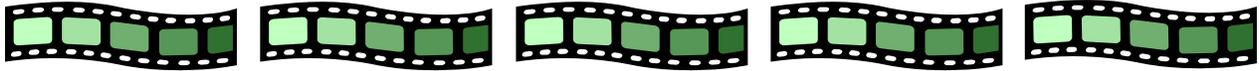


Documentary Films for Community Psychology Courses

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The documentary films described here feature communities adjusting to real-world challenges and the efforts of their citizens to address them through grassroots efforts and innovative community programming. While there are many documentary films suitable for use in community psychology courses, these are of particular interest because they depict community psychology principles and practices in actual community settings, demonstrating both triumphs and defeats, and the impact of activism among everyday people. All of the films are in English [some with English subtitles, when necessary], although they represent communities throughout the world. I have made an effort to only include films that are readily available and note where they can be obtained. I hope that you find this resource useful in your classrooms and would appreciate feedback and recommendations of other films.

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Some Tips on Using Documentaries as Teaching Tools

- **Preview films before you show them in class or assign them to your students.** While documentary filmmakers attempt to “document” issues, they often have a “point of view” and some might argue that their films have a particular slant. It is therefore important for you to be familiar with the film to ensure that what it depicts is in line with what you hope to teach. In addition, familiarity with the film allows you to be selective about what you show in class. Some films can be quite long. Showing selected segments of a film can help you to articulate your point or demonstrate a key concept without taking up too much precious class time.



Some films contain graphic content, and as an instructor you must determine if the content is appropriate for your students and academic institution. Films containing graphic depictions of violence, sexual content, explicit language, etc. are identified with the symbol above.

- **Test classroom equipment before you show the film.** There is nothing more frustrating for students than to watch you fumble around with audio-visual equipment – not to mention how anxiety provoking it will be for you! Be sure that the equipment works – test the image, sound, etc.

- **View the film with your class.** Watching the film while your students are watching it allows you to observe their reactions to the film and to answer questions if they arise. Documentaries often reference historical events or concepts that may not be familiar to your students. This also gives you the opportunity to pause the film in order to add your own commentary.

This document also contains films that stream on-line. In situations where you will only show segments of an entire film, it can be helpful for students to have the opportunity to view the entire film on their own. While it is most desirable to watch films with your students, you may want to consider assigning films to watch on-line as homework. This is most effective when you provide students with some background information about what they will be watching and why. Providing a list of guiding questions as students watch can be quite helpful as well. This approach, complemented with some time to discuss the film in class, can be an effective alternative to using class time to view a film.

Where to Obtain Films Identified in this Guide

- Your College or University Library

Your college or university library is one of the best sources for obtaining documentary films. These libraries often maintain large collections of documentary films on DVD. Many college and university libraries also maintain facilities for viewing films that have been placed on reserve for classes.

Interlibrary Loan: Colleges and universities often participate in large networks of academic libraries that loan materials to each other. While this can be a highly effective vehicle for acquiring hard to find films, it is important to note that the availability can be unpredictable and you may not be able to obtain the desired film when you want to show it.

- Your local public library

Public libraries often maintain large collections of documentary films on DVD, particularly films produced by PBS. Public libraries in major metropolitan areas are excellent sources for films about their own metropolitan areas and may have hard to find films as part of their permanent collections.

- Public Broadcasting System (PBS) Online [www.pbs.org], for purchase [www.shoppbs.org]

This site is the gateways to all PBS documentary series. PBS now produces five documentary film series exploring the human condition including: American Experience (a history series that features people and events that shaped U.S. History, past and present), *FRONTLINE* (public affairs films exploring critical issues of our times), *Independent Lens* and *P.O.V* (both featuring independent films), and *Wide Angle* (international current affairs). Many of the films in these series are available for viewing online (follow links to each series through A-Z program listings on the pbs.org homepage) and many videos are available for purchase through www.shoppbs.org.

- Home Box Office (HBO) Documentaries www.hbo.com/docs
HBO produces a wide range of award-winning documentary films. The films frequently re-air on HBO networks and through their OnDemand service through cable television providers. The HBO.com website also has a “shop” feature where many of their films are available for purchase on DVD.

- Amazon.com www.amazon.com
Amazon.com maintains a large collection of documentary films, available at discount prices. Amazon typically carries all PBS documentaries available on DVD.

- Netflix www.netflix.com
Netflix, the online DVD rental subscription service, maintains a large collection of documentary films, many of which are available to stream on-line at no additional charge to subscribers.

