



Latino Public Broadcasting | VOICES Season 5
Outreach Guide for *The Pushouts*

Thank you for taking the extra step to encourage viewers of *The Pushouts* to think critically about the film and its themes, and to share their thoughts with others in their community. This film raises awareness about serious obstacles that face under-resourced and underestimated youth of color (both Latino and black). Presenting audiences with trustworthy information about these issues, and in neutral spaces, encourages meaningful dialogue about identity and cultural experiences.

This outreach guide includes themes to inspire a direction to take your outreach plan. It also includes ideas for community partners and speakers, event and social media tips and ideas, discussion questions as well as lists of supplemental reading and list of free resources to go along with the film.

Film Summary: “I was in prison before I was even born.” So begins the story of Victor Rios who, by age 15, was a high school “dropout” and gang member with three felony convictions. But when his best friend’s murder, a teacher’s quiet persistence and a mentor’s moral conviction converge, Rios is able to turn his life around.

In 2013, Rios – by then a tenured University of California professor, award-winning author and national thought leader on the school-to-prison pipeline – gets an unexpected phone call from his former high school mentor, Martin Flores, whom he hasn't spoken to in more than 15 years. Flores makes Rios an offer he can't refuse: leading a summer program at YO! Watts, a youth center in South Central L.A. serving 16-24 year-olds who are out of school and out of work. “Thinking about Martin, how he was there when I needed that kind of support,” Rios recalls, “he was one of those people that saved my life!” Although the timing wasn't perfect and the pay non-existent, Rios heads down to L.A. with a team of protégé “super-mentors.”

While the young people at Yo! Watts are often referred to as dropouts in national statistics and common parlance, many of these youth are trying to stay in school but are being pushed or pulled to drop out of high school. They are among the almost one-in-four Latino and Black students who do not graduate each year¹ and are pushed into continuation schools, low-paying jobs, and – too often – the criminal justice and mass incarceration systems. Over the course of the summer, Rios and his team work to build a learning environment that will match the curiosity and determination of their students, while also grappling with the limits they themselves face as temporary figures in the lives of young people fighting significant systemic and structural barriers to success.

This outreach guide will help communities explore questions raised in the film such as, what can schools, colleges, universities and communities do to reverse the trend and prepare our youth for meaningful lives that benefit themselves, their communities and our nation as a whole?

- Website: www.thepushouts.com
- Social Media: Twitter @thepushouts, Facebook www.facebook.com/thepushouts
- Filmmakers: Katie Galloway, Dawn Valdez
- *The Pushouts* is part of [American Graduate](#), public media’s long term commitment, made possible by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) to help young people succeed in school, career and life.



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Themes for Outreach & Topics for Discussion

- Problems and proposed solutions of the American educational system, including:
 - Whole child/social-emotional approach vs. over emphasis on testing
 - Increased access to trauma informed care
 - Increased pathways to college and meaningful work
 - Restorative justice vs. zero tolerance policing models
 - Mentorship programs
- Supportive solutions for transitional age youth in the following situations:
 - Currently enrolled and unemployed
 - Involved in the juvenile/criminal justice system
 - Suffering effects of childhood trauma and/or PTSD
 - School “pushouts” forced to leave for reasons related to unprecedented inequality, corresponding poverty, and legacies of entrenched discrimination
- School-to-prison pipeline / Criminalization of youth of color
- Gang involvement
- Reasons for absenteeism
- Resilience and perseverance
- Challenges faced by both high school and college students in pursuit of a degree
- Training the future workforce of America
- Poverty and marginalization

Community Partners

This film presents an opportunity to cultivate and/or strengthen partnerships with community organizations that are addressing issues and themes in the film. Partnering organizations can participate by helping to spread the word to their constituents about the broadcast and engagement activities, hosting events, bringing stakeholders together, or providing experts for panel discussions or presentations. Partnering with an organization that specializes in conflict resolution and/or restorative justice, can help facilitate audience conversations with civility.

Organizations to consider partnerships with include:

- Educational institutions, such as local universities, colleges, community colleges, middle schools and high schools. Contact them through specialized departments that relate to the film such as Latino Studies, Ethnic Studies, African American Studies, Social Work, Justice, Counseling, Child/ Youth Development, Journalism and Education.
- Public libraries
- AmeriCorps and VISTA Programs
- Local film consortiums
- Latino and African American community organizations, such as your community’s Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and local chapter of MANA.
- After school clubs and programs
- Mentorship programs
- Local law enforcement agencies



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- Community mental health
- Business organizations / associations and workforce development programs
- Teachers and school counselor/ social worker associations

Speakers/Facilitators

- Filmmakers/Impact Producers
- Film subjects
- Youth and School Advocates
- Those in positions of leadership at the school district, or even a high school or middle school principal
- Faculty from, Latino studies, Social Work, Education, Ethnic Studies, Justice Studies or departments at local university or college
- Local Latino/African American and educational equity activists
- Latino community leaders (such as City Council or School District Representatives)

Community Conversation | Suggestions & Tips

- **Part I:** Screening. Begin with brief opening remarks and screen film (approx. 1 hour, 5 min).
- **Part II:** Community Conversation (approx. 25-30 min). The moderator should provide guidelines for the conversation, such as ground rules for civility. Then proceed through 3-4 discussion questions, giving each one three to five minutes for audience members to discuss with a neighbor or in a small group. End with a question that inspires solution-oriented action. Spend final 10 minutes having volunteers share ideas about how to solve this issue in their community.
 - **Use a local example.** Identify a local high school with a significant dropout rate. Include information about “transitional aged youth” and the number of youth 16-24 out of school and out of work in the community. Use this school as an example throughout the conversation in order to bring the topic “home” and inspire realistic action and change in your community.
- **Speaker/Facilitator:** If the opportunity is available, have an expert speaker introduce the film and themselves at the top of the program. Then ask this speaker to facilitate the audience conversation, adding their thoughts on the questions and topics at hand throughout.
- **Audience:** Students, parents/ family, youth workers and advocates, educators, school and district administrators, local, regional and state policy makers, elected officials, community members (especially in affected neighborhoods), law enforcement, and other key stakeholders.
- **Promotion:** Promote on air, website, e-blasts, and social media. Distribute fliers through partners, in partner lobbies and send electronically to station members.

