

A photograph of two young Black men outdoors in winter. The man in the foreground is wearing a dark jacket and looking down with a smile. The man behind him is wearing a blue beanie and a green jacket, looking to the side and smiling. The background is slightly blurred, showing an outdoor setting with trees and buildings.

WINNER: AMERICAN PROMISE

Changing the future for
young black men in the
US education system



AMERICAN PROMISE

In 1999, filmmakers Joe Brewster and Michèle Stephenson turned their cameras on two families – including their own – as they enrolled their sons at a prestigious prep school, in hopes that it would set them on a path to success. Thirteen years later, the result is a feature-length documentary, *American Promise*, which provides a rare look into the lives of two middle class black families as they wrestle with issues of race, class, gender and opportunity in education and navigate the ups and downs of parenthood.

WHAT THE CRITICS SAID

“Compelling both for its intimate focus on the lives of these middle class families and in what it has to say about the struggle for identity of even the most talented African American boys in a society that still often fears and dismisses them.” — Film Comment



Sundance Film Festival
Special Jury Prize for
Excellence in Filmmaking



Full Frame Film Festival
Reva and Logan
Grand Jury Prize



Hot Springs Documentary
Film Festival Spa City
Best Documentary Feature



THE CAMPAIGN



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CONTEXT

In the United States today, African American students across income levels score an average of 25 points lower than their white counterparts on standardised tests; this is sometimes referred to as the racial achievement gap. In fact, African American males currently have among the bleakest educational outcomes in the US, with less than half of all African American males graduating from high school in four years, compared to three-quarters of white males. This gap, which is often fueled by stereotyping and implicit bias, has come to be a major force in perpetuating the lifelong inequality for African American males in the United States.

CAMPAIGN AIMS

Prior to the film’s completion, Active Voice was hired to conduct focus group research amongst parents, educators and students and to help define the body of work around the black male achievement gap.

- Participants included:
- A. Young black men aged 17–22
 - B. Young black men aged 16–17
 - C. Private junior and high school teachers
 - D. Public junior and high school teachers
 - E. Parents of colour active in education reform

In these focus groups, Active Voice witnessed a significant shift in dialogue and understanding after participants viewed the film clips. Prior to

watching the clips, participants discussed the achievement gap in the context of class, access, and underfunded public schools. However, after seeing the clips, participants shifted their focus to the unique challenges facing black boys, regardless of educational opportunity. As one teacher put it, “*this doesn’t fit the model of achievement gap as the gap in access that we spent so much time talking about. This is a different thing where a child has been given that access and is still struggling.*”

These focus groups, plus early strategy meetings with partners, including the Ford Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation and Open Society Foundation’s Campaign for Black Male Achievement, established the goals of the campaign, but the primary overarching campaign goal was to contribute to closing the black male achievement gap in education.

IMPACT DYNAMICS

As a tool for analysing campaign strategies BRITDOC has devised what we call the Four Impact Dynamics; broad categories for the kinds of change you can make in the world. This has been developed by analysing the films that we have worked with as well as working

with NGOs and activists to understand how they conceptualise their work. More information on the impact dynamics can be found in *impactguide.org* Below we apply the impact dynamics to the campaign goals of *American Promise*.

BUILDING COMMUNITIES

Grassroots organising – providing the focal point around which people come together.

Encourage supportive links between parents and caregivers who need recognition that their experiences are not happening in isolation.

Target audience:
Parents and caregivers of African American boys.

Support the empowerment of young African American men by providing opportunities for dialogue, creative expression, and mentorship.

CHANGING STRUCTURES

Top down change – whether in politics or business, directly influencing law and policy to change the context.

Elevate the importance of engaging African American males in the process of their own achievement, especially among organisations, institutions, and policymakers.

Target audience:
Civil society and policymakers.

CHANGING BEHAVIOURS

Actively mobilising people to do different not just think different, whether that’s to buy or boycott, donate or volunteer.

