



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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***DETROIT RISING TO HAVE VIRTUAL WORLD PREMIERE***

*The new docuseries spotlights the Black-led movement in Detroit's classrooms, courts, and executive boardrooms to restore relationships and repair harm at a time of racial reckoning in America.*

DETROIT, MICHIGAN -- *DETROIT RISING*, a new docuseries highlighting the pioneering, restorative practices work of Black civic leaders in Detroit will have its virtual World Premiere on **Tuesday, July 14, 2020 at 3 p.m. EDT.**

Black Family Development Inc. (BFDI), BFDI Training Institute (BTI), the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP), Kresge Foundation, and Building a New Reality (dot com) are sponsoring the event.

"In the wake of George Floyd's death, Detroit was among a handful of cities in the United States that didn't experience an outbreak of violence," says Henry McClendon, a lifelong resident and community leader whose family tragedy ignited his vision of Detroit as a restorative city.

"When we embrace restorative practices, we can build community," Henry continues. "We have hope as a result of the restorative practices we are employing. Never waste a crisis."

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*DETROIT RISING: HOW THE MOTOR CITY BECOMES A RESTORATIVE CITY* is a five-part docuseries that follows Kerra Bolton, a Black American writer, and recovering idealist, who witnesses the power and potency of restorative practices to repair harm, restore relationships, and build community in nearly every sector of Detroit.

The virtual launch of the series will feature two episodes followed by a conversation with the series' protagonists, including members of law enforcement, the court system, clergy, and nonprofit sector.

Through restorative practices, the series' protagonists are dismantling entrenched policies that foster distance and avoidance while simultaneously building an ecosystem of connection and community.

"What's happening now is about redressing centuries of harm," said Alice Thompson, CEO of Black Family Development Inc. (BFDI) Educational Services who is featured in the docuseries. "In Detroit, we have all the right ingredients for strengthening relationships and community building. To make something like this happen, you need the mayor's support, the support of the philanthropic and corporate sectors, the community and for everyone to come together around a single vision for Detroit."

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The docuseries is executive produced by Restorative Practices pioneer [Ted Wachtel](#), produced by CNN Contributor [Kerra Bolton](#), and directed by award-winning restorative practices documentarian, [Cassidy Friedman](#).

"You cannot have reconciliation without the reckoning," Bolton says. "But a reckoning doesn't have to be destructive. With restorative practices, you can have a 'revolution by conversation.' You can hear someone else's truth and allow yourself to heal and be changed by it."

*DETROIT RISING* gives parents, educators, and activists who are working toward transformative justice, on small and large scales, an adaptable blueprint for an approach that works.

"This is what healing looks like," says DETROIT RISING Executive Producer Ted Wachtel.

After founding IIRP, the world's largest restorative practices organization, Ted envisioned the series as a way of launching his new initiative, [buildinganewreality.com](#), which is geared toward bringing restorative practices into the mainstream.

"By sharing the powerful stories of self-determination coming out of Detroit," Wachtel says. "I want to show people that we have a living model for how as Americans we can reshape our society. Through understanding, healing from harm, and igniting conversations about what practices can be adapted to create accountability and harmony in schools and communities across the U.S., and beyond."

For interviews with Kerra Bolton, Henry McClendon, Alice Thompson, Ted Wachtel, Commander Eric Ewing, Benita Cheatom, Cassidy Friedman, or to attend the world premiere, contact: [kerrabolton@gmail.com](mailto:kerrabolton@gmail.com) or [cassidy@storiesmattermedia.com](mailto:cassidy@storiesmattermedia.com).

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## **ABOUT THE SERIES**

*DETROIT RISING* is the first docuseries produced by [Buildinganewreality.com](#).

Founded by Ted and Susan Wachtel, Building a New Reality (BANR) is a non-partisan, evidence-based, social movement that promotes revolution by conversation to advocate for democracy in everyday life.

The organization fosters a variety of learning experiences to encourage participatory learning, decision-making, and action.

**Ted Wachtel and Susan Wachtel** (Executive Producers) are the founders of Building a New Reality (dot com), the International Institute of Restorative Practices, Real Justice, the Community Service Foundation, and Buxmont Academy. A visionary educator and author based in eastern Pennsylvania, Ted Wachtel, has dedicated his life to cultivating ways to repair harm, restore relationships, and build social capital. He also established Safer, Saner Schools, Family Power, and Good Company.

**Kerra Bolton** (Producer), is a writer and filmmaker, specializing in narrative change as a means to spark and drive critical conversations about race, identity, and social history. An award-winning journalist and former CNN contributor, Bolton has documented the impact of U.S. migration on small Mexican towns and cities and post-Apartheid health care in South Africa. She is based in Mexico.

**Cassidy Friedman** (Director/Co-Producer) is a San Francisco-based filmmaker who specializes in directing and producing award-winning character-driven documentaries that highlight unsung social justice pioneers of our time. CIRCLES, his critically-acclaimed, feature documentary premiered at Hot Docs Canadian International Film Festival and distributed by Lionsgate Films. Friedman also produced VOICES BEYOND THE WALL with Executive Producer James Franco, and SOLEDAD (in post-production) with Oscar-winning Producer Glen Zipper and Associate Producer and national prison reform advocate Van Jones.

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## ABOUT OUR SPONSORS

[Black Family Development Inc.](#) was founded in 1978 by the Detroit Chapter of the National Association of Black Social Workers. The mission of BFDI is, “To strengthen and enhance the lives of children, youth, and families through partnerships that support safe, nurturing, vibrant homes, schools, and communities.” The organization currently has a strong focus on promoting community engagement, neighborhood safety, supporting the needs of boys and young men of color, and achieving results by making long- term impact that supports and strengthens family life through a range of comprehensive behavior health programs.

[BFDI Training Institute](#) provides evidence-based restorative practices training and coaching that explore multiple facets of including circles, restorative justice, family engagement and empowerment, restorative parenting, and listening circles. The Institute’s training has proven to reduce suspensions and transform climates and cultures.

[The International Institute for Restorative Practices \(IIRP\) Graduate School](#) is the world’s first graduate school wholly devoted to restorative practices. Its faculty — all scholar/practitioners — are dedicated to helping individuals find new ways to empower people and transform communities.

[The Kresge Foundation](#) is a philanthropic private foundation headquartered in Troy, Michigan that works to expand opportunities in America’s cities through grantmaking and investing in arts and culture, education, environment, health, human services, and community development efforts in Detroit.