- Film distributors
The following companies distribute documentary films for educational/institutional use.
 - Berkeley Media LLC www.berkeleymedia.com
 - California Newsreel www.newsreel.org
 - Documentary Education Resources www.der.org
 - Docurama www.docurama.com
 - Fanlight Productions www.fanlight.com
 - Films for the Humanities and Sciences www.films.com
 - First Run Features www.firstrunfeatures.com
 - IndieFlix www.indieflix.com
 - New Day Films www.newday.com



The Films



A Day's Work, A Day's Pay

New Day Films, 2002

Running time: 57 minutes

Availability: New Day Films: purchase or rental [www.newday.com]

New Day Digital: streaming online [www.newdaydigital.com]

Profiles three New York City welfare recipients forced to participate in the city's Welfare Experience Program (WEP) developed during the Giuliani administration. Workers in the program were required to work full-time in menial jobs, performing the same duties as workers employed by the city, in order to receive their welfare benefits -- amounting to one-fourth of the pay received by city workers with no benefits. Noncompliance would result in a loss of welfare benefits. In addition, the program provided no child care for workers who were required to work full-time, nor did it support participants' academic pursuits. Each of the three individuals profiled gets involved in grassroots initiatives to achieve living wages and equity for WEP workers. Juan Galan becomes a community organizer for ACORN, working to unite WEP workers to stand up for their rights. Jackie Marte, a single mother of two who refuses to work for WEP, finds a training program for welfare recipients that allows her to leave welfare for good, while serving others with similar experiences. Jose Nicolau becomes involved in organizing his fellow workers against the program, delivering inspirational speeches to his peers and testifying to the City Council about sexual harassment of WEP workers.

The Age of Aids

PBS Video, 2006

Running time: 240 minutes in two parts

Availability: Shop PBS [www.shoppbs.org], Amazon [www.amazon.com],
Netflix [www.netflix.com]

The full program is available for online viewing (free) at:
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/aids/>

This two-part film which originally aired on PBS' *Frontline*, explores the history of the AIDS pandemic. Part One focuses on the initial identification of the first patients first patients who appeared for treatment, to the initial identification of the virus, to its proliferation throughout the world. The film features interviews with scientists, physicians, AIDS activists, and a wide range of people infected with the virus and their loved ones, calling attention to missed opportunities both scientific and political, that may have slowed the spread of the disease. Part Two focuses on the global proliferation of the pandemic and the social and economic inequities that have led to longevity for people infected with HIV in some countries, and certain death in others.

All for the Taking

Berkeley Media, 2005

Running time: 58 minutes

Availability: Berkeley Media [www.berkeleymedia.com]

All for the Taking is a powerful exploration of urban renewal and gentrification. In 2001, the City of Philadelphia approved the Neighborhood Transformation Initiative (NTI), a 1.6 billion dollar urban renewal project. The NTI gave the city the power to seize thousands of homes, mostly owned or rented by people of color, the elderly, and the poor, using eminent domain. The seized land created a land bank that the city used to entice developers to rebuild historic neighborhoods of Philadelphia. The film profiles a number of residents and housing activists as they fight the city to keep their homes and calls attention to the fact that eminent domain is most often used in communities where residents are the most vulnerable -- poorly informed about their rights and possessing limited resources to mount a fight to save their homes.

Brick City

First Run Features, 2009

Running time: 260 minutes (5 episodes) on 2 DVDs

Availability: First Run Features [www.firstrunfeatures.com], Amazon [www.amazon.com], Netflix [www.netflix.com]

Brick City, which originally aired on the Sundance Channel, is a five-episode documentary that chronicles the efforts of Newark, New Jersey residents and city officials to transform their community after nearly five decades of decline characterized by violence, poverty, and corruption. Each episode features ordinary citizens and city officials tackling the wide range of seemingly intractable issues that plague the community: adolescent pregnancy, gangs, underperforming schools, poor housing conditions, unemployment and underemployment, community violence etc. Prominently featured throughout the series is the city's charismatic young mayor, Corey Booker, as well as host of community residents, young and old, striving to make changes in their own lives and in the community.

Episode 1: Summer is Ours

This episode focuses on Mayor Corey Booker and Police Director Garry McCarthy's efforts to put new programs and systems in place minimize violence during the hot summer months of 2008. As summer nears, residents recall the summer of 2006 when three college students were murdered, execution-style, on the playground of Mt. Vernon Elementary School. Also featured are longtime Blood gang member Jayda, a youth counselor, and her romance with Crip gang member Creep.

Episode 2: Struggle

Homicides are down in Newark as Mayor Booker joins New Jersey Governor Corzine to announce new state-wide initiatives to help ex-offenders find steady jobs. Jayda, recently released from jail, works to put together a non-profit mentoring group, while she and Creep struggle to keep their growing family together.

Episode 3: Central

A sign in Mayor Booker's office reads, "We are in a budget crisis," as City Hall staff struggle to adapt to budget cuts. Despite earlier concerns, Central High School, a new \$100 million state of the art building opens to its first students. The principal and vice principal hold overnights with freshman boys, building community and exploring the wide range of their concerns, while Jayda runs a similar program for incoming girls.

