



MERAGE FOUNDATION FOR THE AMERICAN DREAM

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Award-Winning DVD Series Inspires Young Immigrants to Achieve their American Dream

The February release of a compilation edition of the award-winning American Dream DVD series helps personalize the immigrant experience for High School students in over 36,000 classrooms across the country. The series, which has won a Telly, the International Film and Video Silver Screen Award, an Accolade, and the Videographer Awards Award of Excellence, examines the American Dream concept through the history of immigration to the United States and the narratives of prominent immigrant citizens and their outstanding contributions to America.

This month 36,000 teachers and students received a compilation of the American Dream DVD series in the February editions of Scholastic's *Upfront*®, *ScholasticAction*®, and *Choices*® magazines. The DVD series, which was created and produced by the Merage Foundation for the American Dream, in association with Dewey Obenchain Films, and in cooperation with Scholastic, provides young people with positive role models and inspires them to define and work toward their own American Dream.

The DVD series features an overview of US immigration, a spotlight on the Mexican immigration experience, and focused pieces on specific successful immigrants like former New York Times Editor Jack Rosenthal who recounts the effects of the Holocaust on his Jewish family, the award-winning Chilean author Isabel Allende famous for her magical realism novels, and Jenny Ming whose immigration from China led to her eventual success as president of the popular Old Navy clothing brand. Also highlighted are the NBA basketball professional from Mexico Eduardo Nájera, Jamaican scholar Orlando Patterson famous for his studies of race-relations, culture, and class in the US, and Dr. David Ho who emigrated from Taiwan and now conducts cutting-edge AIDS research. In addition the series includes a special selection of Merage Fellows—outstanding immigrant students sponsored by the Foundation upon graduation from one of their partner universities to help pursue their American Dreams.

The circulation of these 36,000 new compilation DVDs greatly expands the distribution of the standards-based American Dream DVD series which has been used in 1,200 high school classrooms nationwide since 2004. An online teacher survey showed that all of the respondents who are already using the series in their classrooms plan to continue doing so. Similarly, all the respondents agreed that the activities proposed in the accompanying educational materials were either “very effective” or “reasonably effective” in encouraging discussion about immigration in

the classroom. The vast majority of the respondents believe the series helped their students understand the positive impact of immigrants on America. A couple of the teachers surveyed responded:

“The new Mexican Immigration Experience DVD was awesome for liberating my students from their fixed views.”

“Showing [my students] others like them that have ‘made it’ is a very powerful motivator.”

The Merage Foundation for the American Dream was established by Paul and Lilly Merage, both immigrants to the United States. In establishing this Foundation, they hope to help new Americans achieve their American Dream and contribute to America. Paul and Lilly also hope to increase understanding of the positive impact that immigration has had on America. The Foundation inspires young immigrants to achieve their American Dream and become leaders in their communities and in the nation. It encourages Americans to recognize and celebrate immigrants’ contributions to the United States. It fosters nonpartisan discussion of key immigration issues facing the United States.

To learn more about the Merage Foundation for the American Dream, the American Dream DVD series, and the Foundation’s other initiatives, please visit their website at <http://www.meragefoundations.com/mfad.html>. Free copies of the American Dream DVD series are available to teachers and community organizations through the website.

American Dream Experience DVD Series Screen Shots:



Jenny Ming



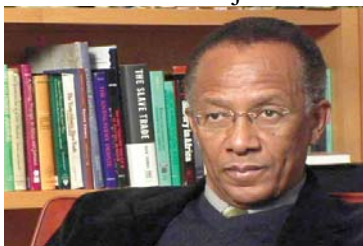
Jack Rosenthal



Eduardo Nájera



Isabel Allende



Orlando Patterson



David Ho

Photos used in “The Mexican Immigration Experience” DVD:



A family of Walnut pickers from Northern California, 1983
(California Historical Society)



United Farm Workers strike near Oxnard, California, 1966
(California Historical Society)



Children play in a Barrio with downtown Los Angeles in the background, 1946
(USC Digital Archive)



Immigrant Rights rally in Philadelphia, 2006
(Immigrant Solidarity Network)