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## THE SAWYER FREE LIBRARY TO HOST FILM AND DISCUSSION SERIES ON IMMIGRATION AND DIVERSITY IN TODAY'S AMERICA

**For Immediate Release** (November 1, 2019) Gloucester, MA - - This November, the **Sawyer Free Library's** (SFL) will host "**Voices from the Margins: A Film and Conversation Series on Immigration.**" As a part of the Library's new initiative, "**The Civic Hub,**" this three-part series will feature the screen of award-winning documentaries and expert-led speaking programs. Its purpose is to encourage an informed discussion of immigration issues against the backdrop of Gloucester's ever-growing, culturally diverse community. The series, which is free and open to the public, begins Wednesday, November 6, at 6:30 p.m. and will continue for the following two Wednesday evenings.

"**Voices from the Margin**" is designed to engage and enlighten audiences as well as stimulate community engagement in challenging conversations on immigration," said Beth Pocock, SFL's Assistant Director. "It is also our hope that the program enhances a broader understanding and appreciation of diversity in the greater Cape Ann community, and more broadly, the United States."

With a grant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, SFL recently launched "The Civic Hub." It is the goal this initiative will create a sense of space and community within the Library for civic reflection, dialogue, and engagement by offering informed issued oriented public programs and opportunities for discussion on topics that are meaningful to the community. *Immigration and its impact on Gloucester* is the first of the three topics The Civic Hub will explore. Events include the following:

### **Wednesday, November 6 / *A Cry for Justice: The Challenges of Immigration Presentation & Discussion***

Human rights advocates, Jeanne Gallo and Sunny Robinson, a former long-time public health nurse in Gloucester, will present and discuss the current US immigration policy. Having been to the US-Mexico border in November 2018, they met with human rights workers, the families of the disappeared, DACA and other youth, as well as visited Annunciation House in El Paso. Stating with an overview of US involvement in Latin America, they will use the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the US asylum laws as the framework for how they propose US immigration ought to and could be.

### **Wednesday, November 13 / *Why are so many coming?***

#### **Screening of *Between Borders: American Migrant Crisis & The Other Side of Immigration***

In 2014, 90,000 unaccompanied minors made the treacherous journey from Central America to the United States. No longer are people simply fleeing poverty, now they are fleeing for their lives from the violence. Filmmakers Brent and Craig Renaud document the journey in *Between Borders: American Migrant Crisis* (30 mins). *The Other Side of Immigration* (50 min) tries to offer some insight as to why so many Mexican immigrants leave behind their family and homes in search for a new life in the United States and shows what happens to the communities left behind. Following the screening of the documentaries, there will be a moderated discussion with Kelsy-Watts, a volunteer for the humanitarian organization, No More Death, whose mission is to end death and suffering in the US-Mexico borderlands through civil initiative.

### **Wednesday, November 20 / *Changing the Conversation & Looking Ahead***

Denzil Mohammed of The Immigrant Learning Center and Amy Grunder of the Massachusetts Immigration and Refugee Advocacy Coalition will share their insight on changing perceptions of today's immigrants. They will discuss the ways their organizations are working to promote the fact that immigrants are critical assets to America. Working to change perceptions of today's immigrants, Both organizations work to improve the rights and integration of immigrants and refugees and to give them a voice and help them become successful workers, parents, and community members.

The "Voices from the Margin" programming will take place at the Sawyer Free Library located at 2 Dale Avenue in Gloucester from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. They are all free and open to the public.

Also, in November, the SFL will be unveiling, in collaboration with Wellspring House, a powerful exhibit **"Portraits of Cape Ann Immigrants."** This collection of photos and first-hand stories of Wellspring House's Adult Education Program students will highlight the diverse, powerful, and inspirational experiences of some of our recent immigrants to Cape Ann and celebrates their stories of resilience and hope.

SFL's "The Civic Hub" has been made possible in part with federal funds provided by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and administrated by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. For more information on The Civic Hub's programs, please visit [sawyerfreelibrary.org](http://sawyerfreelibrary.org).

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About the SFL:

Gloucester Lyceum and Sawyer Free Library Inc. serves the information and cultural needs of Gloucester's residents of all ages as it has for over 175 years. Today, the Gloucester Lyceum & Sawyer Free Library continues as a public charitable corporation as designated under a charter granted by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts on June 10, 1872. Its purpose remains to provide equal access to quality resources that serve the lifelong cultural, educational, and informational needs and interests of all people. It's guiding mission is to be a place of learning, innovation, and creativity to nurture and strengthen the community. Each year, S.F.L. hosts hundreds of programs and serves thousands of people. All of its programs and exhibitions are free and open to the public. To learn more, visit [sawyerfreelibrary.org](http://sawyerfreelibrary.org)