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For the program companion website, visit pbs.org/independentlens/welcome-to-shelbyville

**WELCOME TO SHELBYVILLE VISITS A SMALL SOUTHERN TOWN WHERE
LONGTIME RESIDENTS AND NEW IMMIGRANTS SEARCH
FOR A WAY TO BUILD A COMMUNITY**

Film Premieres on the PBS Series *Independent Lens*, Tuesday, May 24, 2011 AT 10 PM

(San Francisco, CA)— *Welcome to Shelbyville* is a rare, inside look at America at a crossroads. In a small Tennessee town in the heart of the Bible Belt, a community grapples with rapidly changing demographics. Just a stone's throw away from Pulaski, Tennessee (the birthplace of the Ku Klux Klan), Shelbyville's longtime African American and white residents are challenged with how best to integrate with a burgeoning Latino population and the more recent arrival of hundreds of Somali refugees of Muslim faith. Set on the eve of the 2008 Presidential election, the film captures the interaction between Shelbyville's old and new residents as they search for a way to live together during that tumultuous, history-changing year. Produced and directed by Kim Snyder, *Welcome to Shelbyville* will air nationally on the Emmy® Award-winning PBS series *Independent Lens*, hosted by America Ferrera, on Tuesday, May 24, 2011 at 10 PM (check local listings).

The economy was in crisis, factories were closing, and jobs were hard to find. The local Tyson chicken plant was hiring hundreds of new Somali refugees, and when a local reporter initiated a series of articles about these newcomers, a flurry of controversy and debate erupted within the town. Just as the town's Latino population began to grapple with their own immigrant identity, African American residents looked back at their segregated past, balancing perceived threats to their livelihood and security against the values that they learned through their own long struggle for civil rights. While the newcomers, mostly of Muslim faith, attempt to make new lives for themselves and their children, leaders in this deeply religious community attempt to guide their



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congregations through this period of unprecedented change. Through the vibrant and colorful characters of Shelbyville, the film explores immigrant integration and the interplay between race, religion, and identity in a changing America, creating an intimate portrayal of a community's struggle to understand what it means to be American.

To learn more about the film, and the issues involved, visit the companion website for *Welcome to Shelbyville* at www.pbs.org/independentlens/welcome-to-shelbyville. Get detailed information on the film, watch preview clips, read an interview with the filmmaker, and explore the subject in depth with links and resources. The site also features a Talkback section where viewers can share their ideas and opinions.

About the Filmmaker

Kim Snyder (Director/Producer)

Kim Snyder is an award-winning filmmaker with over a dozen shorts and two feature documentaries. Her most recent film, *Welcome to Shelbyville*, is a recipient of a 2010 Gucci-Tribeca Documentary Fund grant and an official selection of the U.S. State Department's 2010 American Documentary Showcase. Snyder co-created the BeCause Foundation, directing and producing its first three short documentaries which have won numerous festival awards and been the catalyst for campaigns that have furthered the work of the social innovators they highlight.

Snyder directed and produced the award-winning documentary *I Remember Me* (Best Documentary, Denver International Film Festival, Honorable Mention Hamptons International Film Festival, Audience Award runner-up Sarasota Film Festival), which was distributed theatrically by Zeitgeist Films. She has also written numerous articles for *Variety*. In 1994, Snyder associate produced the Academy Award®-winning short film *Trevor*, which became the cornerstone of The Trevor Project, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to suicide prevention among gay youth. Snyder served on the admissions review committee for NYU's Graduate Film Program, and has been a producer's rep for several critically acclaimed foreign films including *Crows* (New Yorker Films) directed by Dorota Kedzierzawska. Snyder graduated with a master's degree in international affairs from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.

About Independent Lens

Independent Lens is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing on PBS. The acclaimed anthology series features documentaries and a limited number of fiction films united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of their independent producers. *Independent Lens* features unforgettable stories about unique individuals, communities, and moments in history. Presented by the Independent Television Service (ITVS), the series is supported by interactive companion websites and national publicity and community engagement campaigns. *Independent Lens* is jointly curated by ITVS and PBS, and is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS and the National Endowment for the Arts. The series producer is Lois Vossen.

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