

**NATIONAL DOCUMENTARY INITIATIVE EXPLORES
CIVIC ACTION AND COMMUNITY LIFE ACROSS AMERICA**

INDIVISIBLE: STORIES OF AMERICAN COMMUNITY

Museum Exhibition, Book, Postcard Exhibits, and Interactive Web Site Premiere October 2000

Sept. 22, 2000, Durham, NC – This fall twelve communities across the country will be featured in an original documentary project that explores grassroots democracy at work in America. Through the distinctive visions of some of the nation's leading photographers and compelling interviews by prominent oral historians and folklorists, *Indivisible: Stories of American Community* provides a firsthand look at local initiatives and the people behind them, creating a unique portrait of an America moved to action.

Indivisible is a project of the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University in partnership with the Center for Creative Photography, the University of Arizona. *Indivisible* is funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts.

The project encompasses a nationally touring museum exhibition, a major trade book, traveling exhibits that will circulate free postcards, and an extensive Web site. The museum exhibition will premiere at the Terra Museum of American Art in Chicago on October 6, 2000, and run through November 26, 2000, in conjunction with a postcard exhibit at the James R. Thompson Center, also in Chicago, October 5 through October 19, 2000. The book, published by W.W. Norton & Company/Lyndhurst Books, and including a foreword by journalist Ray Suarez, will be available nationally in bookstores by October 6. The project Web site (www.indivisible.org), launched concurrently with the Chicago opening, will present the *Indivisible* photographs and interview excerpts along with additional resources for learning more about community action. The project also includes major research archives, an educators' guide, and an instructional booklet for documenting community projects.

Using original photographs and the voices of citizens telling their own stories, *Indivisible* focuses on twelve local initiatives that address issues facing communities across the United States—including housing, immigration, the environment, crime prevention, health care, youth empowerment, race relations, and economic and cultural development. Photographer Lynn Davis and folklorist Jens Lund introduce us to Alaskan fishing communities along the North Pacific Coast where innovative marine conservation efforts are having an impact; photographer Reagan Louie and ethnographer Barry Dornfeld take us to North Philadelphia, where—through the hard work of community residents at the Village of Arts and Humanities—some eighty-seven abandoned properties have been converted into art parks, community gardens, education facilities, and low-income housing; and photographer

Sylvia Plachy and journalist Karen Michel visit midwives and doulas—volunteers in the service of women during pregnancy, childbirth and early postpartum time at home—working to support mothers on Long Island. Among the others documented are Haitian immigrants in Delray Beach, Florida, working with local police to patrol their streets to combat drug use and crime; migrant farmworkers in Texas border towns who learn to finance and construct their own homes; and loggers, conservationists, and other residents in Montana forming a coalition on preservation and sustainable use of the forest.

“*Indivisible* is a unique project matching documentary expression with committed grassroots community action. The creative work of project photographers and fieldworkers provides powerful testimony to personal efforts, encouraging dialogue about the importance of the individual in community life,” said project co-director Tom Rankin, director of the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University. “By amplifying the stories of local people and places, *Indivisible* affirms the value of community and illustrates the potential gain that comes from recognizing mutual interests and interdependence.”

“The photographers, twelve distinct interpreters of American life, have given us a wealth of imagery that speaks to the texture and character of diverse communities across the country,” said project co-director Trudy Wilner Stack, curator of exhibitions and collections at the Center for Creative Photography. “These artists powerfully reveal places that define our nation and people who inspire us in the search for a renewed commitment to working democracy.”

“One of the Trusts’ core aims is to help reconnect Americans to the communities and institutions that bind us together as a nation,” said Rebecca W. Rimel, president and CEO of The Pew Charitable Trusts. “*Indivisible* portrays the struggle to build our democracy at the ground level—connecting our everyday lives with our civic lives—and documents how, with hard work, it can be done.”

Archived collections of *Indivisible* project photographs, interview tapes, and transcripts will be housed at both the University of Arizona and Duke University, providing public access to an unusually large body of work documenting a cross section of modern America. The historical value of the collection, given its grounding in a cultural perspective and the inclusion of a range of issues, places, and demographics, will engage and inform future researchers and others interested in the diversity and complexity of American civic life. Each of the twelve communities will also receive a set of photographs and interview tapes from the documentation of their initiatives.

The toll-free number of *Indivisible*, 1-877-INDIV99, will provide the public with up-to-date project information, including upcoming museum and postcard exhibition dates and venues.

THE CONTRIBUTORS

The twelve photographers chosen to participate in *Indivisible* have made considerable contributions to social history and the art of photography, and bring their own artistic viewpoint to each community site. They are Dawoud Bey, Bill Burke, Lucy Capehart, Lynn Davis, Terry Evans, Debbie Fleming Caffery, Lauren Greenfield, Joan Liftin, Reagan Louie, Danny Lyon, Sylvia Plachy, and Eli Reed. The photographers' works range in format, size, and process, from black-and-white images to vibrant color prints to photo montages.

