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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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GIFFORD FOUNDATION PRESENTS FREE FILMS ON COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

The “What if...” Film Series showcases national community efforts to improve quality of life.

(Syracuse, NY) The Gifford Foundation announces the “**What if...**” **Film Series**, a free presentation of films about community revitalization efforts around the United States. Each film documents the successes and struggles communities have experienced – and their varying methods of revitalizing these neighborhoods, from murals and gardens to community activism. There will be a total of three films shown over the course of five presentations from **March 31st to May 12th at the Red House Arts Center**.

“We travel to conferences and read newsletters about how other communities have successfully improved their neighborhoods,” notes Kathy Goldfarb-Findling, executive director. “Each time we usually ask ourselves ‘what if this could be done in Syracuse?’ Here’s an opportunity for people to look at some of the exciting projects taking place in other communities, and imagine if something similar is possible for our city.”

Each of the hour long film showings is free and no reservations are required; each will also be followed by a moderated discussion. The three films and their presentation dates and times are:

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Holding Ground: The Rebirth of Dudley Street, an award-winning documentary about community vision, struggle and change, will be shown **Wednesday March 31st at 7:00 pm**. Through the voices of committed residents, activists and city officials, this one-hour documentary shows how a Boston neighborhood was able to create and carry out its own agenda for change. “This terrific documentary – at once a moving history and a hopeful battle-cry – will come like rain in a dry season to communities all over the nation,” Jonathan Kozol. The Boston Globe termed the film “inspirational.”

Philadelphia: The Holy Experiment will be shown twice: **Wednesday April 7 and Monday April 19th, both dates at 7:00 pm**. Hosted by actor David Morse, the film describes how concerned citizens like activists Doris Gualtney and Iris Brown, muralist Jane Golden, sculptor Lily Yeh, musician Kenny Gamble, gardener Mary Corby, restaurateur Judy Wicks, grieving father Ed Elliss, and the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society’s “Philly Green” initiative have all combined to grow a new title — “Farmadelphia” — for the city. “The inspiring story of ordinary citizens ... who have stepped forward to improve the quality of life in their communities. [The filmmakers] highlight practical solutions and models for urban transformation that go beyond pollution prevention to tackle the challenge of improving the quality of life in cities for ourselves and future generations.” — *Chelsea Green Publishing*

ABCD in Action, which profiles five diverse groups who have utilized the principles of Asset Based Community Development to create partnerships with those they serve and in effect, rejuvenate and revitalize their organizations, will also have two showings: **Monday May 3rd and Wednesday May 12th, both at 7:00 pm**. Included are profiles from agencies and neighborhood associations in Savannah, Georgia; Ames, Iowa; Marquette, Michigan; New Hampshire and Asheville, North Carolina. The DVD outlines a practical approach to creating community collaborations that work, covering such topics as “Discovering What People Care About,” “Mobilizing A Community’s Assets,” “People & Programs: We Need Both,” “Leading By Stepping Back: The Role Of Governments & Agencies,” and “Inclusion: There Is No One We Do Not Need.”

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For further information about the **“What If…” Film Series** please contact Lindsay McClung at lmccclung@giffordfd.org or by phone at 315-474-2489. Details are also available on the Foundation website (www.giffordfd.org) or Facebook page (www.facebook.com/giffordfoundation.)

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