Foster deeper cultural sensitivity among educators by incorporating campaign tools into diversity and professional development training.

Target audience:
Educators.

Inform parents and caregivers of African American boys about how they can be more effective advocates for their children, deepen learning at home, take small steps to create large behaviour changes, and identify opportunities to conquer stereotype threat.

Target audience:
Parents and caregivers of African American boys.

CHANGING MINDS

Mass awareness and understanding – creating a shift in public attitudes.

Raise awareness of the role of implicit bias in the social and emotional growth of black boys.

HOW THE CAMPAIGN WORKED

The campaign decided to use an ambitious traditional theatrical release in over 60 cities to build a national platform for building awareness, dialogue, and action around issues of black male achievement and educational equity, effectively using a traditional theatrical release as an outreach vehicle.

Before the film's distribution, considerable time was spent getting organisations and foundations invested in the film, mobilising a total of 66 national partner organisations and 118 community organisations around the release. These organisations were encouraged to "adopt a screening" and incorporate campaign resources into their screening event. The campaign helped plan group field trips, teacher and educator screenings, facilitated in-theatre discussions with the filmmakers, arranged education and youth panels, and coordinated discount rates for groups of 25 or more throughout the theatrical run.

Local groups were encouraged to use these screenings to communicate what was important to them around the issue. For example, Mocha Moms, one of the primary supporters of the *American Promise* campaign,

is a support group for mothers of colour who have chosen not to work full-time outside of the home in order to devote more time to their families and communities. The organisation currently has 100 chapters in 29 states, and about 3,000 members which enabled it to adopt multiple theatrical release screenings. This activity grew into other campaign outputs; screening at their 2013 National Conference, website presence, hosting multiple Twitter chats, an online book club, and numerous local chapters ended up organising further community screenings of the film.

Private schools and corporations have been active in requesting the film and this has contributed towards the costs of mounting the extensive theatrical tour. Screenings with internal departments at Goldman Sachs, PricewaterhouseCoopers, BNP Paribas, Google, and Deutsche Bank have been used to facilitate

discussion around the role of implicit bias in the workplace.

Right after the theatrical release an extensive community screening programme was rolled out. There were 650 screenings in total and these were often supported by targeted workshops featuring transmedia tools to engage target audiences in solutions to support black male achievement.

To rally support around the POV premiere on PBS the campaign designated the first week of Black History Month as Black Male Achievement Week which was supported by 80 offline and online events such as a Hackathon in Oakland, CA, a Capitol Hill panel in Washington and a Google Hangout with singer John Legend. POV has organised their own free community screenings, over 298 in total incorporated into 605 events around the country.

Teach for America hosted the #DreamRiseDo Twitter chat with the filmmakers to promote the PBS premiere.



@Frederica Wilson Today would have been Trayvon's 19th birthday. It's time to close the opportunity gap & enrich the lives of black males. #BMAWeek #Trayvon19



In Autumn 2014, the Promise Tour was launched; the tour will enable the filmmakers to be present at screenings and workshops over a period of days in 20 cities, driving the conversation deeper towards solutions rather than challenges. To support this tour the team has pursued a strategy of fundraising locally, with the intention of building capacity among local organisations and finding solutions to localised manifestations of the *American Promise* conversation.

By way of example, Omaha, Nebraska has used the film as a catalyst to discuss education disparity in the city's designated "Empowerment Zone." The local PBS network had originally broadcast *American Promise*, inspiring the production of its own version; repeated city activity and interest in the film has made Omaha a destination on the Promise Tour.

EDUCATORS

Over 80% of educators are middle class white females. The team recognised the need to provide educators with tools to help them meet the needs of black boys.

United Way, a large national organisation with a long-standing relationship with the National Football League (NFL), selected education reform as one of its national priorities and used the

American Promise campaign to further this national agenda; seven clip screenings were facilitated and the filmmakers participated in a live online Google Hangout.

Teaching Tolerance (a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center) developed the *American Promise* Professional Development Curriculum to help educators become more aware of the ways school systems do and don't work for African American boys.