Episode 4: Circus

For the first time in over 50 years, the Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus comes to Newark, heralding the growth and improvements that the city has made. Turmoil over power and processes plague the Police Department. Jiwe, a Blood author, wins his literary award.

Episode 5: Red October

In the midst of the 2008 elections, Newark experiences escalating gang violence as homicides increase for both gangbangers and innocent bystanders. Mayor Booker and the citizens of Newark carefully monitor the local and national results of the historical election, while Jayda pursues her legal options.

Brooklyn Matters

New Day Films, 2007

Running time: 50 minutes

Availability: New Day Films: purchase or rental [www.newday.com]

Brooklyn Matters explores the intersection of race, class, power, big real estate and politics on community redevelopment. The proposed Atlantic Yards development in Brooklyn is the one of the largest multi-use development proposals in the history of New York City. Through the use of eminent domain, a 22-acre parcel of land is planned to become a new athletic stadium (for the Nets Basketball franchise), commercial and high end residential space. The film examines how Atlantic Yards will affect employment, housing, the environment, traffic congestion and the future of Brooklyn. The film sheds light on the battle over eminent domain, the leverage and draw of the Brooklyn Nets, and the aggressive public marketing plan that's designed to win the hearts and minds of Brooklyn residents. *Brooklyn Matters* encompasses the many sides of the debate — presenting the views of local residents who support the project as well as many who are deeply opposed to it, and the growing division between them. *Brooklyn Matters* raises important questions about the rights of residents to have a say in the development of their communities and the competing interests of government, politicians, and business.

Brownsville Black and White

Berkeley Media, 2002

Running time: 56 minutes

Availability: Berkeley Media [www.berkeleymedia.com]

Brownsville Black and White explores the complex history of residential segregation, white flight, school reform, and Black-Jewish alliances and rivalries in the Brownsville neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York. Brownsville, which has been called, “The First American Ghetto,” by historians and members of the media, Brownsville is a community characterized by urban decay, crime, violence, chronic poverty and unemployment. Using archival footage and interviews with residents, the film presents an intimate portrait of a community struggling to face some of our most intractable social issues.

California and the American Dream

This four-part series explores the roles of community, culture and identity in shaping California. Arguably one of the most diverse regions of the world, California is at once a role model and cautionary tale for other parts of the United States and the world. California is at the forefront of the post 9-11 American agenda – from dramatic shifts in the demographics to new models of civic engagement, from the role of immigrants in neighborhood life to democracy through the initiative process, from Native American gaming and sovereignty to sustainable agriculture.

California’s “Lost Tribes”

Berkeley Media, 2005

Running time: 56 minutes

Availability: Berkeley Media [www.berkeleymedia.com]

California's "Lost" Tribes explores the controversial issue of tribal gaming and its development in California over the past 30 years. The film examines the historical underpinnings of tribal sovereignty and the impact of gaming on Indian self-determination, and the challenges that Native people face in insuring that their new-found prosperity will be sustained for future generations. The film also provides insights into the thinking and motivation of those who oppose the expansion of Indian gaming including home developers and organic farmers, who find themselves in competition with tribe over the development of what little rural land remains in the state.

The Price of Renewal

Berkeley Media, 2005

Running time: 56 minutes

Availability: Berkeley Media [www.berkeleymedia.com]

The Price of Renewal focuses on the San Diego community of City Heights, known locally as the Ellis Island of San Diego, California, home to poor immigrants from Mexico, Central

America, Southeast Asia and East Africa. Plagued by decades of urban decay and neglect, the community embarks on long-term redevelopment plan to revitalize the neighborhood. The film explores the complex issues of community development, public/private partnerships, philanthropy, civic engagement and the unintended consequences of gentrification on long-term residents of the community.

The New Los Angeles

Berkeley Media, 2005

Running time: 56 minutes

Availability: Berkeley Media [www.berkeleymedia.com]

This film explores the turbulent history of the city of Los Angeles, described as the largest “majority – minority” city with the greatest discrepancy between rich and poor. The film traces the city’s ups and downs from the 1973 election of Tom Bradley, the first African American mayor of a major city without an African American majority, to the 2005 election of Antonio Villaraigosa, the first Latino mayor to be elected in 130 years. *The New Los Angeles* chronicles how the city addresses some of its most pressing issues: immigration, globalization, de-industrialization, economic inequality, and a shrinking middle class. The film also profiles the efforts of the city’s working poor, in coalition with community organizations, labor unions, and elected officials, to transform the environment in which they live and to make the city of Los Angeles more accountable to its residents.

