



***America ReFramed* spotlights diverse Americans working to change misconceptions on intellectual disability, with *Intelligent Lives*, premiering this October**

**Narrated by acclaimed actor Chris Cooper, *Intelligent Lives* debuts on October 22 at 8 p.m. on WORLD Channel, in honor of National Disability Employment Awareness Month**

**NEW YORK (September 4, 2019)** — This October, *America ReFramed*, the award-winning series from WORLD Channel and American Documentary, Inc. (AmDoc), takes viewers into the lives of three young people living with an intellectual disability who challenge perceptions of intelligence as they navigate high school, college and the workforce. Directed and produced by award-winning filmmaker Dan Habib and narrated by Academy Award®-winning actor Chris Cooper, *Intelligent Lives* premieres on Tuesday, October 22, at 8 p.m. ET (7 p.m. CT/ 9 p.m. PT) on WORLD Channel and WorldChannel.org, in celebration of National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

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The documentary follows three Americans living with an intellectual disability, each striving to overcome stereotypes and misconceptions as they work to create more independent lives for themselves, with the support of family, friends, educators and colleagues. Viewers see 17-year-old Naieer Shaheed's journey through a Boston public school and his desire for a career in visual arts; 32-year-old Micah Fialka-Feldman's life as a student and assistant teacher at Syracuse University as he enters the dating scene; and 25-year-old Naomie Monplaisir's attempt to secure work at a Providence, Rhode Island beauty school to gain financial independence.

Cooper's narration begins with the emotional, personal story of his late son, Jesse, whose talent and intelligence helped him prove naysayers wrong and show that an IQ score should not determine a person's worth or potential. Cooper contextualizes the lives of these central characters as he explains the evolution of intelligence testing and disability rights in the U.S.

As Habib's film demonstrates, while many strides have been made to make American culture more accepting of diversity, people with intellectual



disability are perhaps the most marginalized group of Americans. Only 15% of those living with intellectual disability are employed, and a mere 17% are included in regular education classrooms.

“This film is a catalyst to transform the label of intellectual disability from a life sentence of isolation into a life of possibility,” said Habib.

*Intelligent Lives* is executive produced by Chris Cooper, actress/author Marianne Leone Cooper and actress Amy Brenneman.

“*Intelligent Lives* offers audiences a window into the lives of incredible people making huge strides to effect change in America,” said Chris Hastings, executive producer and editorial manager for WORLD Channel at WGBH Boston. “Dan Habib’s film is a great encapsulation of how America and its people are continually evolving, which really echoes what we strive to do with each film featured on *America ReFramed*.”

“Through the stories of Naieer, Micah, Naomie and Jesse, *Intelligent Lives* demonstrates the incredible impact every individual can have on society,” said Justine Nagan, executive producer and executive director of American Documentary.

*Intelligent Lives* will stream on [worldchannel.org](http://worldchannel.org), [amdoc.org](http://amdoc.org) and all station-branded PBS platforms including [PBS.org](http://PBS.org), and on PBS apps for iOS, Android, Roku, Apple TV, Amazon Fire TV and Chromecast.

### **Media Contacts**

For interviews and special requests, journalists and reviewers may contact Erin Callanan at 617-300-3270 or via email at [erin\\_callanan@wgbh.org](mailto:erin_callanan@wgbh.org) or Alimah Boyd at 201-552-9239 or via email at [alimah@cherylduncanpr.com](mailto:alimah@cherylduncanpr.com).

### **About America ReFramed**

*America ReFramed* is a co-production of the WORLD Channel and American Documentary, Inc.

*America ReFramed* curates a diverse selection of independent documentaries that brings to national audiences compelling stories that illuminate the changing contours of our ever-evolving country. Viewers will be immersed in stories that span the spectrum of American life, from the streets of towns big and small to its exurbs and country roads. The documentary series presents an



array of personal voices and experiences through which we learn from our past, understand our present and are challenged to seek new frameworks for America's future. *America ReFramed* is the recipient of a Peabody Award and an Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Award for broadcast journalism. The series has earned several Christopher, Gracie, Telly and Cine Golden Eagle awards, as well as multiple nominations for Emmy, Independent Documentary Association, and Imagen Awards.

#### **America ReFramed Series Credits**

Executive Producers: Justine Nagan, Chris Hastings, Chris White  
Supervising Producer: Carmen L. Vicencio

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#### **America ReFramed Co-Producers**

**American Documentary, Inc.** (AmDoc) is a multimedia arts organization dedicated to creating, identifying and presenting contemporary stories that express opinions and perspectives rarely featured in mainstream media outlets. AmDoc is a catalyst for public culture, developing collaborative strategic engagement activities around socially relevant content on television, online and in community settings. These activities are designed to trigger action, from dialogue and feedback to educational opportunities and community participation. AmDoc is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. For more information, visit: [www.amdoc.org](http://www.amdoc.org).

Based at WGBH in Boston, **WORLD Channel** tells stories that humanize complex issues. WORLD shares the best of public media in news, documentaries and fact-based informational programming that helps us understand conflicts, movements and cultures that may be distinct from our own. WORLD's original content offers a national platform to makers examining issues too often ignored by mainstream media.

These emerging and master filmmakers spotlight a diversity of voices, telling stories not heard elsewhere. WORLD has won a Peabody Award, an Alfred I. duPont-Columbia Award and numerous national honors — including 1st and 2nd place Native Media Awards, an RTNDA Kaleidoscope Award, a Media for a Just



Society Award, two Lesbian & Gay Journalist Awards, a Gracie and an Asian American Journalists Award. Carried by 157 partner stations in markets representing nearly 65% of U.S. TV households, WORLD can also be experienced via [WORLDChannel.org](http://WORLDChannel.org) and social media platforms.



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