The educational DVD was released through ro*co films a month after the theatrical release; a DVD box set with the full version of the film (135 minutes), two abridged versions (80 minutes and 120 minutes), scene selections (45 minutes), discussion guide, additional educational materials, and promotional items. ro*co films had sold 300 packages as of August 2014.

IN AUTUMN 2014, THE PROMISE TOUR WAS LAUNCHED; THE TOUR WILL ENABLE THE FILMMAKERS TO BE PRESENT AT SCREENINGS AND WORKSHOPS OVER A PERIOD OF DAYS IN 20 CITIES, DRIVING THE CONVERSATION DEEPER TOWARDS SOLUTIONS RATHER THAN CHALLENGES

PARENTS

A mobile app, the Promise Tracker, has been developed to allow parents to take small steps to support their sons through education. It was initially developed with Bay Area Video Coalition with support from the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation and Baltimore Center for Urban Families.

More recently, Joe, Michele and co-author Hilary Beard wrote a solutions-orientated book, *Promises Kept*, which has been published by Random House and is now used as a support tool for parents who want to take practical steps in their own families.

A Summer Learning Discussion guide was created with the Campaign for Grade Level Reading & the National Summer Learning Association. During the Summer months low-income students tend to lose two or more months of reading and maths skills, leading to significant implications for the achievement gap, graduation rates and long term career success.

YOUTH

Developed by Active Voice, *Behind Every Promise* is a half-hour adaptation of *American Promise* featuring interviews with Idris and Seun. Aimed at young leaders, and others who work with youth,

the film and accompanying discussion guide are intended to inspire young black men to deepen understanding of implicit bias and stereotypes, build support systems, and promote agency around dealing with tough issues.

BUILDING CAPACITY

While legislative change was not prioritised in the campaign, the campaign did work to support other organisations working on longer-term policy and institutional change. For example, they partnered with influential groups such as the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans, American Graduate, America's Promise Alliance, and GradNation to use the film to further their goals around reducing the achievement gap.

GOING FORWARD

Overall the team has recognised that long term behaviour/awareness change needs to be measured with sophisticated audience response tools. Entry/exit surveys were widely used, and the team has committed to refine these further, in multiple phases wherever possible to measure short, medium and long-term impact. In addition the campaign is collaborating on a new app, HARVIS, which captures realtime emotional responses from audiences; screening facilitators have the opportunity to present



real-time visualisations and comments immediately following a screening. The app has the potential to analyse impact along socio-demographic lines and identify where consensus exists in real time and therefore where more intervention and conversation should be focused as the event progresses.

A photograph of a Google event. On a stage, three people are seated in chairs for a panel discussion. The stage is lit with red, green, and blue lights. Two large screens on either side of the stage display the Google logo. In the foreground, a large audience is seated, facing the stage. The text "CAMPAIGN IMPACT" is overlaid in large white letters on the right side of the image.

Google

Google

CAMPAIGN
IMPACT

The strength of the campaign has been demonstrated by the large number of micro-conversations on racial equity that have been sparked by the film and campaign, linking parents, caregivers, educators, and advocates.

While cultural shifts happen over the long term and are difficult to measure, the number and depth of conversations across this campaign have been remarkable. The campaign has not only strengthened existing relationships between organisations working on this issue but has fostered entirely new partnerships as a direct result. Examples include: America's Promise Alliance & United Way; United Way & 100 Black Men; United Way & Campaign for Grade Level Reading & the National Summer Learning Association; OSF's Campaign for Black Male Achievement, Teach for America & United Negro College Fund; Grade Level Reading & the National Summer Learning Association; COSEBOC & Teaching Tolerance (a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center); Nebraska Educational Telecommunications & Nebraska Children and Families Foundation & Nebraska Loves Public Schools (who produced a film together in response to *American Promise*). In addition, the film has been integrated into the everyday work of huge numbers of local and national organisations, expanding on the

work of the campaign and creating further opportunities for those organisations. Major institutions, from United Way to Open Society Foundations, have used the film and resources to elevate their work to advance black male achievement, creating greater credibility for the field, and inspiring other institutions to follow suit.

