

We Are Not GHOSTS

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Bullfrog Community Screening & Discussion Guide

Roll out the red carpet! Use your film screening of WE ARE NOT GHOSTS as a tool to build community and spark discussion about community activism, urban agriculture, and the process of reimagining and rebuilding urban spaces. This guide offers some background information plus helpful tips & discussion questions for an informative, and rewarding screening. **Good Luck!**

For additional resources, visit wearenotghosts.bullfrogcommunities.com/wang_resources

About WE ARE NOT GHOSTS

Fifty years ago Detroit was booming with two million hard-working people living the American Dream. Then the auto industry crashed and so did the Motor City. Most moved away; whole neighborhoods turned into wastelands. But some didn't give up on the city they love. They had a vision of Detroit as a human-scaled city for a post industrial world, and they are working to make it real.

WE ARE NOT GHOSTS tells their stories: from community businesses, to place-based schools, to thriving urban gardens and spoken word artists. These are the tales of Detroiters remaking their city with vision and spirit.



About the Directors

For 20 years, Moving Images Video Project has produced and distributed documentaries about war and peace, human rights, global justice, and protection for the environment. Founded by Melissa Young and Mark Dworkin to increase understanding in the United States of political and social issues in Central America, Moving Images later expanded to address the AIDS epidemic, labor rights and childcare, international relations in the post cold-war era, and the implications of new genetic technologies.



ready to watch!

Here are some ideas and best practices to help make your community screening of WE ARE NOT GHOSTS 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 wearenotghosts.bullfrogcommunities.com/wang_screenings to register your screening of WE ARE NOT GHOSTS.
- 2. Visualize Your Goal!** What do you hope to achieve with your screening? Your goal could be to generate a lively post-film discussion with your audience about the condition of your neighborhood. Perhaps you want a chance to discuss your ideas for revitalizing your community. You may want to talk with others about joining a Transition Town group or creating your own community-led grassroots organization. Or, you can 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 and synagogues, town halls, community centers, public libraries, school auditoriums, outdoor screenings at parks and playgrounds, and even private homes have been venues for many successful community screenings.
- 4. Find A Partner!** Give some thought to who is already working on improving your community. Can they help sponsor the event? Spread the word? Speak on a panel discussion after the screening? Some potential partners include: city council members, universities, colleges, high schools, faith-based organizations and institutions, museums, parks, nature centers, environmental groups, farmer's markets, CSAs, farmers, small-business owners, human rights and social justice groups, and other organizations concerned about the health of your community.
- 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 thinking about the issues, they will stay engaged long after the screening has passed. Contact your local urban/city/or town planners, city government agencies, teachers, museum directors, park directors, farmers, activists, and professors 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!** Included in this handout is a section called Ready to Act! which is meant to be a hand-out at your screening. It will help your audience know what they can do to educate themselves about key issues brought up in the film.
- 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 WE ARE NOT GHOSTS screening poster and press photos at wearenotghosts.bullfrogcommunities.com/wang_resources to help publicize your event around town.
- 8. Tell Us How It Went!** Visit wearenotghosts.bullfrogcommunities.com/wang_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 Economic Justice community as a whole.

ready to talk!

Your audience will be excited to discuss the issues raised by WE ARE NOT GHOSTS. Here are some questions that will get people talking.

1. Which parts of the film did you find most interesting or eye opening? Was there anything you found problematic?
2. What were your ideas about Detroit before seeing the film? Which of those ideas were challenged, changed or confirmed by viewing WE ARE NOT GHOSTS?
3. Do you see signs of decline in your town or city? What kinds of places seem to be the favored communities in your region? Why are those places preferred?
4. Because of white flight, Detroit's population is now 80% African American. What do you think are the racial dynamics at play in Detroit? What is the racial composition in your community?
5. Why do people in your region move out of your city or town? Why do businesses move out? What are the implications for your community when they leave?
6. What are some activities in the film that seem like good ideas to try where you are living? Are there ideas from the film that wouldn't work where you are, and why?
7. What are the benefits of urban agriculture to city communities? What problems does it work to address? Are there vacant lots, unused rooftops or other areas in your community that could house a garden? Do you foresee any problems involved with growing food on city rooftops and in vacant urban lots?
8. In the film, working in a community garden was one way to get young people excited about growing their own food—can you think of other ideas for engaging kids and young adults in your community? Why do you think the community garden was successful in doing so?
9. In the film we see and hear numerous examples of arts and culture in the form of dance, community murals and the spoken word. What role can art play in fostering a strong community network? What are some ways that the arts contribute to the public good? How can they do more in your community?
10. To create a more humane, livable, post-industrial city, what is the role of grassroots community groups? What should be done by the government? What can we do as individuals?
11. What is your current “working definition” of place-based education? How could you implement it at your school? How can place-based education contribute to the places, communities and environments concerned?
12. Near the end of the film, Grace Lee Boggs says, *“I think the 20th century is a century of expanding materialism, of expanding conflicts, of expanding consumerism. And we're only beginning to understand that in the course of all of this expansion, we have lost our souls. This is a great opportunity to begin to see how much we have been damaged by our affluence, how much in our pursuit of affluence we have exploited the earth, exploited other peoples, damaged ourselves.”* What is your reaction to this statement? How would you respond to Ms. Boggs?
13. What will you do differently in your community as a result of viewing this film? What will your contribution be?

