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**“The Way We Get By,” Acclaimed Documentary About the Famous Troop Greeters of Bangor, Maine, to Screen on Capitol Hill Wednesday, Sept. 30, 2009**

Flight After Flight of War-bound and Returning GIs Are Met by a Determined Band of Patriotic Senior Citizens

Maine Senators Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins, Maine Representatives Michael Michaud and Chellie Pingree Sponsor Event;  
Filmmakers, Troop Greeters to Attend  
Remarks by Dr. Jill Biden

***MEDIA ALERT – FACT SHEET***

**What:** As part of President Obama's United We Serve initiative, the USO, Operation Homefront and HandsOn Network are proud to present the highly acclaimed POV (Point of View) documentary **The Way We Get By** at a special Capitol Hill screening, followed by Q&A with filmmakers Aron Gaudet and Gita Pullapilly. Introductory remarks by Dr. Jill Biden.

**When:** Wednesday, Sept. 30  
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

**Where:** United States Capitol  
North Orientation Theater  
Capitol Visitor Center  
Washington, DC 20515

Map and directions: <http://www.visitthecapitol.gov/Visit/Getting%20to%20the%20Capitol/>

**Who:** Dr. Jill Biden  
Maine Troop greeters Joan Gaudet, Bill Knight and Jerry Mundy.  
U.S. Senator Olympia J. Snowe (R-Maine)  
U.S. Senator Susan M. Collins (R-Maine)  
U.S. Representative Michael Michaud (D-Maine)  
U.S. Representative Chellie Pingree (D-Maine)  
Sloan D. Gibson, President and Chief Executive Officer, USO  
Points of Light Institute Michelle Nunn, CEO, and Co-Founder, HandsOn Network  
Filmmakers Aron Gaudet and Gita Pullapilly  
Stan Soloway, Board Member, Corporation for National and Community Service  
Patricia de Stacy Harrison, President and CEO, Corporation for Public Broadcasting

Simon Kilmurry, Executive Director, American Documentary | POV

**The Film:** On call 24 hours a day for the past five years, a group of senior citizens has made history by greeting more than 900,000 American troops at a tiny airport in Bangor, Maine. **The Way We Get By** is an intimate look at three of these greeters as they confront the universal losses that come with aging and rediscover their reason for living. Bill Knight, Jerry Mundy and Joan Gaudet (filmmaker Aron Gaudet's mother) find the strength to overcome their personal battles and transform their lives through service. This inspirational and surprising story shatters the stereotypes of today's senior citizens as the greeters redefine the meaning of community.

**The Way We Get By** takes a look behind the hearty smiles, handshakes, heartfelt thanks and free cookies and cell phones the greeters bring to the airport, and discovers a world in which the seniors are engaged in their own struggles with aging, disease, loneliness, memories of war and personal loss. The film discovers a remarkable symbiosis between the soldiers' fighting mission and the greeters' fight to overcome pain, fatigue and depression in making sure no soldier departs or returns without thanks.

**The Way We Get By** is a co-production of Dungby Productions, the Independent Television Service (ITVS) and American Documentary, Inc. | POV, WGBH, Maine Public Broadcasting Network (MPBN) with funding provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB).

**On Television:** **The Way We Get By** will have its national broadcast premiere on Veterans Day, Wednesday, Nov. 11 at 9 p.m. as part of the **POV (Point of View)** documentary series on PBS stations nationwide. (Check local listings.)

To view the trailer and to obtain more information, visit [www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom](http://www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom) and [thewaywegetbymovie.com](http://thewaywegetbymovie.com). For more information on partner organizations, visit: [uso.org](http://uso.org), [operationhomefront.net](http://operationhomefront.net), [serve.gov](http://serve.gov) and [handsonnetwork.org](http://handsonnetwork.org).

**Returning Home Project:**

Through a special partnership with BAVC, ITVS, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, an interactive, online site, **Returning Home**, will be launched on Veterans Day. The interactive, online site, **Returning Home**, will ensure that American soldiers, both newly returned and those whose service ended many years ago, are not forgotten, and that there is a place to share thoughts and memories, as well as a place to find support among a community that began to take shape among senior citizens in Bangor, Maine. This companion site to **The Way We Get By** continues the mission of the Maine Troop Greeters, taking these gestures internationally.

**DVD Release:** **The Way We Get By** will be available for sale in time for the holidays at [www.thewaywegetbymovie.com](http://www.thewaywegetbymovie.com) beginning November 3, 2009 for \$19.99.