As United Way Program Manager Kate Bauer has stated, *"The opportunity for conversation provided by community viewings of American Promise has been a unique doorway to open, honest dialogue with varied stakeholders throughout our area. From parents to students and other stakeholders in youth success, watching the story of Idris and Seun's path through school has allowed people to share barriers and solutions to their own and their peers' challenges, and is moving the conversation forward throughout the Tampa Bay area by creating a neutral space for honesty and learning. We are working to build a county-wide Youth Council, hold a youth leadership/advocacy training day in the fall, build a legislative agenda, and apply for an American Graduate Summit next year – all building out of and in conjunction with the work around screenings of American Promise."*

EDUCATORS

Raising the profile of the black male achievement gap and contributing to best practice was a key goal of the campaign. To this end there has been success at local, state and national level.

Notably, an estimated 14,000 educators are now actively using the Professional Development Curriculum to support the socio-emotional and economic growth of black boys. The guide was nominated for the 2014 Educators' Revere Award.

College Board used their large reach (over 50k followers on Twitter) to support the theatrical release of *American Promise* and Black Male Achievement Week with infographics and a public Google Hangout to bring audiences together to discuss the film, and featuring *American Promise* at national summits. They are now working with the filmmakers in an upcoming nationwide video campaign to increase black and latino participation in Advance Placement courses and exams.

American Promise has been incorporated in over 20 conferences, including ones held by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) People of Color, GradNation, Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color (COSEBOC), and the National Urban League.

These conference screenings enabled access to influential school board members as well as educators and parents from all across the country. As a result, school systems have committed to using the *American Promise* Professional Development Modules.



PARENTS

One of the most exciting outcomes has been the formation of 53 Promise Clubs, self-run advocacy groups, which help to foster greater collaboration and problem solving among parents of black boys. Currently, the filmmakers are actively supporting the growth of these clubs by taking part in quarterly themed webinars where Promise Club participants can

network and share information. Mocha Moms has spearheaded the formation of many Promise Clubs, incorporating the Promise Club handbook and other materials, including the book, *Promises Kept*. Every Mocha Moms chapter leader received a copy of the book and participated in a national book club conversation in April 2014.

OTHER NOTEWORTHY INITIATIVES INCLUDE:

- As a result of a screening and discussion organised by PBS/ American Graduate in North Carolina, the State Department of Public Instruction has committed to scheduling 100 screenings of the film over the next year.
- The United Way in Tampa, Florida has planned four screenings that will reach over 1,000 educators, parents, and youth. These screenings will include Youth Modules, Promise Clubs, and a United Way sponsored Professional Development Day for teachers.
- After a screening and community conversation, Oregon State University committed to launching a professional long-term development programme for teachers district-wide using the *American Promise* Professional Development Curriculum, along with a Promise Club.



- In Ann Arbor, Michigan, the *American Promise* Professional Development Curriculum was selected as a year-long Professional Development tool for all 900 middle and high school teachers in 2013-14.
- After a screening, The Roeper School organised monthly workshops with parents and teachers from across the district, and are forming a coalition to ensure they meet their goals.
- What started with a summer screening of *American Promise* led to numerous events and discussions targeted around the African American achievement gap in Omaha, Nebraska.

THEATRICAL

Over 600 theatrical screenings
in over 40 US cities.

BROADCAST

United States
PBS on POV

1,523,000

OVEE broadcast beats POV
all-time attendance records.

ONLINE TRAILER

201,148

WEBSITE

americanpromise.org

61,732

unique visitors

SOCIAL MEDIA

f 10,399

[facebook.com/
AmericanPromise](https://facebook.com/AmericanPromise)

7,122

[Twitter.com/PromiseFilm](https://twitter.com/PromiseFilm)

TWITTER

#BMAWEEK Twitter chat with
619 organisations and individuals.
During Black Male Achievement
week, #AmericanPromise
was used 10,434 times, and
#BMAWeek was used 4,020 times.