Ripe for Change

Berkeley Media, 2005

Running time: 56 minutes

Availability: Berkeley Media [www.berkeleymedia.com]

This film focuses on the debates that dominate the state of California around the issue of food and its production. Through interviews with farmers, well-known chefs, scientists and authors, *Ripe for Change* explores the social, environmental, and political issues around the increasing demand for “inexpensive” food. The film juxtaposes those who support large-scale agriculture, genetic engineering, and technology as the means to meet these goals, versus others who call for organic, sustainable, and locally focused style of farming that considers the impact of agriculture on the environment, on communities, and on workers.

Crips and Bloods: Made in America

Docurama, 2009

Running time: 93 minutes

Availability: Docurama films [www.docurama.com] Amazon [www.amazon.com],
Netflix [www.netflix.com]

This film examines the social, psychological and sociopolitical factors that have given rise to two of the most infamous African American gangs, Los Angeles' Crips and Bloods. Through archival footage and present day interviews with current and former members of both gangs, gang intervention experts, writers, activists and academics the film traces the history of the rise of the gangs that in the past 30 years have resulted in over 15,000 murders in an ongoing cycle of gang violence that continues unabated in the Los Angeles community of South Los Angeles. The film provides insights into the functioning of the gangs characterized by turf wars and territorialism, the inter-gang hierarchy and family structure, the rules of behavior, the culture of guns, death and dishonor. In addition, the film analyzes the sociocultural factors that contribute to the persistence of the gangs in the community: persistent poverty, lack of educational and occupational opportunities, the erosion of identity that fuels the self-perpetuating legacy of black self-hatred, the disappearance of the African-American father and the prison culture in which one in four black men will be imprisoned at some point in his life.



Mature themes, graphic language and descriptions of violence

Every Mother's Son

New Day Films, 2004

Running time: 53 minutes

Availability: New Day Films: purchase or rental [www.newday.com]
New Day Digital: streaming online [www.newdaydigital.com]

Filmed over a period of seven years, *Every Mother's Son* chronicles the transformation of three women – from grieving mothers to activists. Inez Baez (whose son Anthony was killed in an illegal police choke-hold), Kadiatou Diallo (whose son Amadou was unarmed when he was shot 41 times by police), and Doris Busch Boskey (whose son Gary Busch was pepper-sprayed and shot to death while holding a small hammer) join forces to combat police brutality and to advocate to victims and their families. The women have inspired a grassroots movement in New York that is challenging the militarization of law enforcement and the erosions of constitutional protections. When police kill someone under suspicious circumstances, the mothers assemble to help the family deal with its grief and to seek the truth and accountability. The mothers have also become advocates for police reforms, including better training and more citizen oversight, and have connected to a larger national movement against police brutality.

Farmingville

Docurama, 2004

Running time: 78 minutes

Availability: Amazon [www.amazon.com], Docurama [www.docurama.com], Netflix [www.netflix.com]

Chronicles the challenges faced by the relatively homogeneous community of Farmingville (population 15,000), located on central Long Island, New York, as large numbers of undocumented Mexican day laborers move into the community. Many of the men easily find work in Suffolk County's thriving landscaping, construction, and restaurant low-wage industries. As the number of workers increases (to 1,500), long-time residents organize themselves to protest the influx of the workers into their community, lodging complaints about large numbers of men standing on street corners and extreme overcrowding in rental housing. As tensions in the community rise, verbal and physical intimidation toward the workers rises, culminating a brutal attack against two of the workers. The community becomes increasingly divided, as community residents on both sides organize around the issue. The filmmakers spent nearly a year in Farmingville, talking to all sides and filming the conflict as it unfolded in legal and political maneuverings, community organizing, vigilante action, and most tragically, violence.

Flag Wars

Berkeley Media, 2003

Running time: 87 minutes

Availability: Berkeley Media [www.berkeleymedia.com]

Filmed over a period of four years, *Flag Wars* chronicles the gentrification of a Columbus, Ohio neighborhood. The neighborhood, once a stable working and middle class Black community, now in decay and economically depressed, is being gentrified by predominantly White, gay homebuyers. The resulting conflicts are a case study of differences in perception. Where realtors and buyers see run-down homes, black residents see evidence of institutional racism that steered resources away from this community. What newer residents see as a beneficial effort to renovate and restore value, veteran residents see as an assault on their heritage and a threat to their ability to hold on to their homes. As the conflicts play themselves out, flags symbolizing the unity and solidarity of the dueling communities begin to appear throughout the neighborhood. Through interviews with newcomers and long-time residents, realtors and community officials, the film is a thoughtful case study of gentrification and its impact on a community.

