

Defining US: Children at the Crossroads of Change
Available on TVOD Platforms Tuesday, August 23, 2022

Defining | US

Atlanta, GA, July 26, 2022 /PRNewswire/ — Children of color are now the majority of our nation's youth. Historically left behind, these students are now positioned to lead America into the future; but their success hangs in the balance of a national debate about race that is fueling a culture war in America's schools.

CWK Network, Inc., today announced the release date of their new documentary, *Defining US: Children at the Crossroads of Change*. Scheduled to debut on August 23, the film takes audiences inside the nation's largest school systems to see and hear the untold stories of educators fighting to protect students' rights to have open conversations about race and other issues that impact their identity.

The nation's two largest school systems, New York City Department of Education and Los Angeles Unified School District provided unprecedented access to producers along with Atlanta Public Schools, Guilford County Public Schools, and others. Leading voices in education from Yale University, Columbia University, University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), and New York University (NYU) also participated.

"To not talk about race, is to not talk about what it means to be human," says Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz, Ph.D., Associate Professor of English Education at Teachers College, Columbia University.

Defining US shares the stories of Black and Brown students who are directly impacted by the race debate and provides an up close and personal look at the commitment of educators who fight daily for the right of all students to know their history, celebrate their heritage, and access the opportunities they need to achieve and succeed.

The idea to produce the film began as part of a conversation between Paul Forbes, a Black educator from New York and Stacey DeWitt, a White producer from Atlanta who have different backgrounds and perspectives, but share similar hearts and minds. That discussion was the beginning of a friendship and many honest, sometimes uncomfortable, but always constructive conversations about race that informed the film and continue today.

"When Stacey and I met, I saw her as the director of a video shoot, but our relationship has blossomed into one where we are now co-conspirators blending our spheres of influence to disrupt and dismantle structures and systems that are leading to inequitable outcomes," says Forbes, Executive Producer of the film, CEO of Leading with Hearts and Minds, and former Executive Director of Educational Equity, Anti-Bias, and Diversity, New York City Department of Education.

"*Defining US* lifts up teachers and students as a voice of reason in the divisive national dialogue, says DeWitt, Executive Producer and Director of *Defining US*, and CEO of CWK Network, Inc., the company in charge of production.

"Our goal is to provide audiences with a fresh, new perspective on what educators are really teaching our children and what they can teach us about the hope and healing that occurs through a revolution of the heart and mind," says DeWitt.

Click [here](#) to get a sneak preview of the documentary.

For more information about *Defining US: Children at the Crossroads of Change*, please visit definingus.org.

Connect socially on social media [@definingusofficial](#) on Instagram, [@definingus](#) on Twitter, [Defining US](#) on LinkedIn, and [Defining US](#) on Facebook.

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About *Defining US*:

[Defining US](#) is a non-partisan documentary that tells the unheard stories of teachers and students inside the nation's largest school systems who are fighting for the freedom to talk about race. Watch and learn what educators are really teaching our children and how that is defining us.

About CWK Network:

[Defining US](#) is produced by Connect with Kids Network (CWK) that combines the power of media and the promise of education to tell the compelling stories of people and organizations that are improving important social and emotional issues that define our times. The company began by producing and syndicating documentaries and corresponding educational resources on social issues distributed through a network of local school districts and local ABC, CBS, NBC, and Fox television station affiliates reaching over 55 million households. CWK now produces national feature documentaries and corresponding evidence-based educational resources, teacher training, and parent programs delivered through digital platforms. The company is an Effective Producer of Programs on the U.S. Department of Education's What Works. CWK's documentaries have won over 27 Emmy nominations and awards.

About Gravitass Ventures:

Gravitass Ventures is a leading, all-rights distributor of independent feature films and documentaries. Founded in 2006, Gravitass connects independent feature films and producers with distribution opportunities across the globe. Working with talented directors and producers, Gravitass Ventures has distributed thousands of films into over a hundred million homes in North America – over a billion homes worldwide. Recent releases included *Queen Bees* directed by Michael Lembeck; *Our Friend* directed by Gabriela Cowperthwaite, starring Casey Affleck, Dakota Johnson, and Jason Segel; *Vanguard* directed by Stanley Tong and starring Jackie Chan; *The Secret: Dare to Dream*, directed by Andy Tennant and starring Katie Holmes. For more information, please visit www.gravitassventures.com, and follow @GravitassVOD on Twitter and @gravitassventures on Instagram.