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WNET's *Chasing the Dream* Initiative Presents *Broken Places*, Premiering Monday, April 6 on PBS

New documentary from Peabody Award-winning and two-time Academy Award-nominated filmmaker Roger Weisberg explores the devastating impact of childhood trauma and stories of remarkable resilience as part of PBS's spring slate of health and wellness programming

WNET's multi-platform public media initiative *Chasing the Dream: **Poverty and Opportunity in America*** presents Peabody Award-winning producer/director Roger Weisberg's new documentary ***Broken Places***, premiering Monday, April 6 at 10 p.m. on PBS (check local listings), pbs.org/brokenplaces and the PBS Video app as part of PBS's spring programming line-up that shines a light on health and well-being. This timely documentary revisits four abused and neglected children from Weisberg's past documentaries and is the culmination of his four decades of bringing PBS viewers powerful stories of young people struggling to overcome adversity.

"One question emerged from all of my documentaries about children at risk: why are some children severely damaged by early trauma while others are able to thrive?" said Weisberg. "Ernest Hemingway wrote in 'A Farewell to Arms,' 'The world breaks everyone and afterward many are strong at the broken places.' Hemingway's observation about adversity and resilience inspired the title of our film and captured the central theme we explore in ***Broken Places***."

There is a strong connection between early adversity and poor mental and physical health outcomes later in life. Drawing on stories from Weisberg's 32 previous PBS documentaries as well as new interviews, ***Broken Places*** uses a dramatic time-lapse perspective to illustrate how the early experiences of the young people Weisberg filmed decades ago shaped their lives as adults. Some of the film subjects were so scarred by their childhood challenges that they ended up in mental institutions, correctional facilities, drug rehabilitation centers or died prematurely. Others became healthy, successful adults. ***Broken Places*** focuses on four personal journeys:

Bobby Gross

Weisberg featured Bobby Gross in his 1988 film, *Our Children at Risk*, when he was an angry five-year-old growing up in extreme poverty. He was already showing signs of aggressive anti-social

behavior at home and failing in school. Weisberg's crew filmed Bobby being examined by one of the nation's most renowned pediatricians, Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, who painted a bleak future for Bobby in the absence of sustained early intervention. Dr. Brazelton's prediction turned out to be eerily prescient when Weisberg revisited Bobby three decades later. ***Broken Places*** shows that he ended up spending his teenage years in and out of mental institutions and his 20s in and out of prison. Bobby briefly married and had a son, but the authorities terminated his parental rights and placed his son in foster care after Bobby was incarcerated multiple times for abusing his wife and child. At age 35, Bobby's sole source of support is social security disability.

Daniella Rin Hover

When Weisberg first filmed Daniella Rin Hover 16 years ago for the PBS documentary *Aging Out*, she was bouncing around the foster care system after being severely abused and neglected as a child. While living in a group home, Daniella fell in love with Veasna Hover, who also grew up in the foster care system after his parents were murdered in Cambodia. They had their first child while they were both still living in separate group homes and had a second child a few years later. ***Broken Places*** shows that Veasna began to repeat a deeply entrenched pattern of abuse, forcing Daniella to run away with her kids to a domestic violence shelter. Despite the enormous obstacles she continues to face, Daniella works full time, leads health promotion workshops, attends college and raises her 14-year-old daughter.

Danny and Raymond Jacob

Twenty years later, Weisberg revisits Danny and Raymond Jacob, the principal subjects from his Academy Award-nominated film *Why Can't We be a Family, Again*. Weisberg chronicled the struggles of these brothers after their mother abandoned them at a young age when she became addicted to crack cocaine. ***Broken Places*** shows that Danny went on to attend college, host a radio talk show and coach a basketball team for at-risk youth. His younger brother, Raymond, had a harder time overcoming his traumatic childhood and began hallucinating in his teens. He experienced a mental breakdown, was hospitalized for mental health conditions a dozen times, was diagnosed with manic depression and currently receives social security disability.

Broken Places interweaves these stories with commentary from nationally renowned experts, including **Dr. Jack Shonkoff**, the Director of Harvard's Center on the Developing Child; **Dr. Nadine Burke Harris**, recently named the first Surgeon General of the State of California; **Dr. Thomas Boyce**, the Chief of the Division of Developmental Medicine at UCSF; **Dr. Rahil Briggs**, the National Director of HealthySteps; and **Geoffrey Canada**, who led the Harlem Children's Zone for over 30 years. These experts share their insights into the people and systems that failed the film subjects or helped them overcome the formidable obstacles they encountered. They also help explain the life outcomes the film reveals: why some of the young people Weisberg profiled decades ago became severely disabled while others were able to thrive.

