

Walk Right In

The story of the Yale Summer High School

Press Kit



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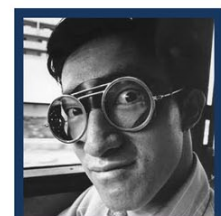
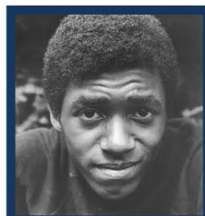
"Yale Summer High School this past summer was the greatest experience I have ever had. It was authentic-like with women, radicals and all kinds of people. It was scary, but that's the way life is in the United States. "

— Lupe, Corpus Christi, TX

BASIC INFORMATION

Producer, Co-Director:	Larry Paros
Co-Director, Editor:	Amy Enser
Associate Producers:	Marth Christensen, Eric Morgret
Original Music:	Jeff Tolbert
Running Time:	85:40
Print Details:	Color and B/W Stereo
Film Sound:	Dolby SR

Available in HDCAM, DigiBeta and DVD Formats
Not Rated, Completed 2010



SYNOPSIS

Walk Right In captures the stories of a unique educational experiment at Yale University through interviews with its participants—40 years later.

Created as part of the war on poverty with a mandate to address issues of social and economic injustice, The Yale Summer High School brought underprivileged kids from across the nation to the Yale Divinity School during the 1960s. In 1968, as American cities and campuses were rife with protest, racial rioting and civil disorder, a small group of educators redefined the enterprise, creating a living laboratory in the problems and promise of the American democracy.

Drawing on the 'Great Books' of Western literature, the school made these classics relevant to the times and lives of its students, bringing sensitive issues of race, tolerance and personal identity to the fore.

From Sophocles' *Antigone* to Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, they searched together for that which eluded the nation—a working definition of "community"—the shared values that ground people and bind them together.

Four decades after leaving Yale, Larry Paros-former Director of the Yale Summer High School traveled the country to interview more than two dozen of his fellow teachers, tutors and students about how they each experienced the Summer High School in 1968. How did it affect their attitude towards learning? How have their experiences impacted their lives? What lessons from that summer would they most like to share with today's students and educators?

A compelling and deeply personal narrative of education and individual transformation, *Walk Right In* recreates the summer of '68 through firsthand accounts, following students from their moment of selection and their arrival on campus to the culmination of the program and where they are today, reminding us of the importance of inclusive and effective education and the impact it has across generations.



ABOUT THE FILM



One of the goals of the school was to assist students to realize their dream through continuing their education beyond high school. For that to happen, they first had to clarify their own identity and sense of purpose, not in isolation but in the context of the current social and political reality. This was no simple task. The year 1968 was a time of great stress and confusion. The nation was in crisis. The Viet-Nam war was raging; Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy had been assassinated; student protests filled the campuses of America, and our largest cities were wracked with racial rioting and civil disorder. Against that backdrop, students and teachers came together to create a new and very different kind of school—a safe and inviting setting in which people could express themselves in both an emotionally charged social and academic context.

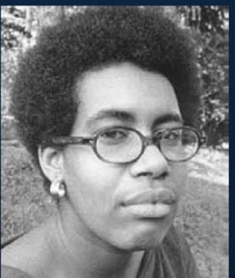
Not unlike the crisis of confidence we face today, the Yale Summer High School in 1968 serves as a model of what is possible in contemporary school reform; a reminder of how far we have regressed as a culture, raising questions which still trouble us today—our commitment to social justice and visions of community we entertained so seriously more than 40 years ago. It is a message of hope and possibility.



The film was inspired in part by a call from a former student in the Seattle area, who encouraged director Larry Paros to create a website and search out others who had shared in the experience. Hours of googling and internet searches turned up dozens of former participants. This, in turn, led to a series of phone conversations, and ultimately, the decision to visit these people to piece together their memories of that summer and the role it played in their lives.

The project received further impetus when the U.S. Supreme Court rejected school integration approaches in Seattle and Louisville. At that time, a column in *The New York Times* lamented the end of integration as the passing of a beautiful dream. The casual dismissal of that goal angered Larry. It's not just a dream, he thought. This is what America is about.

His goal became to create a film on the YSHS refuting the thesis of that article—to provide a beacon of hope and possibility and a model of what an ideal integrated educational community might look like. Larry emptied his bank account, bought a Sony HD Camcorder, lighting and sound equipment, loaded it all into a large molded golf case, and together with videographer Mike Manor, made four trips around the country filming interviews with sixteen former students and eight former staff.