Social Media | Tips & Ideas

- Connect with the film on social media: Twitter @thepushouts, Facebook www.facebook.com/thepushouts
- Create a centralized Facebook event page and be sure to make all participating partners co-hosts. This event page can be updated with the latest event updates, news, and contact information.



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- Consider engaging your Facebook audience by live streaming the speaker presentation and/or post-screening discussion via Facebook Live, Instagram or Twitter. Then promote the broadcast or if the event takes place after the broadcast, provide the link where people can stream the film online at www.pbs.org.
- Invite youth to share their observations regarding what it is that makes them feel “pushed out” of mainstream education opportunities. This can be achieved through producing posts or videos on social media such as Instagram and Twitter. Post these photos or videos on social media, using an easy-to-remember and relevant hashtag, like #thepushouts, #dontpushmeout, #schooltoprisonpipeline and #pushoutnotdropout

Discussion Questions

After the screening of the documentary, ask audience members to turn to a neighbor or form small groups of up to eight people. Ask them to identify a note taker and someone who will represent each group and summarize results when discussion ends. Suggested questions to address:

1. What does it mean to be under resourced like those portrayed in film? What are the obstacles these young people face?
2. Why do some youth get involved in gangs? Is it a misconception that it is simply “a lifestyle choice”? Why or why not? What do gangs provide that young people like those in the film might need or be missing in their lives? What do youth gain from their participation?
3. Is there a specific person or anecdote from the film that resonates with you personally?
4. Why is the dropout rate for students of color higher than the national average and what measures can local governments do to improve the rates? Where do you see yourself in these plans?
5. Consider Victor Rios’ story.
 - a. What role do mentors play in his story?
 - b. Why is his message so effective with youth?
 - c. What techniques does he (and his team) use to engage youth? How does he empower them?
6. What does Dr. Kadir, the algebra teacher, mean when he says, “You have to live and die as a rebel, don’t live and die as a victim.”?
7. What is already being done in your community to help students stay in school, and what steps can or should be taken to ensure potential pushouts graduate and advance their education through college or trade school?
 - a. Who can serve as a mentor?
 - b. What role can law enforcement play?
 - c. In the film, Victor says, “school was a cold place.” What small things can teachers, administrators and schools do to make a difference?
8. What are some things individuals (like you) can do to help address this problem? Brainstorm ideas with your group to help develop new solutions.
9. What are the takeaways from this film and discussion that you might share with others?

Supplemental Reading

VOICES

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1. *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys* by Dr. Victor Rios (2011)
2. *Street Life: Poverty, Gangs, and a Ph.D* by Dr. Victor Rios (2011)
3. *PUSHOUT: PUSHOUT* by Monique W. Morris (2018)
4. *For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood... and the Rest of Y'all Too: Reality Pedagogy and Urban Education* by Christopher Emdin (2017)
5. *The School-to-Prison Pipeline: Education, Discipline, and Racialized Double Standards* by Nancy Heitzeg (2016)
6. *Urban Youth and School Pushout* by Eve Tuck (2013)
7. *School Pushouts: A Plague of Hopelessness Perpetrated Zombie Schools* by Armand A. Fusco (2012)
8. *Disposable Youth : Education or Incarceration* by Wilson, James C. (2010)
9. *Tearing Down the Gates: Confronting the Class Divide in American Education* by Peter Sacks (2007)
10. *Chicano School Failure and Success: Past, Present, and Future* by Richard R. Valencia (2002)
11. *City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1771–1965* by Kelly Lytle Hernández (2017)

Additional Resources (Free)

1. [“Help for kids the Education System Ignores”](#): Ted Talk (11:53) by Dr. Victor Rios. Available to stream for free at Ted.com.
2. [“Restorative Justice: A New Approach to School Discipline”](#): Short video clip (6:50) from *In Close*, a series on PBS. Available to stream for free at PBS.org.
3. [“LA Walkouts”](#): Short video clip (11:04) from the *Latino Americans* series on PBS. Aligned with National Standards for grades 4-12. “In response to poor educational opportunities, students and teachers in Los Angeles begin to organize in the late 1960s. Teacher Sal Castro reflects back on the formative experience of seeing his family split up through the involuntary deportations of the 1930s. This informs his resolve to ensure better conditions for a new generation of students. Student activists reflect on the sense of empowerment and accomplishment that came through claiming Chicano identity and taking action.” Available to stream for free via PBS LearningMedia.
4. [Building a Grad Nation Report](#) by Civic Enterprises, Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University, Alliance for Excellent Education and America’s Promise Alliance (2018)

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Please let us know about your outreach efforts as this informs LPB’s future initiatives and provides data for final reports. Also, please contact us with questions or suggestions to improve this guide.

¹ Civic Enterprises, Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University, Alliance for Excellent Education and America’s Promise Alliance (2018). *Building a Grad Nation Report*. Retrieved from the Grad Nation website: <https://gradnation.americaspromise.org/2018-building-grad-nation-report>

