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Program companion website:
<http://www.pbs.org/almosthome/>

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ALMOST HOME TO PREMIERE ON *INDEPENDENT LENS*
HOSTED BY EDIE FALCO
TUESDAY, JANUARY 31, AT 10 PM
(check local listings)

Warm and Inspiring, ALMOST HOME Chronicles a Year in the Life of a Milwaukee Nursing Home That Is Implementing a Revolutionary New Approach to the Challenge of Making a Nursing Home Feel Like Home

(San Francisco)—ALMOST HOME is a feature-length, cinema verité documentary chronicling a year in the life of a vibrant and revolutionary retirement community in America's Midwest. In January 2006, coinciding with the broadcast, the first wave of baby boomers turns 60. As the 76 million strong Boomer generation rounds that momentous corner, 50 percent of Americans will be reckoning with either their own aging or that of a loved one. ALMOST HOME, a co-presentation with Wisconsin Public Television, will air on *Independent Lens*, hosted by Edie Falco, on Tuesday, January 31, at 10 PM (check local listings). The film presents real stories of aging—frightening, tender, funny, surprising and honest.

The stories in ALMOST HOME unfold at Saint John's on the Lake in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, a retirement community (independent living, assisted living and nursing home) reinventing its 135-year-old medical model of care (think *hospital*) into a social one (think *home*). The visionaries behind this culture-change revolution seek to tear down traditional walls between residents, staff and families and to replace the stigma of nursing homes as institutions of boredom and despair with a vision of a community in which residents have choices and live rich and fulfilling lives. To succeed, they will have to win over skeptical managers, resistant nurses, overworked and underpaid nursing assistants, complacent residents, and families accustomed to being excluded from many of the decisions that affect them.

Told through memorable characters and true-life drama, ALMOST HOME gives viewers an inside and personal look into the lives of many residents, their families and those who care for them.



The film follows a wide range of people dealing with a wide range of issues: a husband and wife bonded by their struggle with Alzheimer's; another couple divided by the challenges of Parkinson's; "sandwich generation" children torn between caring for their parents, caring for their children and following their careers; nursing assistants doing crucial but unsavory work for low wages while juggling precarious lives at home; healthy seniors who fear the day they may have to move to the nursing home; and a visionary nursing home director feverishly working to alleviate such fear by transforming his impersonal, regimented, hospital-like institution into a warm home that promotes autonomy and inspires independence instead of fear.

Through these personal stories, the film explores several issues that have affected or will affect all of us, including coping with disability and dementia, adapting to how aging changes marriages and other relationships, negotiating caregiving responsibilities, preparing for the end of life, dealing with the economics of nursing home care, and searching for the best possible way to live out our final years. But far from being depressing, ALMOST HOME tells a surprising story that grips you from the start, never flinches from reality and offers hope where many think there is none.

ALMOST HOME is a co-production of 371 Productions and Wisconsin Public Television, produced in association with Independent Television Service (ITVS), with funding provided by the Helen Bader Foundation, the Jacob and Valeria Langeloth Foundation, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), the Fay McBeath Foundation, and with additional support from the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee's Peck School of the Arts.

A national outreach campaign will accompany the *Independent Lens* broadcast of ALMOST HOME. For information and outreach materials, visit www.almosthomedoc.org. The ALMOST HOME interactive companion website (www.pbs.org/independentlens/almosthome/) features detailed information on the film, an interview with the filmmakers, and links and resources pertaining to the film's subject matter. The site also features a Talkback section for viewers to share their ideas and opinions, preview clips of the film and more.

The images found in this release are available to the press as high resolution downloadable photos with captions at www.itvs.org/pressroom/photos/

PAGE 1:
Left: Ralph Nelson takes a walk in the Saint John's sculpture garden.
 Photo: Dick Blau/ITVS
Center: Enchantra Cosey talks to long-time resident Pauline Coggs about the day.
 Photo: Dick Blau/ITVS
Right: Nursing home director John George in the renovated home at Saint John's. Photo: Dick Blau/ITVS

PAGE 2:
Left: Nursing home resident Lloyd Herrold pauses to adjust his glasses.
 Photo: Dick Blau/ITVS
Center: Bob Haig jokes with the Saint John's staff.
 Photo: Dick Blau/ITVS
Right: Producers of ALMOST HOME, Brad Lichtenstein & Lisa Gildehaus.
 Photo: Dick Blau/ITVS