The audio component of *Indivisible* is composed of excerpts from interviews with community members. Ten noted journalists, oral historians, radio producers, and folklorists conducted extensive interviews in each of the twelve communities. They are Merle Augustin, Dan Collison, Barry Dornfeld, George King, Jack Loeffler, Jens Lund, Karen Michel, Daniel Rothenberg, Jeff Whetstone, and Joe Wood. Their interviews capture the stories of American community life that accompany the photographs in the exhibitions, in the book, and on the Web site.

THE COMMUNITIES

The twelve communities featured in *Indivisible* are:

Alaskan Fishing Communities, North Pacific Coast, AK: A conservation coalition dedicated to marine resource management in a region whose traditions and livelihood are largely dependent on fishing.

Photographer: Lynn Davis

Interviewer: Jens Lund

Alternatives Federal Credit Union, Ithaca, NY: A member-run credit union, working to empower its members by fostering local investment, low-income bank services and programs, and economic literacy.

Photographer: Bill Burke

Interviewer: Joe Wood

CHALK (Communities in Harmony Advocating for Learning and Kids), San Francisco, CA: A youth-run peer-to-peer conversation and crisis intervention phone service called Youthline.

Photographer: Lauren Greenfield

Interviewer: George King

Haitian Citizens Police Academy and Roving Patrol and MAD DADS Street Patrol, Delray Beach, FL: Citizen groups that work in conjunction with local police to reduce crime, gang violence, and illegal drug use by organizing street patrols, community activities for youth, and violence reduction efforts.

Photographer: Joan Liftin

Interviewer: Merle Augustin

Diné bí' ína', Inc. (Navajo Lifeways), Navajo Nation (AZ, UT, NM): A collaborative program to restore interest in and understanding about traditional Navajo-Churro sheep herding, raising, and weaving processes.

Photographer: Lucy Capehart

Interviewer: Jack Loeffler

Eau Claire Community Council and Eau Claire Community of Shalom, Eau Claire-North Columbia, SC: An interracial, cross-denominational network that attempts to revitalize its historic neighborhoods while addressing community problems and local needs.

Photographer: Eli Reed

Interviewer: George King

HandMade in America Small Town Revitalization Project, Western North Carolina: A project dedicated to enhancing the quality of regional mountain life and culture through economic and community development strategies.

Photographer: Debbie Fleming Caffery

Interviewer: Jeff Whetstone

Midwifery Practice and Doula Service at University Hospital and Medical Center, SUNY, Stony Brook, NY: An organization of community volunteers and health professionals who give support to women during labor, delivery, and in early postpartum stages.

Photographer: Sylvia Plachy

Interviewer: Karen Michel

Projecto Azteca, San Juan, Hidalgo County, TX: A grassroots housing initiative in which migrant farmworkers and other low-income residents learn skills to build and finance their own homes.

Photographer: Danny Lyon

Interviewer: Daniel Rothenberg

Southwest Youth Collaborative, Chicago, IL: An organization building youth and community leadership and enrichment across a constellation of ethnically diverse neighborhoods.

Photographer: Dawoud Bey

Interviewer: Dan Collison

The Village of Arts and Humanities, Philadelphia, PA: An inner-city arts and cultural organization working to rebuild community through creativity and education.

Photographer: Reagan Louie

Interviewer: Barry Dornfeld

Yaak Valley Forest Community, Yaak Valley, MT: A remote forest settlement that is working to foster dialogue and consensus to address forest protection and use.

Photographer: Terry Evans

Interviewer: Jens Lund

MUSEUM EXHIBITION TOUR

The museum exhibition, *Indivisible: Stories of American Community*, is composed of nearly two hundred original photographs accompanied by extensive excerpts from recorded interviews. Audio guides, free to museum visitors, allow people to hear a montage of voices from citizens on the front lines of grassroots democracy, who share their stories of the relationships, motivations, struggles, ingenuity, commitment, and accomplishments that drive community problem-solving. The national tour schedule follows.

Terra Museum of American Art, Chicago, IL	October 6 – November 26, 2000
Akron Art Museum, Akron, OH	December 16, 2000 – February 25, 2001
Center for Creative Photography, Tucson, AZ	July 14 – September 30, 2001
North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC	October 21, 2001 – January 6, 2002
Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, La Jolla, CA	January 27 – April 21, 2002
John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, FL	May 11 – July 13, 2002
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA	August 10 – October 6, 2002
Anchorage Museum of History and Art, Anchorage, AK	October 28 – December 31, 2002

BOOK

As part of the project, W.W. Norton & Company and Lyndhurst Books, a series of the Center for Documentary Studies, are publishing a major book of photography and observations, titled *Local Heroes Changing America: Indivisible*. A foreword by journalist Ray Suarez challenges readers to consider a new perspective on communities, especially those we so often dismiss as disadvantaged or powerless. Mr. Suarez, senior correspondent for “The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer,” is former host of National Public Radio’s call-in news program “Talk of the Nation.” *Local Heroes Changing America* will be a permanent record of Americans engaged in public life at the end of the 20th century, powerfully represented in distinctive images and interview excerpts. Also included is an audio CD of community voices and vignettes. *Local Heroes Changing America* will be in bookstores in early October 2000.