Broken Places is Weisberg's 33rd national public television documentary. His previous films have won over 150 awards, including Emmy, Columbia duPont, and Peabody Awards, as well as two Academy Award nominations. His past films for ***Chasing the Dream*** include *Dream On* (2016) and *First Degree* (2017), both hosted by John Fugelsang.

Chasing the Dream: Poverty and Opportunity in America is a multiplatform public media initiative from WNET in New York, reporting the human stories of poverty, jobs and economic opportunity — and showcasing promising solutions. Reporting focuses on both economic and structural inequality, and what is working to bring people out of poverty. Since 2014, ***Chasing the Dream*** has produced more than 500 on-air and online reports across public media, including documentaries in collaboration with *Frontline*, WORLD and Public Policy Productions, news reports on *PBS NewsHour* and *PBS NewsHour Weekend* and regional reporting on *MetroFocus* and *NJTV News*. Content partners include WNYC and PBS member stations across the country.

Broken Places is a production of Public Policy Productions, Inc. in association with THIRTEEN Productions LLC for WNET. The film is written, produced and directed by Roger Weisberg; Pascal Akesson is Editor; John Hazard is Cinematographer; Mark Suozzo is Composer; Martin Vavra is Field Producer; and Suzanne Beffa is Production Manager. For WNET: Stephen Segaller is Executive-in-Charge; Jane Buckwalter is Director of Programming Operations; and Benjamin Phelps is Coordinating Producer. For ***Chasing the Dream***, Eugenia Harvey is Executive Producer; Maya Navon is Producer; and Nina Joung is Social Media/Digital Associate Producer.

Production support is provided by the Mitzvah Fund of the Oregon Community Foundation. Original production funding is provided by Silverweed Foundation Inc., Spunk Fund Inc., Child Welfare Fund, Seedlings Foundation, The JPB Foundation as part of WNET's *Chasing the Dream*, Charles A. Frueauff Foundation, Marion E. Kenworth—Sarah H. Swift Foundation, Lemberg Foundation, Pincus Family Foundation, and Lucius and Eva Eastman Fund.

Website: pbs.org/chasingthedream, facebook.com/chasingthedreamwnet, twitter.com/chasingthedream, instagram.com/chasingthedream_wnet

About WNET

WNET is America's flagship PBS station: parent company of New York's [THIRTEEN](#) and [WLIW21](#) and operator of [NJTV](#), the statewide public media network in New Jersey. Through its new [ALL ARTS](#) multiplatform initiative, its broadcast channels, three cable services (THIRTEEN PBSKids, Create and World) and online streaming sites, WNET brings quality arts, education and public affairs programming to more than five million viewers each month. WNET produces and presents a wide range of acclaimed PBS series, including *Nature*, *Great Performances*, *American Masters*, *PBS NewsHour Weekend*, and the nightly interview program *Amanpour and Company*. In addition, WNET produces numerous documentaries, children's programs, and local news and cultural offerings, as well as multi-platform initiatives addressing poverty and climate. Through THIRTEEN Passport and WLIW Passport, station members can stream new and archival THIRTEEN, WLIW and PBS programming anytime, anywhere.

About PBS Health and Wellness

Throughout April and May 2020, PBS shines a light on human health with a special programming line-up featuring new specials and documentaries. **THE GENE: AN INTIMATE HISTORY** (Tuesdays, April 7 & 14), a two-part documentary, focuses on efforts to understand and control the fundamental building block of life. Programs will also examine health issues that are often stigmatized, such as body weight,

diabetes, mental illness and opioid addiction with **NOVA “The Truth About Fat”** (Wednesday, April 8), **BLOOD SUGAR RISING** (Wednesday, April 15), **INDEPENDENT LENS “Bedlam”** (Monday, April 13) and **FRONTLINE “Merchants of Pain” (w.t.)** (Tuesday, April 21), respectively. In addition, the line-up explores the lives of individuals affected by, as well as doctors and philanthropists committed to solving, various health crises, including **BROKEN PLACES** (Monday, April 6), **AMERICAN EXPERIENCE “The Man Who Tried to Feed the World”** (Tuesday, April 21) and **INDEPENDENT LENS “Jim Allison: Breakthrough”** (Monday, April 27). Popular series **ANTIQUES ROADSHOW** will also unearth surprising medical artifacts, shedding light on the history of healthcare with **“Treasure Fever”** (Monday, April 6).