

# I Go Home Facilitator Aid

## A. Purpose and Background

The purpose of this aid is to provide information and engage stakeholders in discussion related to the WITF documentary *i go home*. By way of background:

- *WITF's i go home* is an hour documentary chronicling the journey from institution to inclusion for people with developmental disability.
- Imagine living somewhere you didn't choose. Being told you can't love – or leave. For over two centuries, that was reality for people with developmental disability.
- Parents were advised to send their child to the institution where special education and training would be provided, as well as long-term care. The family's only option was to keep their child at home without any form of public support. Doctors would not provide care for their loved ones and school officials claimed these children could not be educated.
- The institutions were built far from population centers and became worlds unto themselves. Health care professionals, school officials, government agencies and community leaders, even the public, helped ensure the children and adults who were placed in these places did not return.
- Most of the institutions housed thousands of children and adults on a lifelong basis. The facilities became over-crowded, regimented, and increasingly inhumane. Society's assumptions that people would benefit from special education being protected from the challenges of everyday life never materialized.
- It wasn't until the late 1960s that Bill Baldini's NBC television expose shed light on the deplorable conditions inside a Pennsylvania institution – Pennhurst State School and Hospital. The media coverage there and in other facilities drove parents to demand something better and for public agencies to respond. See "Suffer the Little Children" on the internet for further coverage.
- While life conditions have improved from these oppressive times, exploitative practices have not gone away. Barriers to inclusion, self-determination, employment and respect continue to challenge people with developmental and other forms of disability.

## **B. The Production**

WITF public media spent more than two years researching the 200 year journey that people with developmental disability have taken in Pennsylvania. Over 20 on-camera interviews were conducted, involving people representing individuals with developmental disability, parents and siblings, educators and researchers, journalists, advocates, performing artists, authors, and leaders in the field.

Various organizations across the state offered technical assistance, photographs and other documentation. The end result was more than 40 hours of footage that includes the historic role that Pennhurst State School and Hospital played in the development of modern community based education and adult services, advocacy, and public policy.

The voices of those who lived and breathed this history are central to this story, particularly people with disability who have led the way in achieving everyday lives at long last. This is their story most of all.

The executive producer Cara Williams Fry and producer, Keira McGuire, composed the film with a team of media professionals at WITF. Their technical and storying telling experience in documentaries of this nature comes through in a compelling way.

The documentary is made possible by a grant funded by the Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council and the support of the Pennsylvania History Coalition Honoring People with Disability. Additional sponsors include Keystone Human Services, Excentia, and Bell Socialization Services.

## C. Airing/Distribution/Coverage

*I go home* first aired on WITF in Central Pennsylvania on April 21, 2016. Since then, all public media affiliates across the state have broadcast the documentary. The film has also been accepted by American Public Television for national distribution beginning in March 2017, and nominated for various awards. The film has been featured by Pennsylvania Senator Robert Casey at the United State Senate in Washington, D.C, and shown at a wide range of venues, including conferences, schools and universities, civic centers, and outreach events.

Television coverage has now extended to most states and almost all major markets. Over 85 public television stations voted yes to broadcast the documentary beginning in 2017 and are likely to air the film in the coming year.

A spring 2017 listing of television stations expected to show *I go home* and their statewide coverage is attached to facilitate stakeholder outreach and coordination. Stakeholders are urged to contact their public television affiliates to discuss when showings are scheduled, and the possibility of other collaborations and events.

Beyond its excellence as documentary, *I go home* is an opportunity to promote increased disability awareness with community and other stakeholders. Coupling its broadcast with any number of community outreach events has already shown to be successful.

The film is being streamed by WITF Media on <http://video.witf.org/video/236712709>. A limited number of complimentary DVDs of the film and 'Smart Talk' radio show CDs related to the film and 90 second shorts or interstitials are available on request of WITF or the Pennsylvania History Coalition Honoring People with Disability at [disabilityhistorypa.org](http://disabilityhistorypa.org) or by calling 717-979-6165.

## **D. General Information**

The film introduces the public and other stakeholders to oppressive conditions and other challenges that have defined the lives of people with intellectual disability, their families, and communities for over 150 years. While specific to Pennsylvania history, the film also has wide applicability to the experiences of people across the nation.

The film is intended to be accompanied by an introduction and question and answer period or other interactive audience opportunity. Event planners are advised to include people with developmental disability and families to the greatest extent possible in this process.

The documentary is intended to be shown with captions. Some earlier versions of the live stream or DVD require that the captioning option be engaged using the projection device.

The 56 minute film is intended to be viewed in its entirety. The credits and closing song by Karl Williams are important to the film and help the content 'sink-in'.

The film contains images and language that may be upsetting to some viewers. Adult guidance is suggested for viewings opened to youth. The documentary is not recommended for young children.

## E. Venues

In arranging for venues for showing the film as a form of community outreach or program development, ensure that the site is accessible for people in wheelchairs and that the host's filming equipment and technical assistance resources are in working order.

Outreach to public and private media outlets are recommended to expand audience participation. Public participation is also more likely in generic settings such as libraries, schools, universities, theaters, malls, and community fairs.

