

The Youth Documentary Academy presents
a new TV series through the lens of youth in America

[OUR] TIME



BROADCAST PREMIERE THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3RD

Airing Thursday nights at 8:30pm in October and November on Rocky Mountain PBS
Check local listings for stations and re-broadcast times

For more information visit YDA-ourtime.org



As intense partisanship continues to polarize the political process in the U.S., young people are stepping forward in unprecedented numbers to make their voices and values heard. From the thousands of students transformed by recent school shootings who have inspired classroom walkouts to the so called “dreamers” pushing the legislative needle on immigration reform to teen climate advocates raising environmental consciousness in their communities, young Americans are articulating a proactive vision for their futures in spite of the extreme toxicity that pervades current national discourse.



OUR TIME is a new series for public television stations produced by youth in Southern Colorado in partnership with professional documentary filmmakers. Films in the series feature character-driven stories around race, colorism, disability, teen suicide, gender and sexuality, domestic violence, family life and immigration. OUR TIME filmmakers come from diverse backgrounds offering fresh and unvarnished perspectives on universal social issues. Turning the lens on young people as they wrestle with stories that matter to them provides public television with a much needed opportunity to amplify the voices of our next generation.



“Their films explore key public policy issues that are in our national conversation. I applaud the young filmmakers for so courageously and intimately tackling social issues that matter to them and doing so, locating a powerful voice that can teach all of us.”

~Congresswoman Diana DeGette (D-CO)



OUR TIME films have won numerous awards including a regional Emmy, selection in major film and media festivals, and dozens of community forums around the U.S. including the Black Congressional Caucus, the National Association of Military Families, the National Center for Transgender Equality and many more. Several of our filmmakers have been interviewed in the national press and all their films have been featured in reviews and articles (see youthdocumentary.org/press/).



OUR TIME is produced by the Youth Documentary Academy (YDA) which was formed in 2013 to train youth from under-represented backgrounds how to make professional documentary films. Increasingly, our program is becoming a go-to for educators and families to acquire youth-generated content with a strong perspective.

SEASON ONE

Each episode of OUR TIME (26:40) includes an intro, two short documentaries that coalesce around a social issue or theme, a short interstitial clip between films, and filmmaker interviews which precede the closing credits. Turning the lens on young people as they wrestle with stories that matter to them provides public television with a much needed source of perspectives from younger lives while amplifying the voices of our next generation.



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EPISODE 1: TEEN SUICIDE

Suicide is the second leading cause of death for young people between the ages of 10 and 24. OUR TIME filmmakers Madison Legg and Sorin "Téa" Santos, both 17, tackle the issue head on in their films UNDER THE WIRE and SURVIVING. Legg confronts her younger brother who recently attempted suicide, and in an unusually intimate conversation, scours the emotional landscape of self harm, family secrets, and the costs of concealing painful emotions. After attempting suicide himself Santos confronts his parents who were forced to admit their son into a psychiatric hospital. In both films, Legg and Santos effectively turn the camera on family (and themselves) to excavate the most taboo topics in their lives. Stay tuned at the end for interviews with the filmmakers. (26:40)



EPISODE 2: HAIR AND SELF IMAGE

For many Americans, hair is not a simple matter. It can shape our identities or it can challenge the very notion of how we define beauty. Hair is a multi-million dollar industry. It can be political. OUR TIME filmmakers Shaienne Knox and Isabella Recca examine the role hair plays in their own lives and communities. In OUR OF OUR HEADS, 16-year-old Knox explores the ways in which African American girls and women style their hair, offering robust racial observations regarding weave and relaxed hair as commodities that hew to white standards of beauty. By interviewing her mother, grandmother and friends, Knox reveals personal, nuanced, and sometimes blistering views on what comprises "good hair" among African Americans. In Bella, 17-year-old Isabella Recca tests her own teenaged girl-beauty standards by shaving her head. Without an important signifier of femininity and status among white girls her age, she is forced to confront how much power to vest in societal definitions of beauty and self worth. Stay tuned at the end for filmmaker interviews. (26:40)



EPISODE 3: INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND BULLYING

While much research has focused on domestic abuse in adult relationships, relatively little has addressed intimate partner violence among teens. Girls and LGBT youth, in particular, report higher levels of dating violence and bullying in their relationships. In her film ROCK BOTTOM, filmmaker Rebecca St. John reveals the gritty stages of a domestic violence relationship in middle and high school, the gradual degradation of self, and the tough love of family and friends (along with professional therapy) necessary for healing. In BREAKING SILENCE, filmmaker Dee Contreras details a life of homophobic bullying, even at the hands of her first girlfriend. As she confronts her mother with years of pain and "silent screams," her family comes to terms with the filmmaker's new identity as the lines of communication open and healthy new relationships begin to form. Stay tuned at the end for interviews with the filmmakers (26:40)



