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***East of Salinas* Premieres on *Independent Lens* Monday, December 28, 2015 on PBS**

A Story of Immigration, Childhood, and Circumstance



José Ansaldo.

Credit: Kate Schermerhorn

(San Francisco, CA) – ***East of Salinas*** is the story of a bright boy and his dedicated teacher — both sons of migrant farm workers. With parents who are busy working long hours in the fields, third grader José Ansaldo often turns to his teacher, Oscar Ramos, for guidance. But José was born in Mexico. And he's on the cusp of understanding what that means for his future. For José and many migrant children like him, the film poses the question: What is lost when promising kids are denied opportunities through no fault of their own? Produced and directed by Laura Pacheco and Jackie Mow, *East of Salinas* premieres on *Independent Lens* Monday, December 28, 2015, 10:00-11:00 PM ET ([check local listings](#)) on PBS.

East of Salinas follows José and his teacher over three years. We learn about the boy and the man: one is full of energy, smarts and potential; the other grew up as a farm kid himself and now wants to give back to a new generation of migrant children.

Every September, Oscar Ramos gets a new class of third grade students at Sherwood Elementary School, in the heart of Salinas Valley, California. Their parents work from sunup to sundown. Many of the kids have never been to the beach, even though it's only twenty miles away. They live in cramped apartments in neighborhoods plagued by gang violence. And they take on the day-to-day stresses of their parents: making ends meet, dealing with acute health issues often without insurance, fearing deportation.

José Ansaldo is one of Oscar's most gifted students. He's been to seven schools in three years and his family shares their one-bedroom apartment with another family. How do you educate children who come to school hungry, who have no place to do their homework, and whose families move every few months? Despite the challenges, Oscar gives them access to a world that often seems beyond their reach.

But Oscar can only do so much. For José, a student with such promise, *East of Salinas* demonstrates the cruelty of circumstance. As the film plays out, we understand the lost opportunities for the millions of migrant kids in America.



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“With warmth and a hard dose of reality, *East of Salinas* reveals what immigration looks like for one undocumented eight-year-old boy with a gift for numbers,” said Lois Vossen, executive producer of *Independent Lens*. “This film captures the aspirations of a dedicated teacher and a gifted student, and shows how today’s debate around immigration feels to people wondering if they will get to share in the American Dream.”

Visit the *East of Salinas* film page (<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens>), which features information about the film.

About the Filmmakers

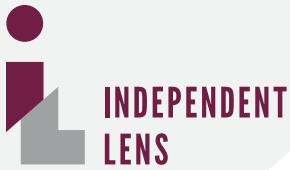
Laura Pacheco (Producer/Director) is an award-winning filmmaker, trained anthropologist, and media activist. She likes to take on big issues such as public health, justice, and the environment using personal narrative to do the storytelling. Many of her projects use film to encourage conversation. In the Emmy Award-winning series *Rx for Survival* (PBS), she followed a young woman dying of drug resistant TB in the slums of Lima, Peru. In Kentucky, she followed evangelical Christians protesting mountaintop removal in *Renewal*, a film on faith and the environment. In the US, she worked with MoveOn.org to create a film and animation series that questioned the changing roles of motherhood in America. Her films have taken her to the jungles of Guatemala, the rivers of West Africa, and to the tops of the Himalayas and have been shown on PBS, Discovery, The National Geographic Channel, international climate talks, and in classrooms around the world.

Jackie Mow (Producer/Director) began her career producing news in France, chasing ambulances for TV news in New Mexico, and reporting for the BBC in Boston. Passionate about science and education, she eventually landed a job at NOVA, the PBS flagship science series. She went on to produce and direct for National Geographic, the Discovery Channel, and PBS Kids. She made films with a great diversity of subjects: the dog genome, Arctic dinosaurs, tunnel engineering, and more. Then she worked on *World in the Balance*, a NOVA film about population policy that took her to a Nairobi slum. There she profiled a young woman with HIV who was caring for her five orphaned siblings. She went on to work on several projects exploring the psychology of adolescent girls and women including *A Girl's Life*, a documentary focusing on personal stories of cyber-bullying, violence, and body image.

CREDITS

Produced and Directed by	Laura Pacheco and Jackie Mow
Director of Photography	Jackie Mow
Edited by	Rachel Clark
Music by	Joseph Julian Gonzalez
Additional Cinematography	Samantha Grant Vicente Franco Jason Blalock





Sound Recordists

Laura Pacheco
Ray Day
Todd Dayton
Phil Turner
Mario Furioni
Jessie Beers-Altman
Sally Jo Fifer
Sandie Viquez Pedlow

Additional Editing
Executive Producer for ITVS
Executive Producer for LPB

East of Salinas is a co-production of Rock Salt Creative, LLC and Independent Television Service (ITVS), produced in association with Latino Public Broadcasting, with major funding provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

About Latino Public Broadcasting

[Latino Public Broadcasting](#) (LPB) is the leader in the development, production, acquisition, and distribution of non-commercial educational and cultural media that is representative of Latino people, or addresses issues of particular interest to Latino Americans. These programs are produced for dissemination to public broadcasting stations and other public telecommunication entities. Latino Public Broadcasting provides a voice to the diverse Latino community throughout the United States and is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Latino Public Broadcasting produces the series *VOCES*, PBS's signature Latino arts and culture documentary showcase and the only ongoing national television series devoted to exploring and celebrating the rich diversity of the Latino cultural experience. Between 2009 and 2014, LPB programs won 85 awards, including the prestigious George Foster Peabody Award as well as two Emmys, two Imagen Awards, and the Sundance Film Festival Award for Best Director, Documentary. In addition, LPB has been the recipient of the Norman Lear Legacy Award and the NCLR Alma Award for Special Achievement – Year in Documentaries.

About *Independent Lens*

Independent Lens is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing on PBS Monday nights at 10:00 PM. The acclaimed series features documentaries united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of independent filmmakers. Presented by Independent Television Service, the series is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding from PBS and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. For more visit pbs.org/independentlens. Join the conversation: [facebook.com/independentlens](https://www.facebook.com/independentlens) and on Twitter [@IndependentLens](https://twitter.com/IndependentLens).

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