompson, Amy Sedaris, Robert Longstreet and Judah Friedlander. The cast also includes young actors Marcello Conte and Andy Riddle; Marylanders Myles Massey, Joseph McCaughtry, Helena Seabrook, and Maddie Howard.

The teenage actress Emmi Shockley, who plays the story’s female lead, is an Ocean City local who was discovered during auditions here in the resort before filming began.

Michael Gottwald, another producer on “Ping Pong Summer,” also was a producer for another small, independent film that ended up a major hit in 2012 at Sundance. That movie, “Beasts of the Southern Wild,” ended up a contender for Best Picture at the Academy Awards, and won a slew of film accolades throughout the year.