EPISODE 4: AUTISM AND DISABILITY

One out of 60 kids in America is diagnosed with an autistic disorder. While doctors continue to wrestle with treatments for this and other neurological conditions, young people who are affected often face difficult, if not hostile, social environments. In his film *LONELY HIGHWAY*, 18 year old filmmaker Andy Kwiatkowski shares what life was like growing up with autism. Despite good intentions by some teachers, Kwiatkowski ate lunch by himself every day of high school in the cafeteria. Without waxing sentimental, the film shines light on the ferocity of one family's love on the filmmaker's ability to overcome obstacles. In *TWICE EXCEPTIONAL*, 14-year-old filmmaker Samuel Faux introduces his audience to apraxia of speech which has affected him since he began speaking. Faux investigates his condition on camera with doctors, former teachers, and his own family (including his brother, who is also affected.) While giving voice to these stories, both filmmakers find the resilience necessary to eschew the label of the "kid with a disability" and define themselves on their own terms. Stay tuned at the end for interviews with the filmmakers (26:40)



EPISODE 5: NON-TRADITIONAL FAMILIES

Over 135,000 children are adopted each year in the U.S., over half from the foster system. In addition, 23 percent of families are headed by a single parent. Non traditional families are rarely portrayed in the media with any nuance, if at all. In his film *FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE*, Angel Baeza, 15, creates a love letter to his mother, who, as a teenager, was forced to drop out of school to raise her four children without support from their father. Baeza reveals how pure love, hard work and resilience can allow one family to endure. In *FROM CLOSED TO OPEN*, 17-year-old filmmaker Cody McIntire reveals what happens at 14 when he and his girlfriend get pregnant. His journey to open adoption transforms his life in surprising ways: while faced with mourning the loss of his daughter, his new relationships with the adoptive parents (who have their own stories of adoption) expand his notion of what defines a family. Stay tuned at the end for interviews with the filmmakers. (26:40)



EPISODE 6: IMMIGRATION

New immigrants face steep challenges coming to the U.S. Often, though, it's the children of immigrants who find themselves caught between the traditions of their parents and the new norms in which they live. *OUR TIME* filmmakers Josh Sun and Yolande Morrison navigate two very different worlds: living up to their parents' expectations while carving a uniquely American voice of their own. In *LOVE ME*, Sun, 17, the second child of Chinese parents, finds himself at odds with his "tiger mom" who confesses to raising her son in America "win at all costs." In *FINDING HOME*, Morrison, 16, recounts the sweeping move from Jamaica to Colorado Springs and how being a stranger in a strange land presents as many obstacles as there are opportunities for a better life. Both Sun and Morrison's films reveal the double binds of assimilation while remaining true to family and tradition. Stay tuned at the end for interviews with the filmmakers. (26:40)



EPISODE 7: COLORISM

Racial stereotyping has a long and insidious history in the U.S. While gains in civil rights have increased significantly, younger generations continue to use and perpetuate harmful labels, often subtle ones, that undermine people of color and their sense of self worth. In *SHADE*, teen filmmaker Antreise Lacey explores the terms "Team Light Skin" and "Team Dark Skin" and the ways in which, even when employed within the African American community, continue to reinforce whiteness as the standard of beauty. In *WHITE CHOCOLATE*, filmmaker Dan Robinson explores how being a writer, gamer and self-proclaimed nerd challenges culturally accepted definitions of race while also critiquing hyper masculine images of black boys and men in American society. Stay tuned at the end for interviews with the filmmakers. (26:40)



IMPACT AND ENGAGEMENT

The Youth Documentary Academy (YDA) runs impact production classes concurrent to its film production sessions, teaching youth how to build impact campaigns around the episodes of OUR TIME. Impact campaigns consist of viewer's guides, trailers, PSAs, electronic press kits, and newly formed partnerships with non-profit organizations and NGOs. Youth are learning now not only how to produce content appropriate for national distribution, but also how to create tools to engage audiences in advance (and following) the broadcast of that work. These materials will reside online, via social media, and in collaterals disseminated at community screenings in advance of broadcasts. Current discussions with Rocky Mountain PBS have laid plans for community screenings (similar to Indy Lens Pop Up events) beginning in the Fall of 2019 throughout Colorado and incorporating pieces of the impact campaigns created by YDA student alumni. As we begin to promote the series to markets around the U.S., we will replicate those engagement efforts as resources allow.

OUR TEAM



Tom Shepard (OUR TIME Series Producer) is founder and director of the Youth Documentary Academy. He has over 20 years of experience producing and distributing films for national broadcast on public television. His work has been distributed nationally on PBS through numerous strands: Scout's Honor, 2001, P.O.V.; Knocking, 2007, Independent Lens; Whiz Kids, 2010, NETA; The Grove, 2012, PBS Plus. Currently Tom is completing a four-year longitudinal documentary (Unsettled) in association with the Independent Television Service (ITVS) for national PBS broadcast in 2020 about LGBT refugees and asylum seekers. Tom has overseen national outreach and engagement campaigns for four of his television productions.



Eric Risher (OUR TIME Series Editor) is a regular faculty member of the Youth Documentary Academy as well as staff editor. His own work as a director/producer/editor has been screened at film festivals and conferences around the U.S. Eric won a regional Emmy Award in Colorado for editing UNDER THE WIRE, a film featured in OUR TIME. In addition, he has done significant assistant editing on nationally distributed films including AMERICAN FACTORY (the recent Sundance award-winning documentary), UNSETTLED (recently premiered at the San Francisco International Film Festival) and the upcoming film FREE FOR ALL by Director Dawn Logsdon about libraries in America. Risher splits his time between California and Colorado where he is co-directing and editing two new documentary projects.

YDA has built an extraordinary filmmaking and instructional team with both expertise in documentary production and engagement. Please see <https://www.youthdocumentary.org/about-us/team/>