**Filmmaker's Statement:**

"This is a very personal story to me," says director Aron Gaudet. "Witnessing firsthand how my mother's life changed in such positive ways, while at the same time touching the lives of troops from all over the country, convinced me this was a story that could inspire people. I knew it could be a way to show the everyday struggles of senior citizens and an inspirational story of how these three seniors use a simple handshake to change their lives, and the lives of the 900,000-plus troops they've greeted."

**About the Filmmakers:**

[Aron Gaudet, Director/Editor](#)

Award-winning director and editor Aron Gaudet has worked on films in the United States, Jordan and India. In 2006, he attended the Sundance Producers Conference at the Sundance Institute with producer Gita Pullapilly, and they were subsequently named

2007-2008 WGBH Boston Filmmakers in Residence, where they worked on the film's post-production. Gaudet's other credits include "India: A New Life," a WGBH-*Frontline World* production and winner of three Telly Awards, and the short film "OUCH!" (on the art of eyebrow threading). He has won numerous awards in television, including a total of eight Telly Awards, two Vermont Association of Broadcasters awards, a Michigan Association of Broadcasters award and two Emmy nominations.

A member of the International Documentary Association (IDA) and the Independent Feature Project (IFP), he is a graduate of the New England School of Communications. He grew up in Maine and lives in Brooklyn, NY. Gaudet and filmmaker Gita Pullapilly will be married this fall.

#### Gita Pullapilly, Producer/Interviewer

Gita Pullapilly is an award-winning television journalist and film producer who has produced films in the United States, Jordan and India and whose stories have aired on CBS, CNN and ABC. In 2006, she was selected as a participant in the Sundance Producers Conference at the Sundance Institute for **The Way We Get By** and in 2007 she was selected as a WGBH Filmmaker in Residence for the film. She was inducted into the Royal Society of the Arts in recognition of her work in film and television.

In addition to producing "India: A New Life," Pullapilly produced the Fulbright-funded film "Diary of a Refugee," and was the first filmmaker chosen as a Fulbright Senior Scholar to Jordan. She was born and raised in South Bend, Ind., and graduated from the University of Notre Dame with a bachelor's degree in finance. She worked as a television reporter before making the switch to documentary filmmaking. Now living in Brooklyn, she holds a master's degree from Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism.

Pullapilly is the recipient of a University of Notre Dame Asian American Alumni Association Exemplar Award, two Associated Press Awards, a Michigan Association of Broadcasters Award and a Northwestern University Scholarship for Outstanding Storytelling. She is a member of IFP in Chicago and New York, the IDA, Women in Film and Video and the Color of Film Collaborative.

#### Dr. Jill Biden

Dr. Jill Biden has been an educator for the past 28 years and continues to teach English classes at a DC-area community college. She is the wife of Vice President Joe Biden.

Dr. Biden has a long history of activism in her community and she continues to work to raise awareness on education, military families, and women's health issues. President Obama has asked her to help highlight the importance of America's community colleges, and Dr. Biden frequently visits community colleges and speaks with students, parents and teachers around the country as part of this outreach.

As a Blue Star Mom, Dr. Biden has made military families one of her top priorities. She has traveled to many bases in the United States and in Germany to speak with soldiers and their families and try to raise awareness and show appreciation for the special sacrifices that these Americans make. In Delaware, she was active with the nonprofit organization Delaware Boots on the Ground, which helps families during times of military deployment by organizing community events to raise awareness and support.

Prior to moving to Washington, Dr. Biden taught English for 15 years at Delaware Technical & Community College. Before that, she taught for 13 years in public schools as a reading specialist and English teacher, as well as working part-time with the Rockford Psychiatric Hospital Adolescent Program. In January 2007, Dr. Biden earned her Doctorate in Education from the University of Delaware.

POV Website: **The Way We Get By** companion website, [www.pbs.org/pov/waywegetby](http://www.pbs.org/pov/waywegetby), offers a streaming video trailer of the film, an interview with the filmmakers, a list of related websites, organizations and books, lesson plans, discussion guides and special features.

Outreach: POV works with public television stations and national and community-based groups across the country to foster community dialogue around the issues presented in the film. For a list of upcoming screening and discussion events for **The Way We Get By**, go to: [http://www.amdoc.org/outreach\\_news.php](http://www.amdoc.org/outreach_news.php).