ready to act!

handout

Share this handout with your WE ARE NOT GHOSTS screening audience!

1. Get to know your neighbors. Find allies who live close to you who are asking the same questions you are and thinking they want to become involved in revitalizing your community. Host a discussion circle at your home or a picnic in your backyard. Participate in community events and activities.
2. Attend City Council meetings. Gain an understanding of the issues in your community. Ask for information about your community's plans to maintain and repair public infrastructure.
3. Buy locally as much as possible. When you shop at locally owned establishments, your money goes right back into your community. Try out a CSA for the next growing season! Visit your farmers market for this weekend's grocery shopping. Sample treats from artisan bakeries and delis and family run restaurants. Buy clothing from locally owned boutiques and mom and pop stores.
4. Start a community garden. Families can grow vegetables and fruits in empty lots (with permission), in their backyards, in window boxes, or pots. Donate your surplus produce to local food banks. Read this guide to see how you can make it happen. <http://www.communitygarden.org/learn/starting-a-community-garden.php>
5. Volunteer at an urban farm. Search on the Internet to see what urban farms there are in your area and then offer your services as a volunteer. You'll learn about farming techniques while supporting the movement for healthy, sustainable eating in city communities
6. Join (or create it yourself!) a community revitalization group Transition Towns (also known as Transition Network or Transition Movement) is a grassroots network of communities that are starting up projects in areas of food, transport, energy, education, housing, waste, arts etc. They work locally in response to global challenges such as climate change, economic hardship and shrinking supplies of cheap energy. Find out more at <http://www.transitionnetwork.org/>
7. Arrange screenings of this film with other groups in your community. We've made it easy at <http://wearenotghosts.bullfrogcommunities.com>
8. Join the Bullfrog Economic Justice Community at http://www.bullfrogcommunities.com/bc_economic_justice and show other films to expand understanding on timely economic issues that affect us all.
9. Learn More! Related community revitalization organizations and resources are:
 - **The Community Revitalization Alliance** is a national public education initiative based in Washington, D.C. on equitable community development, environment and health. http://www.sustainablecommunitydevelopmentgroup.org/revive_alliance.htm
 - **Partners for Livable Communities** is a non-profit leadership organization working to improve the livability of communities by promoting quality of life, economic development, and social equity. <http://www.livable.org/>
 - **The Partnership for Sustainable Communities** works to coordinate federal housing, transportation, water, and other infrastructure investments to make neighborhoods more prosperous, allow people to live closer to jobs, save households time and money, and reduce pollution. <http://www.sustainablecommunities.gov/>

- **The National Trust for Historic Preservation**, a privately funded nonprofit organization in the U.S. works to preserve and protect landscapes, buildings, and neighborhoods that have played a meaningful role in our past. <http://www.preservationnation.org/>
- **The Land Conservation and Advocacy Trust** provides emergency funding and legal support to preserve open spaces, farm land, historic architecture, natural resources, and to promote smart-growth ideals that foster these land conservation values. <http://www.lcatrust.org/about-lcat/>
- **The Center for Rural Affairs** is known for their pioneering work to rebuild rural America and reform federal policy. They advocate for policies that support rural communities to reduce poverty, reward stewardship, and strengthen small farms and businesses. <http://www.cfra.org/>
- **Smart Growth America** is a nation-wide coalition that believes that smart growth solutions support businesses and jobs and provide more options for how people get around their communities. The coalition works with communities to fight sprawl and save money. <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/>