The Garden

Oscilloscope Laboratories, 2009

Running time: 80 minutes

Availability: Official film site [<http://www.thegardenmovie.com/>], Amazon [www.amazon.com], Netflix [www.netflix.com]

The Garden chronicles the triumphs and defeats of the South Central Farmers. Born out of the 1992 civil unrest that followed the Rodney King beating trial verdicts, the South Central Farmers created a 14 acre urban farm in the epicenter of the destruction. The largest urban farm in the United States became a symbol of hope and pride in one of the nation's most blighted communities, providing the only source of fresh produce to the community and an opportunity for the farmers to grow healthy food to feed their families and their neighbors. After a decade of operation the owner of the land decided to sell the property to developers, prompting a series of protests, vigils, and lawsuits as the passionate group of largely poor Latino farmers took on the landowner, developers, and the City of Los Angeles. After nearly two years of struggle, the farmers were evicted and the land was bulldozed. This film provides excellent examples of the strengths and weaknesses of grassroots community organizing.

Holding Ground: The Rebirth of Dudley Street

New Day Films, 1996

Running time: 58 minutes

Availability: New Day Films: purchase or rental [www.newday.com]
New Day Digital: streaming online [www.newdaydigital.com]

Holding Ground features the work of residents of the multicultural (African-American, Latino, Cape Verdean, Haitian, Puerto Rican, and European-American) Boston area community of Roxbury, to revitalize their neighborhood. The neighborhood, long red-lined by banks, marginalized by the city, and plagued by illegal dumping, drug dealing in a community park, and a proliferation of abandoned lots created by the burning down houses. Residents formed the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) went on to gain national recognition as residents fought to close down illegal dumps, gain unprecedented control of land from City Hall and create a comprehensive plan to rebuild the fabric of their community. The film features interviews with residents, activists and city officials, interspersed with archival footage of community events and activities. This film exemplifies the power of community mobilization to effect sustainable change when neighborhood residents create and implement their own agenda for change.

Homeless in Paradise

New Day Films, 2006

Running time: 50 minutes

Availability: New Day Films: purchase or rental [www.newday.com]
New Day Digital: streaming online [www.newdaydigital.com]

Homeless in Paradise tackles the issue of homelessness through case studies of four individuals living on the streets of Santa Monica, California where an estimated 2 -- 5% of the city's population is homeless. As Rick, Donna, Simon, and Faye struggle with the mental illnesses and addictions that are contributors to their living on the streets, the city struggles with how to address the problem. While most cities in the United States budget less than \$1.00 per year per homeless person, Santa Monica budgets more than \$100.00 per homeless person, yet getting a handle on the problem continues to allude city officials and service providers. The film provides insights into factors that contribute to homelessness and the ways in which communities, social service agencies and providers attempt to address this growing, intractable social issue.

Homes & Hands: Community Land Trusts in Action

New Day Films, 2006

Running time: 36 minutes

Availability: New Day Films: purchase or rental [www.newday.com]
New Day Digital: streaming online [www.newdaydigital.com]

This film features communities in North Carolina, New Mexico and Vermont where community land trusts have been used to assist low income residents to become homeowners. Buyers purchase homes on land owned by a community land trust (CLT) and enjoy the tax benefits of homeownership and the opportunity to build equity. In the event that a resident decides to move, they sell the home back to the trust. The end result is revitalization of a neighborhood without gentrification, providing low income residents to continue living in their communities as those communities improve.

Letters from the Other Side

New Day Films, 2006

Running time: 73 minutes

Availability: New Day Films: purchase or rental [www.newday.com]
New Day Digital: streaming online [www.newdaydigital.com]

Letters from the Other Side explores the stories of women left behind in Mexico as their husbands and sons illegally enter the United States to find work and economic security for their families. Through video letters carried across the border, viewers gain insights into the struggles of three families torn apart by poverty, communities dying as a result of globalization, and governments unwilling or unable to address these complex issues. This powerful film raises important questions about the status of poor women and the viability of their families.

Living Broke in Boom Times: Lessons from the Movement to End Poverty

New Day Films, 2007

Running time: 73 minutes

Availability: New Day Films: purchase or rental [www.newday.com]
New Day Digital: streaming online [www.newdaydigital.com]

Living Broke in Boom Times documents the decade-long movement of poor Americans to end poverty and achieve social and economic justice. The film condenses three full-length documentaries (*Takeover*, *Poverty Outlaw* and *Outriders*) into segments ideal for classroom use and includes new commentary from key figures who led the movement. In the *Takeover* (1990) groups of poor people across the country organize to take over abandoned Housing and Urban Development (HUD) houses for poor and homeless people and families in an effort to call attention to local government to the plight of these vulnerable individuals. *Poverty Outlaw* (1997) features the efforts of the Kensington Welfare Rights Union (Philadelphia), a multiethnic organization of poor women working to empower poor women within the city in support of their efforts to locate and secure affordable housing for themselves and their children. *Outriders* (1999) follows the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign New Freedom Bus Tour as homeless and poor people ride a bus across the United States (some 10,000 miles) to document human rights violations (denial of food, shelter, living wages) against the poor. The tour ends as the group takes their findings to the United Nations, charging the United States government with crimes against humanity under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The film depicts outstanding examples the obstacles the organizers faced (fear, fragmentation, etc.). Cheri Honkala, Willie Baptist and Liz Theoharis discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the organizing, and the lessons learned from hard-won experience.