POSTCARD EXHIBITS

Indivisible’s nationally touring museum exhibition is complemented by a postcard version shown in public spaces and crossroads such as train stations, libraries, university student unions, and airports nationwide. Opening in Chicago and traveling to numerous cities, including Albany, Dallas, Denver, Ithaca, Philadelphia, Salt Lake City, Stony Brook, and Washington D.C., among others, the postcard exhibit was designed to take the words and images of *Indivisible* to a broad audience. These installations feature racks of free postcards—three million will be distributed—and an interactive computer station that allows visitors to record their own stories of community.

WEB SITE

The project Web site, www.indivisible.org, offers people all over the world an opportunity to experience *Indivisible* and to explore additional resources for participating in civic life. The Web site includes photographs, audio interviews, short video clips, a space for online dialogue, resource guides and links, educators' material, a bibliography for further reading, and suggestions for how visitors can document their own community efforts. It also provides a forum for engaging in dialogue and exchanging ideas on building community. The Web site reaches beyond the exhibitions and the book to provide greater access to *Indivisible*, creating the opportunity for new audiences to connect with the ideas and themes of the project.

EDUCATORS’ GUIDE

The *Indivisible* Educators' Guide will be distributed to K-12 teachers, through museum venues and through the *Indivisible* Web site. This resource will enable teachers to integrate the exhibition's photographs, interviews, and themes into their own interdisciplinary curricula in conjunction with a visit to the museum gallery. The guide focuses on the documentary tradition and the power of images and personal narrative to reveal aspects of identity, community, and civic engagement. It includes an introduction and overview of each of the project sites, as well as

background on documenting local communities through oral history and photographs. A selection of slides of exhibition photographs and an audio CD composed of excerpts from project interviews accompany lessons for analyzing the form and content of *Indivisible* images and dialogue.

COMMUNITY BOOKLET

The booklet *Putting Documenting Work to Work* is a step-by-step guide for community organizations that plan to develop and conduct their own documentary projects using a camera and tape recorder. The booklet explains how documentary work at the local level can provoke important community discussion and lead to collaborative problem solving. *Putting Documenting Work to Work* outlines the basic principles of project development, budgeting, image making, and oral history interviewing, and it provides creative ideas about how the products of documentary work can be put into action. It also explores the ethics of documentary work and offers useful tips about equipment, project timelines, and community collaboration. It is available through the *Indivisible* Web site.

ORGANIZERS

The Center for Documentary Studies (CDS), an interdisciplinary educational organization affiliated with Duke University, is dedicated to advancing documentary work that combines experience and creativity with education and community life. Founded in 1989, CDS connects the arts and humanities to fieldwork, drawing upon photography, filmmaking, oral history, folklore, and writing as catalysts for education and change. CDS supports the active examination of contemporary society, the recognition of collaboration as central to documentary work, and the presentation of experiences that heighten our historical and cultural awareness. CDS achieves this work through academic courses, research, oral history and other fieldwork, gallery and traveling exhibitions, annual awards, book publishing, community-based projects, and public events.

The Center for Creative Photography (CCP) at the University of Arizona is a museum and research institution dedicated to photography as an art form and cultural record. The CCP holds more archives and individual works by 20th-century North American photographers than any other museum in the nation, including the archives of over sixty major 20th-century American photographers—Ansel Adams, Richard Avedon, Louise Dahl-Wolfe, W. Eugene Smith, Edward Weston and Garry Winogrand among them—whose prints are the centerpiece of an art collection numbering more than sixty thousand works by two thousand photographers. The CCP has an integrated program of preservation, access, and education that celebrates the history of photography and its contemporary practice and is celebrating its 25th Anniversary in 2000 and 2001.

THE PEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS

The Pew Charitable Trusts support nonprofit activities in the areas of culture, education, the environment, health and human services, public policy, and religion. Based in Philadelphia, the Trusts make strategic investments to help organizations and citizens develop practical solutions to difficult problems. In 1999, with approximately \$4.9 billion in assets, the Trusts granted more than \$250 million to 206 organizations.

The Pew Charitable Trusts invest in ideas that fuel timely action and results. They focus a significant portion of their resources on supporting programs that stimulate participation in civic affairs. These include initiatives that foster a citizenry more engaged in local, regional, and national public issues and that provide information resources for the media, the public, and policymakers.

The programs supported by the Trusts address a spectrum of issues affecting the democratic impulse, especially among younger people. These include partnerships that drive public participation in local and national democratic processes; research revealing the motivations for, and impediments to, individuals becoming engaged in social action; establishing information resources for the media, public, and policymakers; and preserving original historic documents and sites that serve as touchstones for animating discussion about the rights and responsibilities that define us as Americans. The collective goal of these investments is to reinvigorate public participation in democracy and, by doing so, strengthen the fabric of community that extends from neighborhood to nationhood.

For questions or inquiries, please contact:

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