EMAIL LIST

10,000

PRESS

The two largest press campaigns
were focused around the theatrical
release and POV broadcast
premiere, where national and local
print and broadcast were targeted.

POV's media campaign
included digital media alerts to
over 40,000 journalists reaching
specifically Hispanic journalists,
African American bloggers and
education reporters.

In print, *American Promise* reached
a potential audience of 32.7 million
through 183 articles and 157 online
pieces in major national news
outlets. The filmmakers were
featured in 22 television interviews,
including CNN's Anderson Cooper
360, and in 24 radio interviews,
including NPR's weekend edition.

A small sample of this in-depth
conversation can be found in
a selection of five press articles
towards the back, which illustrate
the quality of conversation around
the issues raised in the film.

AWARDS

- Sundance Film Festival
Special Jury Prize for
Excellence in Filmmaking
- Full Frame Film Festival
Reva and Logan Grand Jury Prize
- Hot Springs Documentary
Film Festival Spa City
Best Documentary Feature
- Jozi Film Festival,
South Africa
Best International
Documentary Feature
- African American Film
Critics Association
Best Documentary
- Champs Elysees
Bloggers Prize

FESTIVALS

- Sundance Film Festival
- Full Frame Film Festival
- New York Film Festival
- SXSW Edu Film Festival
- Taipei Documentary
Film Festival CNEX
- Hot Springs Documentary
Film Festival
- Jozi Film Festival,
South Africa
- Rocky Mountain
Women's Film Festival
- Bradford International
Film Festival, UK
- American Film Showcase



1990

2010

2012

2013

2014

REAL WORLD EVENTS

THE FILM

THE CAMPAIGN

IMPACT & ACHIEVEMENTS

1999

Michèle and Joe start filming after Idris and Seun enroll at Dalton.

FEB 2012

Shooting of Trayvon Martin.

MAR 2013

White House establishes initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans.

JULY 2013

George Zimmerman acquitted of Trayvon Martin's death.

JAN 2013

Premiere at Sundance Film Festival.

OCT 2013

Theatrical release in 60 cities.

NOV 2013

Educational DVD released.

FEB 2014

PBS POV broadcast.

AUG 2014

International screening as part of the American Film Showcase organised by US State Department.

SEPT 2014

Digital release.

2010

First outreach research and strategy work begins.

AUG 2012

Active Voice focus groups.

JUNE 2013

Eight screenings are held for Teach for America.

JUNE 2013

National Summer Learning Day of Action Google Hangout

JULY 2013

Summer Learning collaboration with United Way.

AUG 2013

"Adopt a Theatrical Screening" meetings with partners.

OCT 2013

Online Day of Action for Black Boys.

AUTUMN 2013

Community screening roll-out.

JAN 2014

Promises Kept book is released.

FEB 2014

1st week of Black History Month is designated Black Male Achievement Week.

FEB 2014

Capitol Hill screening and panel discussion.

MAR 2014

Filmmakers show clips of the film and discuss global right to equal education at UNHRC.

APR 2014

Mocha Moms National Book Club conversation about *Promises Kept*.

AUG 2014

Promise Tour begins.

AUTUMN 2013

Ann Arbor Public School Districts adopts Professional Development Curriculum.

APR 2014

5th largest public school system, Broward County, adopts film as part of strategy to narrow achievement gap.

SEPT 2014

53 Promise Clubs in operation.

THE TEAM





PRODUCER/DIRECTOR

Joe Brewster is a Harvard and Stanford-educated psychiatrist who specialised in organisational analysis, the use of psychoanalytic principles to understand and improve organisations. In 1996, he wrote and directed *The Keeper*, which was an official selection in the dramatic narrative competition section of the Sundance Film Festival and was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award nomination. His feature film projects have received broadcast internationally and have garnered numerous prizes. His film outreach efforts have been supported by the Kellogg Foundation, Tribeca New Media, Open Society Foundations and BAVC fellowships and have been honoured with a Revere Award and the Media Funders' Woodward Wickham Award.