Long Night's Journey Into Day

California Newsreel, 2000

Running time: 94 minutes

Availability: California Newsreel [<http://newsreel.org>]

This film chronicles several cases heard by South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) formed following the collapse of Apartheid. The mandate of the TRC was to bear witness to, record and in some cases grant amnesty to the perpetrators of human rights violations that occurred under Apartheid. The goal of the TRC is to surface the truth of past events in service to lasting peace. At times heart wrenching, the film provides unique insights into the process of reconciliation and the creation of community after collective trauma.

The Lost Children of Rockdale County

PBS, Frontline, 1999

Running time: 90 minutes

Availability: Shop PBS [www.shoppbs.org], Amazon [www.amazon.com],
Netflix [www.netflix.com]

The Lost Children of Rockdale County, which originally aired on PBS' *Frontline*, explores how a 1996 syphilis outbreak in a well-off Atlanta suburb affected over 200 teenagers and revealed their lives unknown to parents: group sex, binge drinking, drugs and violence. Some were as young as twelve and thirteen years old. Although the program begins with an enquiry into how and why the syphilis outbreak happened, it becomes in the end a wider, deeper examination of the world of teenagers emerges. The report interweaves frank conversations with the teens, parents of teens, as well as interviews with community leaders, educators, and medical professionals who investigated the syphilis outbreak. The film provides insights into the relative isolation of youth within a community that prides itself on meeting their meeting the needs of its children.



Graphic discussion of sexual activity

Madres Unidas: Parents Researching for Change

Berkeley Media, 2003

Running time: 58 minutes

Availability: Berkeley Media [www.berkeleymedia.com]

This film documents the efforts of five Latina immigrant mothers to start a small school in their Oakland, California neighborhood. As part of their work on the project, the mothers become engaged in participatory research, chronicling their process through data collection and videography. *Madres Unidas* highlights their participation in city-wide school reform efforts and community organizing around the issue. The film effectively highlights the personal transformation of the five mothers, as they work to create a school for their children and develop their skills as social activists and researchers. In documenting the process undertaken by the women, the film demonstrates how the experience of engaging in research was tremendously empowering and transforming for them and serves as a strong testament to the value of participatory research as a method that expands the possibilities for democratic participation and social change.

Maid in America

New Day Films, 2006

Running time: 60 minutes

Courses: Adult Development; Lifespan Development; Immigration; Family Studies

Availability: New Day Films [www.newday.com]

This film explores the lives of three Latina immigrant women who work as nannies and housekeepers in Los Angeles. Often leaving their own children behind to care of other women's children and homes, the film provides insights into the struggles they face as a result of long periods of separation from their own families and the sometimes harsh working conditions, characterized by long hours, low pay, no benefits, and sometimes abuse at the hands of their employers. The film also raises questions about modern day motherhood, which immigrant women leave their children behind to raise the children of American women, who in turn leave their children in the care of a nanny in order to go to work.

The New Heroes

Oregon Public Broadcasting, 2005

Running time: 4, 60 minute episodes

Availability: Order from Oregon Public Broadcasting at:

<http://www.pbs.org/opb/thenewheroes/about/index.html>

The New Heroes tells the dramatic stories of 14 social entrepreneurs who are successfully alleviating poverty and illness, combating unemployment and violence, and bringing education, light, opportunity and freedom to poor and marginalized people around the world. The series consists of four episodes organized around the following themes:

Episode 1: Dreams of Sanctuary

"Dreams of Sanctuary" features three social entrepreneurs working to create new beginnings for some of the world's most desperate and destitute. Segments in this episode travel to Moses Zulu's home and school for AIDS orphans in Zambia and to Mimi Silbert's San Francisco-based Delancey Street foundation, which helps drug addicts, ex-convicts and homeless people turn their lives around. This episode also features the work of Kailash Satyarthi to end forced labor and child slavery in India through a network of child-friendly villages. Viewers witness a harrowing raid on a slave camp holding children.

