

TEACHING TOLERANCE



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MIDDLE & UPPER GRADES ACTIVITY

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AMERICA BY THE NUMBERS

Point of View

Choose one of the following quotes from the video. Within your group, discuss that person's relationship with Clarkston, their understanding of its present and their hopes for its future.

“I’m probably a racist or redneck or something ... I just see (change) destroying what we had planned to happen here. You wonder sometimes if I’ve got any buddies any more that think the way I do.”

– LONGTIME RESIDENT GRAHAM THOMAS

“Half of the citizens that used to be here have moved out of Clarkston. Our refugee community is the majority. And how are you going to survive without them?”

– MAYOR EMANUEL RANSOM

“We went to different little Asian stores. (My Vietnamese checker) helped me decide what would sell, what her mama bought at the other stores, what her grandma bought. Eventually, we were finding the products they wanted and business started to climb.”

– THRIFTOWN GROCERY OWNER BILL MEHLINGER

“The people who are in the political power, they just believe that immigrants are here to drain the resource(s) of the county. They’re not looking (at) the other side—that we work hard, we are buying foreclosed homes, we are revitalizing the economy of this county.”

– OMAR SHEKHEY, LEADER IN CLARKSTON’S SOMALI COMMUNITY

“People in America think democracy is given to them: ‘Oh, I don’t need to vote!’ But for us, it’s so important because we are doing it for the first time. (When I cast my first ballot), that’s the time that I will feel that I belong to a nation—that I’m helping the development of a nation.”

– BIRENDRA DHAKAL, A REFUGEE FROM BHUTAN