



Not In Our Town e-News

for ordinary people transforming their communities

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Organize a Screening of "A Dream in Doubt" PBS Broadcasts Begin Tuesday, May 20

Film Chronicles Life of a Sikh Family Under Attack Post 9-11

Tune in to [Independent Lens on PBS](#) this week for *A Dream in Doubt*, an important film by Tami Yeager about the power of courage and hope to overcome hate.

In the wave of violence that followed 9/11, Balbir Singh Sodhi, a Sikh-American, was fatally shot in a retaliatory hate crime after he was mistaken for an Arab Muslim. *A Dream in Doubt* tells the story of Rana Singh Sodhi as he struggles to heal from his brother's murder, find community support, and reclaim his American dream.



Find out more about [A Dream In Doubt on PBS.org](#).

We encourage NIOT members to organize a community screening of this powerful film.

For local listings and PBS broadcast schedule, visit the [Independent Lens site](#). Download resources, discussion and facilitator guides at [A Dream in Doubt on PBS.org](#).



Third Annual Not In Our School Week in Palo Alto!

Now in its third year, Palo Alto's Not In Our School campaign has become a new model for engaging students in learning, conversation, and action against hate, bigotry, and bullying. This spring, Palo Alto elementary, middle, and high school students



Gunn High students in Roni Habib's Facing History class discuss the power of language and stereotyping after watching Not In Our Town: Northern California.

Be the first to see the finished video--subscribe to [the Not In Our Town YouTube channel](#).

and teachers took their Not In Our School campaign to new heights. Students and teachers used closed-circuit TV to show *Not In Our Town Northern California* and the *Not In Our Town* youth video, took part in a "dissolving stereotypes" activity, created artwork about taking a stand against intolerance and stereotyping, and more.

The Working Group's video team was on hand to document Palo Alto's Not In Our School campaign for an upcoming video about how students can stand up to hate and bias. Stay tuned for information on screening locations.

More about NIOS week

[Gunn High School: NIOS week aims to dissolve hate](#)
[Palo Alto High's Not In Our School Week podcast](#)

Subscribe to the NIOT YouTube Channel

Want to stay up-to-date on the latest Not In Our Town and Not In Our School videos? Subscribe to the [Not In Our Town YouTube channel](#). You'll get updates sent straight to your inbox when we upload our new short videos this summer.

Construction Begins on NIOT.org

Thanks to a recent grant from the [Walter and Elise Haas, Sr. Fund](#), we're taking the first steps toward developing a new Not In Our Town website. This grant allows us to lay the groundwork for an interactive online resource for NIOT community members, students, and civic leaders to exchange strategies and stories for fighting intolerance, and get tools to take action against hate.

Since we launched the first Not In Our Town website 12 years ago, hundreds of dedicated people and organizations have come together under the NIOT name to address issues of acceptance and diversity in their schools and communities. Our goal is for NIOT.org to help unite and connect these leaders, and launch much-needed communication tools in the fight against bigotry and intolerance.

A prototype for NIOT.org was developed at [Bay Area Video Coalition](#)'s first [Producers Institute for New Media](#). Since then, TWG has partnered with [BAVC](#) and [Institute for Next Generation Internet](#) to develop this new interactive platform that will dramatically enhance the capacity of communities and individuals to take action against hate.

TWG is actively raising funds to launch and further develop NIOT.org. Please [contact us if](#)



[you would like to contribute](#). We'll be sure to keep you posted as the site takes shape.



TOP: Tammie Schnitzer speaks to a group of Billings residents before a march honoring Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

BOTTOM: Eran Thompson re-enacts King's "I Have a Dream" speech on MLK Day.

Photos courtesy Billings Gazette.

Not In Our Town Billings Celebrates 15 Years, Takes New Steps

After NIOT Billings Steering Committee Chair Eran Thompson returned home to Billings after taking part in last year's NIOT Leadership Gathering, he went home with a renewed sense of mission: to revitalize the NIOT movement in the town where it all began.

Thompson, the lead organizer of Montana People's Action, turned his inspiration into action, and worked with NIOT Billings and the Black Heritage Foundation to host a vibrant, energizing series of Not In Our Town events over the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday weekend. The group invited *Not In Our Town* producers Patrice O'Neill and Rhian Miller to participate in and lead many of the week's activities, including a Not In Our School Assembly at Laurel Middle School.

Celebration of the King Holiday has particular significance in Billings. The series of events chronicled in the *Not in Our Town* story began fifteen years ago when community members who gathered at a candlelight vigil to honor Dr. King discovered that their cars had been blanketed with KKK fliers.

This year's NIOT week included an MLK-day bell-ringing ceremony led by Governor Brian Schweitzer and a candlelight vigil in sub-zero weather featuring speaker Tammie Schnitzer, a Billings resident who became a NIOT leader after her home was vandalized in 1993.

Schnitzer, who now lives in South Carolina, encouraged Billings residents to keep standing together in the name of human rights. "Be brave, step forward and make a sound that encourages conversations, not accusations..." she told the *Billings Gazette*, "Move forward as a community that listens."

And listen they did. The open and frank discussion at all the events made clear that the people of Billings are not willing to rest on their laurels. A half-day community meeting brought out stories of the everyday intolerance still facing Billings residents. A Muslim woman talked about the eggs that are regularly thrown at her house. A Tribal Leader shared that there are still Native American elders who are afraid to come to Billings. A lesbian mother of a bi-racial child described the names he has been called at school. These ongoing concerns encouraged NIOT leaders to make a commitment to sustained action.

As NIOT Billings commemorates their 15th anniversary, they're also taking big steps towards becoming certified as a 501(c)3 organization. In April, the group created articles of incorporation and nominated nine people to serve on the NIOT Billings board of directors. They also plan to raise funds to host a national Not In Our Town conference in mid-2009, which they hope will draw civic leaders and activists from around the country.



"What happened here in Billings really changed our lives as filmmakers. We feel honored to carry this story forward. But most significantly, what people in Billings did has had an influence on our collective ability to stand up to hate, not just around the country, but around the world," O'Neill said.



TOP: Eunice Terry, Michael Crummett, and Eran Thompson wait for the MLKJ Celebration to begin.

Read more about Not In Our Town activities in Billings:

- [Billings Gazette: Students Urged to Avoid Prejudice](#)
- [NIOT Billings Blog](#)
- [Billings Gazette: Small gathering recalls MLK's equality dream](#)
- [KTVQ Report on MLK Day in Billings](#)
- [Billings Gazette: Residents tackle question of how to promote diversity](#)

BOTTOM: Panelists at the NIOT Billings half-day community meeting on diversity and acceptance. Photos courtesy Eran Thompson.

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