PRODUCER/DIRECTOR

Michèle Stephenson is a graduate of McGill University and Columbia Law School. Stephenson uses her background in critical studies, race and human rights and her Panamanian and Haitian heritage to inform her passion for personal nonfiction storytelling. An early pioneer in the internet revolution, Stephenson began her filmmaking career with the video advocacy group, WITNESS, where she used video and the internet to structure human rights campaigns and train advocates around the globe in video storytelling. Stephenson's work has appeared on PBS, MTV and other outlets. Her honors include fellowships from the Tribeca and Sundance Institutes and the Magnum Foundation and awards from the Sundance, Full Frame, New York and Media Impact Film Festivals.

MICHÈLE STEPHENSON
& JOE BREWSTER
DIRECTORS & PRODUCERS

STEPHANIE BLEYER

SAHAR DRIVER

DARCY HEUSEL

NATASHA LOGAN

ALEXANDRA PEARSON

SHAADY SALEH

MICHAEL TUCKMAN

KHALEAPH LEWIS

CONSULTANTS

JESSICA JONES

**IMPACT PRODUCER,
RADA FILM GROUP**

**JAMIE DOBIE, AUBREY
GALLEGOS, ELIZA LIGHT**
POV COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

ORGANOGRAM

TRADITIONAL DISTRIBUTION

MICHÈLE / DIRECTOR - PRODUCER

- + Fundraising
- + Theatrical
- + Publicity
- + Project Management

JESSICA / REACH

In-house consultancy
established by Joe
and Michèle

SHAADY & SAHAR / ACTIVE VOICE

- + Strategy Development
- + Focus Groups;
- + Development and Management of Partnerships
- + Behind Every Promise (2 years)

STEPHANIE / SIX FOOT CHIPMUNK

- +Community Outreach
- +Toolkit Development (18 months)

NATASHA / LOGAN PROJECTS

Transmedia Producer

KHALEAPH

- + Community Outreach
- + Youth Module Development
- + Partnerships

DARCY, ALEXANDRA / PICTURE MOTION

- + Social Media
- + Strategy pre-premiere
- + Partnership Management
- + Community Screenings (12 months)

ELIZA, JAMIE, AUBREY / POV

Community Engagement
(18 months)

JOE / DIRECTOR - PRODUCER

- + Fundraising
- + Theatrical
- + Publicity
- + Project Management

MICHAEL TUCKMAN

Theatrical bookings

AMERICA'S PROMISE ALLIANCE (APA)

The nation's largest partnership dedicated to improving the lives of young people, featured *American Promise* at their annual GradNation Summit (sponsored by the Arthur M. Blank Foundation and in conjunction with United Way Atlanta), and has used clips from the film in various online Twitter chats, Google Hangout and social events since 2013. APA also partnered with the campaign, the Blank Foundation and United Way Atlanta to organise two days of screenings and workshops with target stakeholders.

BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS

National and local chapters hosted community screenings of *American Promise* and adoptions of theatrical screenings. Film screened at the 2013 National Conference in Denver. Have also supported initiatives online through Google Hangouts, Twitter chats, newsletter and social media.

COLLEGE BOARD

Conference screenings, infographics, Google Hangouts in support of theatrical release.

TEACH FOR AMERICA (TFA)

In addition to hosting theatrical adoptions in seven local branches and teacher training sessions, TFA has adopted the *American Promise* Professional Development Curriculum as a part of their internal educational resources for its teachers in training.

TEACHING TOLERANCE

(A project of the Southern Poverty Law Center) developed the Professional Development Curriculum which utilises clips from the film.

