

Brother Towns

Pueblos Hermanos

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Bullfrog Community Screening & Discussion Guide

Roll out the red carpet! Use your film screening of BROTHER TOWNS as a tool to build community and spark discussion about migrant labor, the benefits to small towns, and the bonds that can form between laborers and community members. This guide offers some background information plus helpful tips and discussion questions for a stirring, informative, and rewarding screening. **Good Luck!**

For additional resources, visit brothertowns.bullfrogcommunities.com/brt_resources

About BROTHER TOWNS

Brother Towns is a story of two towns linked by immigration, family, and work: Jacaltenango, a highland Maya town in Guatemala; and Jupiter, a coastal resort town where many Jacaltecos have settled in Florida. **Brother Towns** chronicles a story of how and why people migrate across borders, how people make and remake their communities when they travel thousands of miles from home, and how people maintain families despite their travel. Because we are all immigrants, this is a universal human story, and a quintessential American one. All of us understand family. **Brother Towns** is also a story of local and international controversy. News of undocumented immigrants is familiar in nearly every community across the U.S., and citizens must choose how they respond to this issue.



About the Director

Charlie Thompson is Curriculum and Education Director at the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University and is a lecturer in Cultural Anthropology. He has worked and studied in Guatemala since 1994. He lived with his family in Jacaltenango from 1996-1997. His other film works include *The Guestworker* with Cynthia Hill and *We Shall Not Be Moved* with Chris Potter. His books include *Maya Identities and Violence of Place: Borders Bleed, Indigenous Diasporas and Dislocations*, and *The Human Cost of Food*.

ready to watch!

Here are some ideas and best practices to help make your community screening of BROTHER TOWNS a success!

- 1. Publicize Your Event!** This is the most important step. Not only can you tell the world about your screening, but you can also let the Bullfrog Community team know about your plans so we can help you publicize your event. Visit brothertowns.bullfrogcommunities.com/brt_screenings to register your screening of BROTHER TOWNS.
- 2. Visualize Your Goal!** What do you hope to achieve with your screening of BROTHER TOWNS? Your goal could be to generate a lively post-film discussion with your audience about migrant labor, immigration policy, and human rights Or, simply provide an opportunity for families to watch and learn together.
- 3. Where To Host?** Consider which locations in your area would be ideal for accommodating a community film screening of the size you anticipate: churches, town halls, private homes and even high schools have been venues for many successful community screenings.
- 4. Find A Partner!** Give some thought to who is already working on these issues in your community. Can they help sponsor the event? Spread the word? Be a part of a panel discussion after the screening? Some potential partners include: academic departments at colleges, universities, and high schools, faith-based organizations and institutions, and organizations concerned with migrant worker rights and immigration policy reform.
- 5. Invite A Guest Speaker!** Guest speakers and panels are a great way to encourage discussion and debate after a community screening. When people are a part of a meaningful discussion after a film they are more likely to stay engaged with the issue over the long term. Contact local non-profit representatives, teachers, lawyers, or government officials who have expertise or insight into the issues raised by the film, and invite them to attend and participate in a discussion or Q&A session. The filmmaker is available to appear in person or via Skype for a Q&A. [Contact Bullfrog Communities](#) if you are interested.
- 6. Engage Your Audience!** After the film ends, allow 30 minutes for discussion. Use the sample questions below to engage your guests!
- 7. Spread The Word!** Think about the best methods available to you for publicizing the film screening to people in your community. Sending emails, creating event notifications on Facebook or Meetup, using Twitter, and placing screening announcements in local newspapers and newsletters is a good start. Use the BROTHER TOWNS screening poster and press photos at brothertowns.bullfrogcommunities.com/brt_resources to help publicize your event around town.
- 8. Tell Us How It Went!** Visit brothertowns.bullfrogcommunities.com/brt_discussion to tell us about your event. Where it was held? Who attended? What went well, and what was challenging? Your feedback will help others in organizing their own successful events and will energize the Bullfrog Human Rights community as a whole.

ready to talk!

Your audience will be excited to discuss the issues raised by BROTHER TOWNS. Here are some questions that will get people talking.

1. Discuss your own family's immigration history. Compare this in a larger group.
2. Has the U.S. been a welcoming place in history or has it traditionally closed its borders? How has this differed depending upon the ethnicities and nationalities concerned?
3. Discuss "nativism" and what some call the "anti-immigrant sentiment in the U.S." Do you think common attitudes towards Latin American immigrants today differ from attitudes or public sentiment towards historical immigrant groups?
4. In what ways do you think our lifestyles or decisions in the U.S. affect the lives of our Latin American neighbors? How does economics play a role in these decisions?
5. Why do you think laws have become restrictive towards immigrants?
6. Was there a crucial moment or turning point when everything regarding immigration changed? What does NAFTA have to do with immigration from Mexico? CAFTA from Guatemala? If you could revamp federal immigration law, how would you do it?
7. In the film, Filomeno says that he is "of two hearts"; he wants to be a good father, present to his family, but also wants to provide materially for them. Try to put yourself in his shoes. How would you respond to this conflict of needs?
8. Many American citizens have serious concerns about the presence of immigrants in the United States. Can you name some of these fears that you have witnessed in your own community? Do you think these fears are well founded? Are there also benefits to the presence of immigrants in our communities?
9. Some advocacy groups say that assisting immigrants is a humanitarian act. What do you think our responsibility is towards people who endanger their lives to go to the U.S. to work? How should we respond to the building of the border wall and border policies in general, when those policies threaten the lives of desperate people without stopping the flow of migrants?
10. Why do you think the U.S. Border Patrol budget has increased so much over the last 15 years? If you had control over the \$10 billion the U.S. government expends each year on Border Patrol services, how would you use it to address immigration concerns? Can you think of alternative ways to control immigration to the U.S.?
11. What responsibility do the U.S. government and U.S. citizens have for consequences of our border policies? How do you think this should be addressed?
12. Are there day laborers in your community? If so, why? If not, why not? If you have day laborers in your community, what is your community's relationship with them?