Upon recruiting such talent as BJ Bullert, Seattle documentary filmmaker and teacher at Antioch; Eric Mogret and Marth Christensen of Maelstrom Productions; and Amy Enser, owner of Higher Ames Productions; the aggressive film venture has matured into the powerful feature documentary, *Walk Right In*—and we encourage everyone to do just that.

THE TEAM

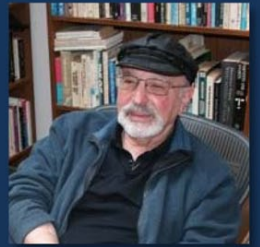
Larry Paros: Producer, Co-Director, Writer

Larry Paros completed his undergraduate work at the University of Massachusetts and his work for his doctorate at Yale. He has an extensive background in Education and Human Services, both as a teacher and administrator. As an educational innovator, he created and directed two experimental schools which gained widespread recognition and later replicated at more than 125 sites nationwide. Under the aegis of the U.S. Department of Labor, he also supervised the development of a nationwide network of neighborhood-based inner city group homes for "at risk" youth, and at Yale University, headed up a unique project for talented students from poverty backgrounds. He later directed an inner city anti-poverty agency, the centerpiece of which was an innovative community center for appropriate technology.

Paros is also a professional writer, and authority on language. His published works include numerous publications on education and etymology. A former op-ed page columnist for the Seattle Post Intelligencer and commentator on KUOW-FM, he most recently wrote, directed, and produced "The Journey", a film documenting the history of an immigrant family's trek from Russia to America in the early 20th century.

Amy Enser: Co-Director/Editor

Amy Enser is an accomplished film and video editor residing in Seattle. Attempting to break traditional narrative storytelling, Amy focuses on pieces within the documentary genre that push the boundaries of conventional black and white thought and offer multi-faceted perspectives on socially conscious, relevant stories. Amy's first feature documentary, *The Descendants Project*, was an all-female collaborative effort about 3rd and 4th generation descendants of the Holocaust and the educational relevance of such major historical events. Her short film *Seattle in Color* won the city of Seattle's "I am Seattle" Award, and was an official selection of the Seattle International Film Festival in 2007. Amy was also an editor on the award winning short, *Ars Magna*, which won the PBS Documentary Spirit I POV Short Film Award in 2008.



Marth Christensen: Associate Producer

Marth brings his management experience and team-building talents to filmmaking process. He is the Business Manager and co-owner of Maelstrom Productions LLC, a Seattle film production company. As a Boeing software and systems engineering manager, Marth has led groups on several satellite development programs and on the development of the International Space Station for NASA in Houston. He is also Treasurer of Globalroots, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, dedicated to supporting grass roots humanitarian efforts around the planet. (www.globalroots.org)

Eric Morgret: Associate Producer

Eric brings his creative imagination to the project. He is Director/Producer and co-owner of Maelstrom Productions LLC, a Seattle film production Company (www.maelstromproductions.com). He was director and co-producer on their first film in 2006, *Strange Aeons: The Thing on the Doorstep*, which is available on Netflix. He is a graduate of the Art Institute of Seattle and of TheFilmSchool in Seattle, an intensive screenwriting and directing workshop, conducted by experienced filmmakers, actors and writers. Eric has established the Maelstrom International Fantastic Film Festival, the Pacific Northwest's new premiere weekend long event devoted towards independent and international genre filmmaking.



B. J. Bullert: Consulting Producer

B. J. Bullert, Ph.D., is an advisor to the production team. She is on the Core Faculty at the Center for Creative Change, Antioch University Seattle where she directs the Masters' program in Communication. B. J. is a documentary filmmaker who has produced and directed seven documentaries that aired on public TV, including *Chief Seattle*, *Earl Robinson: Ballad of an American*, and *Fishermen's Terminal*. She is also the author of *Public Television: Politics and the Battle Over Documentary Film* (Rutgers University Press, 1997)



Jeff Tolbert: Composer

In addition to "Walk Right In," Jeff has also scored the documentary "Modern View," and a number of short films, including "Safe Passage," "Skip Cadence," and "Facing the Dragon." He has also composed the music for a number of videos including one for PATH, the global health initiative to combat malaria, as well as the tracks for Moviemaker magazine's Sundance Family podcast. A multi-talented musician, Jeff plays bass, guitar, and keyboards, along with trombone, ukulele and miscellaneous percussion. As a bass player, he's performed in numerous bands, including What Fell?, the Goat-Footed Senators, The Diary of Anne Frank String Quartet, 80 Bones, the Penelopies, and the Fireproof Beauties. Currently, he's playing bass with Seattle blues guitarist James Howard and singer/songwriter Tiger Zane.

