



AMONG THE INDUSTRIAL RUINS OF AMERICA,
A NEW GENERATION IS REBUILDING HOME.

THE PLACE THAT MAKES US

By Karla Murthy

"THE PLACE THAT MAKES US" PRODUCED BY ALEXANDRA NIKOLICHEVY. WRITTEN BY KARLA MURTHY AND KRYSTEN NOTTLE. EDITED BY ANDREW FREEDERICKS. MUSIC BY SHARON LOTTEPPOUR AND CASEY TRELA. EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: JULIA BECKETT LEWIS, REBECCA JAY AND ADRIAN. PRODUCED BY KARLA MURTHY AND ALEXANDRA NIKOLICHEVY. DIRECTED BY KARLA MURTHY.

WORLD AMERICA REFRAMED www.ThePlaceThatMakesUs.com @ytownfilm AMDOC PBS

NATIONAL TV PREMIERE

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America ReFramed on WORLD Channel

*Check local listings

The stories of struggle, resilience, and revitalization are part of the American story. In **THE PLACE THAT MAKES US the people of Youngstown share their hopes and dreams for their community.**

An area widely known as the “Rust Belt” region, stretching from Buffalo, New York down along the Great Lakes, was America’s backbone for decades—producing the iron and steel used to fight our wars. But when the steel industry collapsed in the 1970s, it shattered a way of life, leaving behind a city in trauma.

Many communities that thrived decades ago now find themselves in a situation where young people have fled in search of economic opportunities, and the residents who do remain have grown frustrated over diminished job opportunities and uncertain of their future.

However, not all has been lost. Amidst the bleak headlines there is an untold story of hope and inspiration. There is a culture of resilience in residents that remain in the hard hit cities of post-industrial America, bound together by decades of hardship and abandonment but fighting to survive. And there is a new generation of leaders— not beholden to memories of the industrial heyday—who can imagine a new future and are determined to rebuild home.

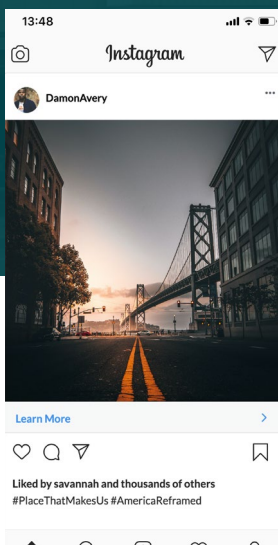
With their vision in mind, the filmmakers invite viewers to join in the effort to reimagine communities. This toolkit helps you get started. Begin with a reflection on the film and start a conversation with a friend. Then do your own research and see how you can get involved in an effort to revitalize a struggling community. You can be a part of the community built around THE PLACE THAT MAKES US by participating in our social activity included in this guide.

Discussion Questions

- 1 What did you hear the residents of Youngstown say about their community? How does their perspective on their community affect the way that you think about yours?
- 2 Which characters or stories in the film resonated with you in particular? Why do you think they made an impression?
- 3 What revitalization efforts shown in the film do you think are working? What aspects of these projects surprised you? Do you think there is a need for this kind of effort in your community?
- 4 What basic necessities do you think must be met in order to live with dignity? How does the lack of these necessities impact the people and communities that touch your life?
- 5 Do you think there should be more support for communities like Youngstown that were once thriving industrial areas? If so, how can that support be provided—by government, by volunteers and donations, by other means?
- 6 What do you think the future holds for post-industrial communities like Youngstown?

Social Media Activity

What place has had a formative impact on your life? It could be a location, such as a city, a space like a community center, or a community of people that represents a part of your identity. Take a moment to remember with us, and share a photo that represents “the place” that made you with others online.



How to Participate

- 1 Find a photo or draw an illustration of the place you have in mind and upload it to Instagram, Facebook or Twitter with the hashtag **#PlaceThatMakesUs #AmericaReframed #Ytownfilm**
- 2 Add a personal memory or reflection about your place with your post. Some questions to consider:
 - Why do you think this place made an impact on you?
 - How did your experience in this place shape you into the person you are today?
 - How has this place changed over time?
 - How would you like to see this place develop in the future?

Facts & Figures

- ▶ The phrase “Rust Belt” became popular after the 1984 presidential campaign as a critique of President Ronald Reagan’s policies on steel. Many in the region consider it a derogatory way to refer to the once-booming industrial urban centers located along the Great Lakes from Buffalo, New York to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. [Source](#)
- ▶ The population of Youngstown Ohio, where the film is shot, currently numbers close to 65,000 and has lost about 100,000 residents since 1960. Meanwhile Detroit has lost more than a million in the past 70 years. At least 80 US cities with 50,000 or more residents are shrinking, according to Cleveland State University researchers; nearly all of those cities are clustered in post-industrial north east. [Source](#)
- ▶ In 1980, even after the first wave of deindustrialization, the wealth in Middle American cities still kept pace with its coastal peers. For example, per capita income in Seattle was only 16 percent greater than in the Dayton, Ohio area. In metro Boston, the edge was only 6 percent, and in the San Francisco Bay Area, 33 percent. By 2018, the wealth gap had grown significantly. Seattle’s per capita income is now 48 percent greater than Dayton’s. Boston’s has increased tenfold to 61 percent and in the Bay Area, per capita income is almost double at 94 percent over the Dayton area. [Source](#)
- ▶ Youngstown has some of the highest home vacancies by zip code in the country, with close to one in four houses vacant in 2018. Flint, Michigan and Gary, Indiana zip codes topped that, at around 30 percent of all homes. [Source](#)
- ▶ Former industrial cities with low housing costs are a draw for some Millennials. The number of young college graduates in Pittsburgh, for example, grew by 53 percent, or almost 15,000, between 2000 and 2014, even as the city’s overall population dropped by about 29,000, or 9 percent. [Source](#)
- ▶ Many “Rust Belt” cities have minority populations that statistically outpace those in other parts of the country. The largest per capita Muslim population in the United States is in Dearborn, Michigan. [Source](#)

Resources



- [Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation](#) works to transform neighborhoods into meaningful places where people invest time, money and energy into their homes and neighborhoods; where neighbors have the capacity to manage day-to-day issues; and where neighbors feel confident about the future of their neighborhood.
- [Reinvention Cities of Ohio](#) is composed of key leaders representing the public, private, nonprofit, and philanthropic sectors of Ohio’s 16 small legacy cities.
- [NeighborWorks America](#) creates opportunities for people to live in affordable homes, improve their lives and strengthen their communities.
- [National Center for Healthy Housing](#) works to reduce health disparities by translating credible science into tools and catalyzing systems change in low-income communities.
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) [Find Shelter](#) tool provides information about housing, shelter, health care, and clothing resources in communities across the country.
- [Run for Office](#) is a free service that provides all the tools you need to launch a successful campaign whether you are a seasoned veteran or first-time campaigner.