



***For Immediate Release***

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***Generation Growth* Documentary Film Selected for Heartland International Film Festival in Indianapolis**

- ***Documentary focuses on addressing social determinants of health through gardening curriculum in the classroom for students***
- ***Film also selected as nominee for 'Indiana Spotlight' as Holy Angels Catholic School in Indianapolis and Moores Hill in Dearborn County are featured***
- ***Green Bronx Machine and Anthem Inc. partner to expand curriculum across the country to bring hope, health and opportunity to communities and students who need it most***

**INDIANAPOLIS (Oct. 6, 2020)** – The [Heartland International Film Festival](#) in Indianapolis has announced *Generation Growth*, a documentary film focused on health and educational outcomes in low-income areas across America, has been selected for 'Documentary Features' and is a nominee for the 'Indiana Spotlight Award' for its upcoming film festival from October 8 – 18, 2020.

*Generation Growth* takes a journey across the country to address the social determinants of health in some of the most vulnerable communities through an interactive gardening curriculum that allows students to grow vegetables in the classroom, helping them eat better, be more engaged with school and give them pathways for jobs. With the support and partnership of [Anthem Inc.](#), a health benefits company, Stephen Ritz, founder of [Green Bronx Machine](#), is able to deliver on his mission to expand around the country, in places like Indiana, to bring hope, health and opportunity to those communities and students who need it most. From 3rd grade to high school students, to rural and urban communities, to students with disabilities and youth in foster care, *Generation Growth* is dedicated to cultivating minds and harvesting hope.

Social determinants of health continue to be barriers to good health outcomes. These conditions include poverty, housing, poor water quality, transportation, social isolation, lack of employment, lack of access to healthy foods, lack of family cohesion and lack of education. *Generation Growth* explores these challenges that are impacting so many in Indiana and across the country.

Research indicates that poor nutrition, often a result of food insecurity, is a leading risk factor for many chronic conditions, including heart disease, hypertension, diabetes and other diet-related diseases. And

food insecurity is reported to cost the healthcare system an additional \$53 billion a year. In Indianapolis, 1 in 4 children live in poverty, 23% of children lack consistent access to food, 21% of households use food assistance and 90% of food consumed is grown out of state.

“It’s hard work raising children, and a lot harder when you’re in poverty, when caring and consistency can be at a premium. When I came across the work that Stephen was doing — teaching children unfairly disadvantaged by their environments, lacking only in opportunity rather than aptitude, and creating a pathway for health and success in life — I felt like this was a story needing to be told,” said Mu Sun, *Generation Growth* Director. “I wanted people to understand the breadth of the compounding issues that hamper development of children in poverty, and the herculean efforts put forth by teachers, such as Stephen and those who implement his program in the film, to provide a caring and loving environment for them to overcome those issues. These children have done nothing wrong besides being born into poverty rather than affluence, and it’s up to educators everywhere to make sure their misfortune doesn’t negatively affect their future.”

“There are more people sick from food than have access to it and that is absolutely unacceptable. It’s my job to make sure that every student and child gets a perfect plate of healthy, nutritious and fresh food,” said Stephen Ritz, the main feature in *Generation Growth*. “Zip code and skin color should not determine outcomes in life – quality education should. Our Green Bronx Machine Classroom Curriculum has proven to be a data-driven tool that transforms school performance and generates healthy outcomes for students. Together, we grow vegetables, our vegetables grow students, our students grow schools, and our schools grow happy, healthy, resilient communities that love eating and sharing their vegetables. This film celebrates teachers, communities and all that is possible when we come together in the best interests of our children. I’m proud and honored to be doing this work.”

“We’ve been grateful to partner with Green Bronx Machine to help further the vision of building healthier communities through inspiring educational and workforce opportunities,” said Dr. Kimberly Roop, Anthem Indiana Medicaid President. “Students learn hands-on how to grow, eat, and enjoy vegetables for themselves, their school and their community while also learning about math, science, and English in a fresh and engaging way. Our commitment to person-centered, holistic care drives us to innovate and develop community relationships that expand access to resources, create new opportunities, and ultimately improve the well-being and quality of life for people in the communities we serve.”

“Green Bronx Machine’s model combines the use of aeroponic gardens with evidence-based, scientific study and is the only garden, wellness and nutrition program that can be fully integrated into core curriculum,” said Justin Armitage, [Holy Angels Catholic School](#) Principal, a Notre Dame ACE Academy based in Indianapolis, and featured in *Generation Growth*. “Our scholars and team at Holy Angels have implemented the curriculum in our classrooms and community. The model has transformed how we think about food and nutrition, and more importantly what we choose to eat. Through this programming, we are able to address childhood obesity, scholar motivation, and academic performance. Scholars are empowered to learn and grow every day.”

“Nutrition is such an important aspect in all of our lives and this collaboration between Anthem and Green Bronx Machine educates our local youth on how smart decisions around healthy foods can make a lasting impact,” said Indiana Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch. “By implementing this curriculum into the classroom, we help spread wellness into Hoosier homes and neighborhoods, promoting healthier opportunities for students and their families.”

"*Generation Growth* is inspiring, a game changer in how we can teach and motivate kids," said [Paul McGuire Grimes](#), [Rotten Tomatoes](#)-Approved Critic and Member of the [Critics Choice Association](#). "Using gardening as a tool to teach students true life lessons provides evidence of the hard work they had a real hand in cultivating."

*Generation Growth* will have a drive-in socially distanced premiere at the Heartland International Film Festival in Indianapolis on Sunday, Oct. 11, 2020 at 7:15 p.m. ET at Tibbs Screen 2. The documentary film is suitable for all audiences. For drive-in showing tickets and placing orders please visit [here](#). Please note, drive-in pricing is per person, not per vehicle. The film will also be available online in the Heartland International Virtual Film Festival for purchase from Oct. 8 – Oct. 25 which can be ordered [here](#).

The Heartland International Film Festival is Indiana's largest and longest-running film festival and will celebrate its 29th anniversary this October across Indianapolis. Since the inaugural Festival in 1992, Heartland has grown from a 4-day event with less than 20 films to an 11-day celebration featuring more than 100 independent films, 200 visiting filmmakers and 300 film screenings.

*Generation Growth* was also selected for this year's virtual and drive-in hybrid edition of the critically acclaimed [Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival](#) from Oct. 9 – 17. For more information on *Generation Growth* and to view the documentary film trailer, please visit <http://www.generationgrowthdoc.com>.

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#### **About Green Bronx Machine**

Green Bronx Machine builds healthy, equitable, and resilient communities through inspired education, local food systems, and 21st Century workforce development. Dedicated to cultivating minds and harvesting hope, our school-based model using urban agriculture aligned to key school performance indicators grows healthy students and healthy schools to transform communities that are fragmented and marginalized into neighborhoods that are inclusive and thriving. We believe that healthy students help drive healthy schools, and that healthy schools are at the heart of healthy communities. We envision growing healthy communities where those who are "a part from" will become "part of" new solutions that benefit 100% of society; a world where people do not have to leave their community to live, learn and earn in a better one. Together, we can grow something greater! Ready, set, GROW! For more information, please visit <https://greenbronxmachine.org/> or follow @greenBXmachine on Twitter.

#### **About Anthem, Inc.**

Anthem is a leading health benefits company dedicated to improving lives and communities, and making healthcare simpler. Through its affiliated companies, Anthem serves more than 108 million people, including more than 42 million within its family of health plans. We aim to be the most innovative, valuable and inclusive partner. For more information, please visit [www.antheminc.com](http://www.antheminc.com) or follow @AnthemInc on Twitter.