UNITED WAY

Promoted *American Promise* and distributed resources to local chapters, resulting in huge support on a local level during the theatrical release. Created a special *American Promise* grant offering \$1,000 to host a screening and event with *American Promise*; they have since continued to organise and sponsor workshops in local chapters throughout the country.

OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS

Strategic partner advising on overall campaign strategy.

BUDGET

Production Budget:
\$1,557,377

Funders:

- ITVS
- Jerome Foundation
- National Black Programming Consortium
- New York State Council on the Arts
- POV
- San Francisco Film Society
- Sundance Institute Documentary Fund
- Gucci Tribeca Documentary Fund

Outreach Budget:
\$1,210,700

Funders:

- American Graduate Initiative/ Corporation for Public Broadcasting (indirect support through POV)
- Fledgling Fund
- Ford Foundation
- Kellogg Foundation
- Open Society Foundations



The *American Promise* campaign leveraged extensive partnership work to spark new discussions and collaborations around the black male achievement gap, as well as amplifying and supporting existing initiatives in this issue area.

The film – an unflinching, longitudinal record of parental

experience – was uniquely placed to not only lay out the challenges but speak to individuals coming into contact with the sharp end of the black male achievement gap. To this end, the campaign provided toolkits for their strategic audiences; educators, parents and youth, at the same time working at a more structural level towards

a deeper cultural shift. The impact of the campaign is thus found in both depth and breadth, a text book example of how film can be used as a tool to pursue both immediate and long-term change, working within the existing field but also adding layers of meaning and context to inspire collective and individual action.

PEER REVIEW COMMITTEE

“One thing that sets American Promise apart is the film has fostered collaboration between many great partner organisations – effectively creating a coalition that did not exist before the film.”

“Beautiful goal. This is a quest for structural change which is what matters in the end. Much more important than stimuli-response behaviour.”

AMERICAN PROMISE VIEWERS:

“I feel like I’m not alone in the struggle to raise a confident, competent young brown boy in this country. I feel reenergized to persevere and help my son become the best he can be.” – Parent

“The film left me with a great deal of food for thought and reaffirmed the great need to better train teachers and ourselves about stereotype threat in our classrooms.”

– Kellin Thompson, educator, Teach for America NewYork



WATCH THE FILM

Buy your copy from **Amazon**
Stream on **Amazon, iTunes,**
Netflix

FOLLOW

@PromiseFilm
facebook.com/American Promise

CONTACT

Jessica Jones
jessica@AmericanPromise.org

A photograph of a man in a maroon sweater and khaki pants standing at a wooden podium, addressing a large audience seated in a conference hall. The audience is diverse and attentive. The room features a patterned carpet and wood-paneled walls. A large white text overlay is centered over the image.

PRESS

A small press sample which illustrates the quality of conversation around the issues raised in the film.

- 1

THE ATLANTIC
When Minority Students Attend Elite Private Schools
- 2

THE NEW YORK TIMES
Admitted, but Left Out
- 3

MSNBC
Powerful Film Looks at Education and Race
- 4

EBONY
Examining the 'American Promise' to Black Children
- 5

THE NEW YORK TIMES
An Education in Equality

Some bits you need to know

App available on selected smartphones, to personal current account customers with a debit card, Online Banking and UK mobile number.

NatWest

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By Noah Berlatsky

The President Goes After Terrorists in Syria
By Jeffrey Goldberg

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When Minority Students Attend Elite Private Schools

Many parents of color send their children to exclusive, predominantly white schools in an attempt to give their kids a "ticket to upward mobility." But these well-resourced institutions can fall short at nurturing minority students emotionally and intellectually.

JUDITH OHIKUARE | DEC 17 2013, 9:23 AM ET

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Idris Brewster and his mother, Michèle Stephenson, in a scene from American Promise (Jon Stuyvesant)

Dalton is a prestigious, decades-old, K-12 prep school on New York City's Upper East Side that filters its students into the best universities in the country. In 2010, *Forbes* reported that 31 percent of its students matriculated into MIT, Stanford, or an Ivy League institution. Former students include Anderson Cooper, Claire Danes, and Ralph Lauren's daughter Dylan. Even imaginary people make sure their families are present for parent-teacher conferences. For years, however, Dalton was largely inaccessible to minority and lower-income

VIDEO

Let's Talk About Not Smoking
Why does smoking maintain its allure? James Hamblin seeks the wisdom of a cool person.