Episode 2: Technology of Freedom

"Technology of Freedom" features the work of "compassionate capitalists," who have created self-sustaining businesses to maximize human benefit rather than profit. Segments in this episode profile Martin Fisher and Nick Moon, the founders of ApproTEC, who invented an economical water pump that benefits Africa's subsistence farmers, providing them with the opportunity to make a meaningful living. This episode also travels to Brazil where modern Brazilian cowboy, Fabio Rosa, battles government monopolies to bring electricity to remote regions in his country. Finally, this episode returns to India to meet Govindapa Vin Kataswami, known as Dr. V., who, working with social entrepreneur David Green, has applied the latest industrial techniques to make sight-saving surgery available for the poor.

Episode 3: Power of Enterprise

The third program in the series looks at how social entrepreneurs are working to break the cycle of poverty by empowering people to earn a living. Featured in this episode are Muhammad Yunus, "the banker to the poor," whose Grameen Bank has provided 4.7 billion dollars in loans to 4.4 million families in Bangladesh and inspired similar credit operations in a hundred countries. In the jungle city of Pucallpa, Peru, Albina Ruiz Rios has been working with local residents to form micro-enterprises to clean up garbage that is contaminating water and causing disease in poor neighborhoods. In this episode viewers also travel to the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, where Maria Teresa "Tete" Leal leads the Coopa-Roca sewing cooperative, a fair labor shop that creates high-fashion clothing sold around the world.

Episode 4: The Power of Knowledge

The final episode features social entrepreneurs creating educational opportunities for children in societies where education is not accessible for significant numbers of children.

In Thailand Sompop Jantraka has started a school for young Thai girls with the goal of saving them from entering into or being sold into prostitution. In Egypt Dina Abdel Wahab who has started schools children with disabilities who are often neglected by Egypt's education system. And the program returns once more to India, this time to Calcutta, where Inderjit Khurana has set out to bring education to children who beg in the train stations by setting up a school right on the railway platforms.

Roots of Health

Berkeley Media, 2009

Running time: 58 minutes

Availability: Berkeley Media [www.berkeleymedia.com]

This film explores how people's health and well-being are primarily determined by where they live, their educational, economic, and social status, and the degree of control they have over their own lives. Following case studies in the UK, India, and the United States, the film demonstrates the dramatic inequities that exist worldwide and how poverty affects the health of individuals and communities around the world. The film effectively chronicles how community mobilization and activism can be used to overcome health disparities.

Third Ward Tx

Welcome Home Productions, 2007

Running time: 57 minutes

Availability: New Day Films: purchase or rental [www.newday.com]
New Day Digital: streaming online [www.newdaydigital.com]

This film features Houston's *Project Row Houses* (PRH), a neighborhood-based nonprofit art and cultural organization in Houston's Northern Third Ward, one of the city's oldest African-American communities. In 1993 a group of artists began displaying art on a series of blighted shotgun houses in the neighborhood. Over time the project grew encompass arts and culture, neighborhood revitalization, low-income housing, education, historic preservation, and community service. In addition to art exhibitions sponsored by the PRH, their Young Mothers Residential Program (YMRP) is prominently featured. YMRP provides a "social safety net" for low-income young mothers between the ages of 18 and 26, including: a fully furnished row house with rent subsidy for one to two years; weekly workshops focusing on parenting and life skills; a program mentor (a professional woman who has volunteered to be available to a mother as a friend and advisor); counseling support services; and the structure to establish healthy environments for raising their children and community networks to sustain them when they exit the program.

Two Towns of Jasper

PBS Video, 2007

Running time: 90 minutes

Availability: Shop PBS [www.shoppbs.org], Documentary Educational Resources [www.der.org]

On June 7, 1998, three white men from Jasper, Texas, chained African-American James Byrd to a pick-up truck and dragged him for three miles on a country road until his body disintegrated. This film explores racial tensions in the community of Jasper over the course of the year when the three white men stood trial for the death of Mr. Byrd. Two film crews interviewed residents of the community: an all white crew interviewed white residents and an all black crew interviewed black residents. The emerging narratives provide powerful insights into the longstanding mutual distrust that exists between blacks and whites, and their diametrically opposed perspectives on race relations in the community.

Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick?

California Newsreel, 2008

Running time: 236 minutes (7 episodes: one 56 minutes and six 28 minutes each)

Availability: California Newsreel [www.newsreel.org]

Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick? consists of one full-length episode and six shorter films. The films explore mounting evidence that suggest that lack of access to power and resources can be just as detrimental to health and well-being as biological agents. It also reveals a health gradient tied to wealth: those at the top of the class pyramid average longer, healthier lives, while those at the bottom are the most disempowered, get sicker more often and die sooner. What's more, at every level, many communities of color are worse off than their white counterparts. Researchers believe that chronic stress over the life course may create an additional health burden for people of color. Compelling personal stories illustrate obstacles and inequities in society but they also point the way to new possibilities, as individuals and communities organize to gain control over their destinies and their health.