POV also works with nationally recognized media educator Dr. Faith Rogow to develop a discussion guide with background information to help event organizers carry out discussions around the film's content. Cari Ladd has created the lesson plan. POV partners with librarians around the country to create multimedia resource lists of related books and videos that further explore the issues. The materials are available free of charge at [www.pbs.org/pov/waywegetby](http://www.pbs.org/pov/waywegetby).

Credits: Director/Editor: Aron Gaudet  
Producer: Gita Pullapilly  
Executive Producer: Warren Cook  
Cinematographer: Aron Gaudet and Dan Ferrigan  
Original Music: Zack Martin  
  
Running Time: 82:30

Awards 2009: Special Jury Award, South by Southwest (SXSW) Film Festival  
Best Documentary, Audience Award Winner, Newport International Film Festival  
Best Documentary, Atlanta Film Festival  
Best Documentary, Little Rock Film Festival  
Best Documentary, Phoenix Film Festival  
Audience Award, Full Frame Documentary Festival  
Standing Up Competition Winner, Cleveland International Film Festival  
Eric Parker Social Justice Award, Indianapolis International Film Festival  
Honorable Mention, Boston Independent Film Festival

Pressroom: Visit POV's pressroom, [www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom](http://www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom), for press releases, downloadable art, filmmaker biographies, transcripts and special features.

About Partner Organizations:

USO: The USO is a private, nonprofit organization whose mission is to support the troops by providing morale, welfare and recreation-type services to our men and women in uniform. The USO currently operates more than 135 centers worldwide, including ten mobile canteens located in the continental United States and overseas. For more information, visit [uso.org](http://uso.org).

Points of Light Institute

Points of Light Institute inspires, equips and mobilizes people to take action that changes the world. The Institute has a global focus to redefine volunteerism and civic engagement for the 21st century, putting people at the center of community problem solving. We are organized to innovate, incubate and activate new ideas that help people act upon their power to make a difference. Points of Light Institute operates three dynamic business units that share our mission: HandsOn Network, MissionFish and the Civic Incubator. For more information, visit [www.pointsoflight.org](http://www.pointsoflight.org).

HandsOn Network:

HandsOn Network, the volunteer-focused arm of Points of Light Institute, is the largest volunteer network in the nation and includes more than 250 HandsOn Action Centers that

reach more than 83% of the nation's population and extend to ten countries. HandsOn includes a powerful network of more than 70,000 corporate, faith and nonprofit organizations that are answering the call to serve and creating scaled impact. In 2008, the network delivered approximately 30 million hours of volunteer service valued at \$615 million. For more information, visit [www.handsonnetwork.org](http://www.handsonnetwork.org)

The Corporation for National and Community Service:

The Corporation for National and Community Service is a federal agency that improves lives, strengthens communities, and fosters civic engagement through service and volunteering. Each year, the Corporation engages four million Americans of all ages and backgrounds through its Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America programs. For more information, visit [NationalService.gov](http://NationalService.gov).

Operation Homefront:

Operation Homefront provides emergency and morale assistance for our troops, the families they leave behind and for wounded warriors when they return home. A nonprofit 501(c)(3), Operation Homefront leads more than 4,500 volunteers in 30 chapters nationwide, and has met more than 105,000 needs of military families. Operation Homefront also hosts the Web community Operation Homefront Online. For more information, please visit [operationhomefront.net](http://operationhomefront.net) and [homefrontonline.com](http://homefrontonline.com).

POV:

Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and now in its 22nd season on PBS, the award-winning POV series is the longest-running showcase on American television to feature the work of today's best independent documentary filmmakers. Airing June through September with primetime specials during the year, POV has brought more than 275 acclaimed documentaries to millions nationwide, and has a Webby Award-winning online series, *POV's Borders*. Since 1988, POV has pioneered the art of presentation and outreach using independent nonfiction media to build new communities in conversation about today's most pressing social issues. More information is available at [www.pbs.org/pov](http://www.pbs.org/pov).

Major funding for POV is provided by PBS, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, The Educational Foundation of America, JPMorgan Chase Foundation, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New York State Council on the Arts, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, The September 11th Fund and public television viewers. Funding for POV's *Diverse Voices Project* is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. Special support provided by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. POV is presented by a consortium of public television stations, including KCET Los Angeles, WGBH Boston and THIRTEEN in association with WNET.ORG.

***DVD REQUESTS: Please note that a broadcast version of this film is available upon request, as the film may be edited to comply with new FCC regulations.***