ASUS IN SEARCH OF INCREDIBLE

intel inside

HOVER TO EXPAND

Is it a laptop? Is it a tablet?

http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2013/12/when-minority-students-attend-elite-private-schools/282416/

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Admitted, but Left Out



Left, Collection of Idris Brewster; right, Monica Almeida/The New York Times

< 1 2 3 4 5 6 >

Idris Brewster in a Dalton class photo from 2001-2002 (front row, third from left), and as a student at Occidental College.

By JENNY ANDERSON
Published: October 19, 2012 526 Comments

WHEN Ayinde Alleyne arrived at the [Trinity School](#), an elite independent school on the Upper West Side in Manhattan, he was eager to make new friends. A brainy 14-year-old, he was the son of immigrants from Trinidad and Tobago, a teacher and an auto-body repairman, in the South Bronx. He was soon overwhelmed by the privilege he saw. Talk of fancy vacations and weekends in the Hamptons rankled — “I couldn’t handle that at that stage of my life,” said Mr. Alleyne, now a sophomore at the University of Pennsylvania — and he eventually found comfort in the school’s “minority corner,” where other minority students, of lesser means, hung out.

In 2011, when Mr. Alleyne was preparing to graduate, seniors were buzzing about the \$1,300-per-student class trip to the Bahamas.

Metropolitan

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Powerful film looks at education and race | MSNBC

MHP 10/19/13

Powerful film looks at education and race

It is a movie 13 years in the making. Melisa Harris-Perry talks to the filmmakers behind the bold new documentary, "American Promise."

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NOVEMBER 2013

ENTERTAINMENT & CULTURE / TV & Film

Examining the "American Promise" to Black Children

WE TALK WITH THE DIRECTORS OF THE POWERFUL FILM WHICH EXAMINES THE CHALLENGES OUR KIDS FACE IN SEARCH OF EDUCATION

EBONY

By CHRIS WILLIAMS

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ilmmakers Joe Brewster and Michele Stephenson have joined forces in producing a compelling documentary called *American Promise* chronicling their son, Idris and his friend Seun Summers journey through The Dalton School in New York City. It highlights the numerous perils Black children and families encounter in the United States educational system. Using their skills as a former human rights lawyer and psychiatrist respectively, they were able to examine some of the reasons that Black children are locked in such a battle between success and failure inside and outside American classrooms.

American Promise won the Special Jury Award at the Sundance Film Festival earlier this year and is generating notable Oscar consideration. The film will be seen on the PBS Series POV in 2014.

EBONY recently sat down with Brewster and Stephenson to delve into the making of their documentary and the challenges faced by Black children and

http://www. Ebony.com/entertainment-culture/examining-the-american-promise-to-black-children#axzz3E8wxi2mz

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OP-DOCS

'An Education in Equality'

By Joe Brewster and Michele Stephenson

An Education in Equality: Filmed over 13 years, this short film presents a coming-of-age story of an African-American boy who attends an elite Manhattan prep school.

By JOE BREWSTER and MICHELE STEPHENSON Published: September 23, 2013 77 Comments

When our son Idris was 4 years old, he was accepted to the Dalton School, a prestigious private school in Manhattan. Idris would become one of only a few black boys in a kindergarten class of about 90 students, where tuition rivaled that of private colleges. We decided to document this new world, following Idris over 13 years through graduation. (The story of Idris and one of his close friends became our feature-length documentary "American Promise," from which this Op-Doc video is adapted.) What began as an exploration of diversity in New York's elite private-school world grew into a story that touches on larger themes of identity, race and class in American society.

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