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PRESS RELEASE

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**EXCLUSIVE SCREENING OF 'AMERICAN WINTER' TO KICK OFF EFFORT TO
RESTORE ECONOMIC MOBILITY FOR HOOSIER FAMILIES**

**INDIANA PREMIERE OF FILM SPOTLIGHTING ECONOMIC CHALLENGES FACING AMERICAN FAMILIES TO BE
PRESENTED AT THE PLATFORM AT CITY MARKET ON JANUARY 15TH 6:00-8:00PM WITH Q&A TO FOLLOW**

Indianapolis, IN— For countless middle-class families who have experienced job loss or an unexpected financial setback, the American Dream has become an American nightmare. Working families, seemingly on a path toward economic security, have discovered how quickly they can slip from the middle class into poverty. Emmy®-winning filmmakers Joe and Harry Gantz (HBO's "Taxicab Confessions," "The Defenders") feature struggling families who called into the 211 social services hotline in search of help during the winter of 2012 in the powerful film **AMERICAN WINTER**, which debuted on HBO in March 2013. The film presents an intimate snapshot of the state of the nation's economy as it is playing out in the lives of many American families, and reveals the human consequences of rising economic insecurity, budget cuts to the social safety net, and the fracturing of the American Dream. A preview of the film can be found at <http://www.americanwinterfilm.com/>

The latest U.S. census data shows that 48.8 million Americans are living in poverty, the largest number in the 54-year history of published poverty estimates, including 16.4 million children. Here in Indiana, nearly a million Hoosiers live in poverty, including 22.4 percent of all Hoosier children. Moreover, more than a third of all Hoosiers (2.24 Million) are low-income and thus not economically self-sufficient to withstand the financial challenges portrayed in the film.

Hosted by the Indiana Institute for Working Families as part of its statewide efforts to raise awareness about its ['Cliff Effect'](#) research and long-term efforts to restore economic mobility for working Hoosier families, this special screening of **AMERICAN WINTER** will be shown at The Platform at City Market on January 15th from 6:00-8:00pm.

The screening is made possible by the Indianapolis Foundation, a Central Indiana Community Foundation (CICF) affiliate, with support from the Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC) Indianapolis and the Indianapolis International Film Fest. The screening is free and open to the public ages 21+. The event will conclude with a Q&A discussion on efforts to address poverty in Indiana moderated by Erika D. Smith, Metro Columnist at the Indianapolis Star, with participants including Terri Garcia of Southeast Community Services, Angie Carr Klitzsch of the Indianapolis Foundation, and Bill Taft of LISC Indianapolis.

Even as the economy slowly recovers from the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression, an increasing number of American families are finding themselves caught in a daily struggle to meet their basic needs. At the same time, the social safety net that was intended to help those in crisis has been impacted by budget cuts, creating a perfect storm of greater need and fewer resources available to assist vulnerable families. Framed through the very personal stories of eight families, AMERICAN WINTER reveals the devastating fallout of the mortgage meltdown, unemployment, the health care crisis and a shrinking social safety net. Woven into the film are interviews with local economic experts, policy analysts, religious leaders and social workers, all of whom give context to the families' stories.

AMERICAN WINTER highlights the work of "211info" in Portland, a referral hotline that connects callers with community resources and social services. The eight families profiled in the film were among thousands calling 211 during the winter months of the past year. As one operator explains, "I can't count the number of people I've spoken with who start their conversation with 'I never believed I would be in this situation.' They say, 'I have always worked.'" But now they are unable to find work, or they cannot find jobs that pay enough to provide for their families' basic needs.