Suggested venues include:

- High school history, civic, and health related classrooms, or as a feature in the school auditorium
- Historical societies, museums, and archives.
- Independent film theaters as a stand-alone attraction or part of a disability film festival
- Shopping malls; VFWs, civic clubs, and volunteer organizations as part of an organized community outreach initiative
- Social gatherings, and other private showings with family, neighbors and friends
- Retreats, conferences, symposia
- Congregations and places of worship
- Police and first responders
- Colleges and universities, particularly in departments of history, human services, education, health care, social work, and public administration
- Human service organizations for orientation of administrative, program, volunteer and board personnel
- Managed care, policy and administrative entities, including organizations providing program monitoring and evaluation
- Advocacy agencies as part of an orientation, training, and community outreach function
- Political forums and events
- Public fairs and other large community gatherings

## F. Introduction of the Film

Here are some points to cover during a five to ten minute introduction:

1. Welcome people to the showing of *I go home*, introduce yourself and panelists as well as dignitaries and sponsors who may be present
2. Point out the locations of restrooms, vendors and concessions
3. Ask that cell phones be turned off during the film
4. Thank the host organization and sponsors
5. Give a brief overview of the film, taking from the background section of this paper
6. Indicate why you decided to host this event
7. Advise the audience about the post showing discussion and the time that the event will be over
8. Note that the film is captioned
9. Advise the audience if the gathering is being recorded and if there are plans to include an article about the showing in the media or the organization's newsletter
10. Advise the audience if there is an evaluation form in their packet
11. Advise the audience that images and language in portions of the film are graphic. Note that some people have had difficulty watching the film. People are free to leave the showing if they want to and return if they are feeling more composed. It's also okay to cry. Many people have.

## **G. Discussion Following the Film**

### Option 1. A Panel Discussion with Audience Participation

Introduce panelists and give an approximate time for this segment. Generally this will be no more than 30 minutes. If snacks and a social event are provided, announce this too.

Depending on the audience and panel, the moderator may want to choose 1 or 2 questions for the panel to begin with before turning questions and comments to the audience. Start off questions may be:

- How do you see the history of oppression that is depicted in the film affecting the lives of people today? What remnants of oppression have continued in everyday life today?
- Now that we know that this history exists, what can we do with this knowledge? How can this information be used to make life better for all of us?
- Who needs to see this film or others like it?

After this, questions and comments can be invited from the audience. If a member of the panel is a member of the production team, it is recommended that time be devoted to asking the producer about the making of the film.

After the discussion, the moderator can close the event and thank people for coming. If handouts or vendors are present, remind the audience to pick up materials that they find relevant. Indicate if you and or the panelists will stay around for further discussion. Remind people to complete their evaluations.

### Option 2. Audience Tailored Discussion

As an option to a panel discussion, provide 15 to 30 minutes of discussion to talk about the film with the audience. This can begin with asking about general impressions about the film. Questions along this line include:

- What did you learn from this film that you did not know about before?
- What value does this film have for public education purposes or for the organization you represent?
- What themes most impressed you in the film?

Specific questions may also be appropriate for different audiences as an alternative or in conjunction with an opening general inquiry. For example:

- An audience of service workers may want to discuss how the oppressive aspects of history continue to affect their work in supporting people with disability in community life.

- People with disability and families may want to reflect on how oppressive tendencies have affected their lives. A question that invites people to share their feelings about what they saw can be powerful.
- Policy and program directors can reflect on how past practices and attitudes continue to present barriers and what their agencies have done or can plan to do in addressing them.
- College students may want to look at research implications suggested by the film and reflect on how aspects of disability history parallel the history of other oppressed and marginalized citizens.
- A civic gathering may want to consider what new roles and responsibilities that local resources need to fulfill in order for people to lead everyday lives.
- Any and all audiences may want to comment on what is hopeful in the film and what is most troubling.



## H. Further Information

Additional information about the history of people with developmental disability in Pennsylvania and this film is available from a number of sources including:

1. The Pennsylvania History Coalition Honoring People with Disability at: [disabilityhistorypa.com](http://disabilityhistorypa.com)  
Attention: Dana Olsen, Director at 717-979-6165
2. The Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council at [www.paddc.org](http://www.paddc.org). Attention: Graham Mullholland, Executive Director
3. The Arc of Pennsylvania at [thearcpa.org](http://thearcpa.org). Attention Maureen Cronin, Executive Director
4. Speaking for Ourselves. Attn: Debbie Robinson, President at: [Debbie@speaking.com](mailto:Debbie@speaking.com).
5. The Pennhurst Memorial and Preservation Alliance at [www.preservepennhurst.org](http://www.preservepennhurst.org). Attention Dr. Jim Conroy and Jean M. Searle, Co-Presidents
6. The Pennsylvania State Archives at [www.digitalarchives.state.pa.us](http://www.digitalarchives.state.pa.us). Attention: David Carmicheal, Director
7. Elwyn Archives at [www.Elwyn.org](http://www.Elwyn.org). Attention Dr. Elliott Simon, Director
8. The Western Pennsylvania Disability History and Action Consortium at [www.wpdhac.org](http://www.wpdhac.org).  
Attention John Tague Jr. Director
9. Millersville University, Honors College at [www.millersville.edu/honorscollege](http://www.millersville.edu/honorscollege), Attention Dr. Dennis Downey, Director
10. West Chester University, Department of History <https://www.wcupa.edu/arts-humanities/history>, Attention: Dr. Charlie Hardy, Professor of History
11. Temple University Institute on Disabilities at [www.temple.edu/instituteondisabilities](http://www.temple.edu/instituteondisabilities). Attention Guy Caruso, Director
12. WITF Public Media at [www.witf.org](http://www.witf.org). Attention Cara-Williams-Fry or Keira McGuire, Producers
13. Pennsylvania TASH at <https://tash.org>. Attention Ellen Tierney, Vice President
14. Heinz History Center at [www.heinzhistorycenter.org](http://www.heinzhistorycenter.org). Attention: Anne Manandez, Director
15. Historic Harrisburg Association at [www.historicharrisburg.org](http://www.historicharrisburg.org). Attention: David Morrison, Acting Executive Director

Thank You for Your Attention to History

That Honors People with Disability

And

Best Wishes in Your Work