

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 “Mainstream, USA.” Within your group, discuss that person’s relationship with Clarkston, Georgia, 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 anymore ... that think the way I do.”

– GRAHAM THOMAS, LONGTIME CLARKSTON RESIDENT

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

– EMANUEL RANSOM, FORMER MAYOR OF CLARKSTON

“[My Vietnamese cashier and I] went to different little Asian stores. She 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.”

– BILL MEHLINGER, THRIFTOWN GROCERY OWNER

“The people who are in the political power, they just believe the immigrants are here to take, [to] drain the resources 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. ... 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