Featured in the film are:

- TJ & Tara – After TJ gets laid off from his job, he and his wife Tara struggle to provide for their three children on her minimum wage income. Forced to choose between paying their mortgage or electricity bill, the family recalls what it is like to have no lights and no heat in the middle of winter.
- John & Geral – 50-year-old John is now facing a third year of unemployment and despairs that he'll soon lose his ranch, Growing discouraged with his fruitless job hunt, John must also cope with feelings of shame when he is forced to apply for food stamps in order to feed himself and his 10-year-old son Geral, who has Downs Syndrome.
- Brandon & Pam – With Brandon frustrated by a series of close calls on the job front, Pam is forced to go with her two young sons to a women's shelter to get assistance with basic provisions. Unable to pay rent, the family moves into Pam's mother's two-bedroom apartment.
- Diedre – Though college-educated, Diedre was laid off from her job along with 1500 other employees during the Recession, and has turned to donating plasma and selling scrap metal to make ends meet for her family of five.
- Ben & Paula – After working at the credit branch of a car company, Ben was laid off and quickly fell behind on the mortgage to the distress of his wife and kids. As the family copes with the trauma of losing their home to foreclosure, they also find themselves struggling to pay for basics.
- Shanon – A single mother, Shanon got into debt because her 12-year-old daughter suffers from a stomach condition requiring hospitalization, causing her to miss 3 months of work. Hit with expensive medical bills that her insurance company will not cover, Shanon is now struggling to pay the rent.
- Mike & Heather – Mike, Heather and their five children are left without water, electricity or heat, and have turned to a generous neighbor to run an extension cord from his garage. Completely demoralized, Mike finds he can't even afford gas to go and *look* for a job.
- Jeannette and Gunner – When Jeannette's husband died recently, she and her 11-year-old son Gunner were left to fend for themselves. Unable to keep their home, they slept in a garage and in their car before ending up in a shelter.

The experiences of the families in AMERICAN WINTER are a vivid illustration of what has been happening to families all across America, including working families losing their homes, people who remain jobless or underemployed, children going hungry, families getting their heat shut off in the dead of winter and people with health issues overwhelmed by medical costs.

AMERICAN WINTER is produced and directed by Emmy® Award-winning filmmakers Joe and Harry Gantz; co-producers, Aaron I. Butler and Devon Terrill; co-director, Harry Gantz; editor, Aaron I. Butler; music, Joel Goodman; directors of photography, Patrick Thelander and Dan Morris. The film was produced with support from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation whose mission is to transform lives and strengthen communities by fostering innovation, creating knowledge and promoting social progress.

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ABOUT THE INDIANA INSTITUTE FOR WORKING FAMILIES

The Indiana Institute for Working Families – a program of the Indiana Community Action Association (INCAA) – conducts research and promotes public policies to help Hoosier families achieve and maintain economic self-sufficiency. The Institute is the only statewide program in Indiana that combines research and policy analysis on federal and state legislation, public policies, and programs impacting low-income working families. The Institute achieves its work through advocacy and education, and through national, statewide, and community partnerships. The Institute was founded in 2004. To learn more about the Institute, please visit: www.incap.org/iwvf.html

ABOUT THE INDIANA COMMUNITY ACTION ASSOCIATION (IN-CAA)

The Indiana Community Action Association, Inc. (IN-CAA) is a statewide not-for-profit membership corporation, incorporated in the State of Indiana in 1970. IN-CAA's members are comprised of Indiana's 23 Community Action Agencies (CAAs), which serve all of Indiana's 92 counties. IN-CAA envisions a state with limited or no poverty, where its residents have decent, safe, and sanitary living conditions, and where resources are available to help low-income individuals attain self-sufficiency. IN-CAA serves as an advocate and facilitator of policy, planning and programs to create solutions and share responsibility as leaders in the War Against Poverty. IN-CAA's mission is to help the state's CAAs address the conditions of poverty through: training and technical assistance; developing models for service delivery; and providing resources to help increase network capacity. For more information about IN-CAA, please visit: www.incap.org



ABOUT THE INDIANAPOLIS FOUNDATION

Established in 1916, The Indianapolis Foundation was one of the first community trusts in America. The Foundation is a public charity and an affiliate of Central Indiana Community Foundation (CICF), a collaborative effort between the community foundations serving Marion and Hamilton Counties. As Indiana's oldest and largest community foundation, The Indianapolis Foundation was created to ensure that the quality of life in Marion County continuously improves; to help where the needs are greatest and the benefits to the community are most extensive; and to provide donors a vehicle for using their gifts in the best possible way now, and in the future as conditions in the community change. Six publicly appointed trustees govern The Indianapolis Foundation and make final grant decisions. To learn more about the foundation, please visit: <http://www.cicf.org/the-indianapolis-foundation>