- 13.** Think about your own perceptions about day laborers. Where do they come from? How do permanent residents' perceptions influence the way your community interacts with day laborers?
- 14.** In what ways has your community sought local solutions to immigration issues? Should local communities respond to the immigrants in their midst, or is this a federal issue?
- 15.** Does a community near you have a day labor center? What local support has this Center received? What kinds of support do you think your community should offer to this Center?
- 16.** The U.S. government has historically supported violently repressive regimes in Guatemala. Does our history of involvement in Guatemala affect our responsibility towards Guatemalan immigrants today? There is evidence that the Maya may have traded in and explored some of the territory that we call the United States today. Perhaps they were in this territory more than a thousand years ago. Does this longer view affect the ways we should view land rights or land control.

ready to act!

handout

Share this handout with your BROTHER TOWNS screening audience!

I. Take action online in defense of migrant rights. Check out these sites for more information:

- **National Center for Refugee and Immigrant Children** (www.refugees.org/our-work/child-migrants)
- **Amnesty International** (www.amnesty.org/en/refugees-and-migrants) campaigns for the rights of refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and migrants around the world and exposes human rights abuses and failures in their protection.
- **Detention Watch Network** (www.detentionwatchnetwork.org) A coalition that addresses the immigration detention crisis, working to reform the U.S. detention and deportation system so that all receive fair and humane treatment.
- **National Immigration Forum** (www.immigrationforum.org) Provides leading information on ever-changing US immigration policy.
- **Rights Working Group** (www.rightsworkinggroup.org) Information and Actions on human rights, racial profiling, immigration and detention.
- **American Civil Liberties Union – Immigrant Rights** (www.aclu.org/immigrants-rights) See their Immigration Myths and Facts sheet and Know Your Rights materials.
- **No More Deaths/ No Mas Muertes:** <http://www.nomoredeaths.org/>
- **National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights:** <http://www.nnirr.org/>
- **Centro de los Derechos del Migrante (Center for Migrant Rights)** (www.cdmigrante.org) The first transnational workers' rights law center based in Mexico to focus on U.S. workplace rights.

2. Contact your local elected officials! Individually or as a family, write letters and/or emails to elected officials to express your belief in the need for humane, just immigration reform that is reasonable, compassionate, and understanding of the needs and motivations of illegal immigrants and migrant workers. (www.justiceforimmigrants.org/action.html)

3. Find an organization in your area advocating for migrant rights and ask how you can help or volunteer your time. If you have specialized language skills, many advocates are in need of bilingual volunteers to translate documents or interpret during client interviews. Many religious denominations also have offices to help refugees and migrants.

4. Being in violation of immigration laws is not a crime. It is a civil violation for which immigrants go through a process to see whether they have a right to stay in the US. Immigrants “detained” during this process are in non-criminal custody. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the agency responsible, imprisons over 350,000 people in immigration custody each year. Immigrants in detention include children, families, undocumented and documented immigrants (many who have been in the US for years and are now facing exile) Torture survivors, victims of human trafficking, and others can be detained for months or even years, further

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aggravating their isolation, depression, and problems associated with past trauma. Is there a detention center near you run by Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE), a private contract facility, or on contract with your county prison? Are the human and legal needs of people detained there being met?

5. Some people who enter this country without documents are eligible for protection and legal status, such as those who are granted asylum from persecution, Temporary Protected Status (TPS) from certain countries, or legal status derived from a relative legally in the US. Is there adequate legal representation for immigrants in your community? Are there “Notarios” misrepresenting themselves as lawyers to this vulnerable population? Contact your local human rights or religion-based legal service provider to see how you can help. Some national organizations with local offices are:

www.hias.org • www.lirs.org • www.cliniclegal.org • www.aclu.org

6. Human Rights Watch (www.hrw.org/en/united-states) and Amnesty International monitor treatment of immigrants in the U.S. as well as elsewhere in the world. Immigrants and their families carry all their human rights when they move.

7. The fundamental constitutional protections of due process and equal protection embodied in our Constitution and Bill of Rights apply to every “person” and are not limited to citizens. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has know-your-rights materials available for migrants in the U.S. with or without documents. www.aclu.org/immigrants-rights

8. Join the Campaign for a United America to challenge anti-immigrant hate groups in your community at www.campaignforaunitedamerica.org

9. Arrange screenings of this film with other groups in your community that need to be brought up to speed on this issue. www.brothertowns.bullfrogcommunities.com

10. Another film available from bullfrogcommunities.com is WHICH WAY HOME which demonstrates the many dangers migrants, especially children, face as they try to make their way through Mexico, riding on top of trains. Join Amnesty International in calling on the Mexican government to guarantee that the human rights of migrants are protected. www.amnesty.org/en/appeals-for-action/protect-mexicos-invisible-victims