Episode 1: In Sickness and in Wealth (56 minutes)

Set in Louisville, Kentucky, this episode reveals the disparities in access to health care as we follow the lives of a CEO, lab supervisor, janitor and unemployed mother. This film illustrates how social class shapes access to power, resources, and opportunities and that the key to health and longevity may lie in social policies that promote economic and social justice, rather than in medicine.

Episode 2: When the Bough Breaks (28 minutes)

This episode focuses on infant mortality rates and disparities that exist between African Americans and Whites. The film presents data that demonstrates that African American women with graduate degrees are at higher risk for delivering pre-term, low birth-weight babies than are White women who did not complete high school. Researchers argue that the chronic stress of racism may be a contributing risk factor to infant mortality among African Americans.

Episode 3: Becoming American (28 minutes)

This episode explores the “Hispanic Paradox” in which Mexican immigrants experience declines in their overall health as a function of how long they have lived in the U.S. The film explores protective factors that exist in immigrant communities and the role of labor and community organizing in reversing downward trends in Mexican immigrant health.

Episode 4: Bad Sugar (28 minutes)

This episode focuses on the Pima and O'odham Indian reservations of southern Arizona which have the highest rates of Type 2 diabetes in the world. The film explores the notion that chronic poverty and oppression have resulted in “futurelessness,” which manifests itself in chronic disease. Community leaders are hopeful that community empowerment and sustainable and culturally appropriate development can restore prosperity, hope, and health.

Episode 5: Place matters (28 minutes)

This episode focuses on the health of Southeast Asian and Latino immigrants who move into neglected predominantly Black neighborhoods. Segregation, high unemployment, limited access to fresh foods, safe parks, and affordable quality housing have harmed the health of their African American neighbors, and now the newcomers’ health is being compromised as well. The film profiles a community that has used federal funds to rebuild a new mixed-income community with health as its focus.

Episode 6: Collateral Damage (28 minutes)

This episode explores the ways in which U.S. military policy and globalization have impacted the health status of people in the Pacific Islands.

Episode 7: Not Just a Paycheck (28 minutes)

This episode focuses on a community Greenville, Michigan – once home to the largest refrigerator factory in the U.S. When the factory closed, hospital visits in the community tripled as a result of depression, alcoholism, and domestic abuse. When the same company shuts down a factory in Sweden, the outcomes are quite different as a result of social policies designed to protect workers.

V-Day: Until the Violence Stops

Docurama, 2003

Running time: 73 minutes

Availability: Docurama films www.docurama.com, Amazon www.amazon.com,
Netflix www.netflix.com

V-Day: Until the Violence Stops chronicles the evolution of Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues* into an international grassroots movement dedicated to ending violence directed at women and girls. In 2002, over 800 performances of *The Vagina Monologues* were staged world-wide in order to raise awareness about violence against women and girls and to raise fund to support programs that provide refuge and support to those who have been victimized. In addition to brief pieces of the play performed around the world, the film spotlights efforts in Kenya to combat female circumcision and a discussion among a group of women from the Philippines forced to serve as sex workers for Japanese soldiers during WWII. The film is a powerful testament to the resilience of women and the healing power of testimony and resistance.

A Village Called Versailles

New Day Films, 2007

Running time: 67 minutes

Availability: New Day Films [www.newday.com]

This film chronicles the struggles of a working class Vietnamese American community to overcome tragedy and to effect meaningful social change. Versailles, a tight-knit neighborhood on the edge of New Orleans, is home to the densest ethnic Vietnamese population outside of Vietnam. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, residents rebuild their homes — only to have them threatened by a toxic landfill planned in their neighborhood. As the community fights back, it turns a devastating disaster into a catalyst for change and the creation of a better future.

When the Levees Broke

HBO Video, 2006

Running time: 257 minutes (4 acts) on 3 DVDs

Availability: HBO video [<http://store.hbo.com>], Amazon [www.amazon.com],
Netflix [www.netflix.com]

When the Levees Broke is a powerful portrait of New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Incorporating archival footage, filmed as the city braced for what would be one of the most destructive hurricanes in the history of the gulf coast of the United States, along with interviews with residents, news reporters, city, state and federal officials, the film powerfully juxtaposes the devastation of the community and the resilience of its people. Nearly 100 people from all walks of life were interviewed for this film, which raises questions about the role that individuals, neighborhoods, city and state officials, the federal government, aid agencies and the U.S. military played both during and after the hurricane. The film also provides insights into the rich cultural heritage of the city and its role in the resilience manifested by ordinary citizens' commitment to rebuild and revitalize their city, despite government red tape, ineffective distribution of limited resources and waning interest on the part of the American people as the months pass. In addition, issues of race, poverty, social class, and marginalization are recurrent themes in the film, as interviewees struggle to make sense of the poorly orchestrated response in the aftermath of this deadly natural disaster.