



# UPSTANDERS

A STARBUCKS ORIGINAL SERIES

## **Discussion Questions for Upstanders Videos**

Available to view at <http://upstanders.starbucks.com>

### **Lloyd Pendleton, How Salt Lake City Housed the Homeless**

Faced with a growing homeless population, Utah changed the way it provides shelter to those on the streets. Under Lloyd Pendleton's leadership, the state has reduced its chronic homeless population by 91 percent.

#### *Educators:*

1. Name three ways the stories in this video helped to change your perspective on homelessness.
2. What are some actions people in your community have taken to address homelessness? What else could be done, and what actions could you take?
3. Describe the "clean, dry, and sober" model. Where does this model come from and how does it influence the way we speak about people who are homeless?
4. Describe the "housing first model." Why was this model so successful in Salt Lake City? How might this model benefit your own community?
5. Discuss how access to a housing opportunity became a turning point for residents. What are two ways in which this intervention empowered individuals and families in areas of their lives beyond access to housing?

#### *Citizen Changemakers:*

1. What is your community's approach to homelessness? How does this approach compare to or differ from the "housing first" model?
2. Lloyd Pendleton made the decision to see the problem of homelessness differently. Think about other conventional wisdom about homelessness and flip the narrative. How could you flip the narrative of other chronic problems in your community?
3. What are some specific ways you could use empathy to make positive change in your community around issues you care about?
4. How did Pendleton go from considering himself a "normal citizen" to being an Upstander?
5. At the end of the video, Pendleton says "We have not solved overall homelessness. It's not the end; it's the beginning." What next steps could be taken in Salt Lake City and in your own community to help end homelessness?

## [Maria Rose Belding, Building an App to Fight Hunger](#)

Forty percent of the U.S. food supply goes to waste. College student Maria Rose Belding created a web-based solution that saves tens of thousands of pounds of food each year.

### *Educators:*

1. What is food insecurity? How does food insecurity affect day-to-day life? What benefits come with food security?
2. What systems must be in place to ensure food security for all?
3. An estimated 25 to 40% of food grown, processed and transported in the US will be wasted. Discuss why this may be, and what kind of steps might help reduce food waste in your community and your home?
4. Maria Rose Belding succeeded because she understood the complexity and specifics of the problem in her community. Think of an issue in your community. What specifics do you need to understand to successfully address it?
5. Belding and Grant Nelson each used their unique personal skills to make change. What kinds of skills do you have that could make you an Upstander?

### *Citizen Changemakers:*

1. How many food banks are there in your area/community? How can you collaborate with food banks in your community on food-sharing programs or in other ways?
2. When Maria Rose Belding pitched her idea, Grant Nelson says, "Surely this is not a problem that hasn't already been solved." Identify a problem like this in your community. Why might people assume that this problem has already been solved, and why hasn't it? What concrete steps would you take to help solve this problem?
3. What role does technology have in making positive societal change? What role did it play in this situation?
4. Belding succeeded because she understood the complexity and specifics of the problem in her community. Think of an issue in your community. What specifics do you need to understand to successfully address it?
5. What is a problem in your community that could be solved simply through better communication and collaboration between organizations working toward a common cause? Name what specific actions you would take to improve this situation.



## [Destiny Watford, A High Schooler Saves Her Neighborhood](#)

Seventeen-year-old Destiny Watford's decision to stand up for her community and oppose the construction of an incinerator led to an improbable series of events that would stun her neighbors and everyone connected with the project.

### *Educators:*

1. What is the role of public protest in creating change? What is the role of art and public performance in creating change? Discuss how Destiny Watford used these tools as an Upstander.
2. Though no single plant in Curtis Bay broke any pollution laws, the total pollution from numerous plants in the community caused problems for residents. With this in mind, discuss the difference between legality and moral responsibility. Identify other situations where these may not always be the same thing.
3. Why is it important to believe that you are capable of making change? How did this mindset impact Destiny and her community?
4. How did Watford convert the power of protest into the concrete changes for which she was advocating?
5. What are some specific ways that Watford and her community overcame the obstacles to the change they wanted to enact?

### *Citizen Changemakers:*

1. How was Destiny Watford able to overcome the cynicism and complacency in her community? Think about an issue in your community where you want to see change. What strategies would you need to employ to overcome similar reactions and attitudes in your own community?
2. What is the role of public protest in creating change? What is the role of art and public performance in creating change?
3. How did Watford convert the power of protest into the concrete changes for which she was advocating?
4. Why is it important to believe that you are capable of making change? How did this mindset impact Watford and her community?
5. Are there communities that you are aware of that are used as "dumping grounds" like Curtis Bay? Who is taking action on this? What steps could you take to make change on this issue?



## [Town of Baldwin, College for Everyone](#)

In Baldwin, Michigan, college wasn't in the cards for most high-school graduates — until residents did something remarkable: They banded together and raised enough money to provide every student with a scholarship.

### *Educators:*

1. In addition to Baldwin's Promise, what other programs, initiatives, and experiments are in place in your community and across the country to enable more students to go to college?
2. Name some unexpected benefits of having access to a college education. Think about how this might affect someone's peers and other areas of their lives.
3. Before the community in Baldwin came together to create Baldwin's Promise, the issue of college accessibility was viewed by many as impossible to solve. Discuss how community members were able to make progress towards solving this issue despite this impression. How might you apply this thinking to an issue you care about?
4. Other than attending a four-year college or University, what other paths might students take after graduating high school that might also help to break the cycle of generational poverty?
5. In the video, it is mentioned that access to college education is related to access to kindergarten education. Discuss this connection and how one might influence the other.

### *Citizen Changemakers:*

1. Identify three ways in which people overcome barriers to access education in the video.
2. Name two strategies to break the cycle of generational poverty through education.
3. Before the community in Baldwin came together to create Baldwin's Promise, the issue of college accessibility was viewed by many as impossible to solve. Discuss how community members were able to make progress towards solving this issue despite this impression. How might you apply this thinking to an issue in your own community?
4. The entire community was involved in raising the money to make Baldwin's Promise a reality. What are some benefits of this wide-spread community support?
5. As this story shows, the community of Baldwin was eager to give, they just needed the opportunity to do so. What opportunities could you create to mobilize people to give like this or to take action in your community?



## [Susan Burton, A New Home for 900 Former Inmates](#)

Susan Burton, who spent years behind bars, is determined to keep other female ex-convicts from returning to prison by giving them a place to live that is free of drugs, alcohol and abusive relationships. She has helped hundreds of them start new lives.

### *Educators:*

1. Discuss the role of empathy in Susan Burton's work.
2. What is recidivism? Discuss how interventions related to issues like drug addiction, mental health, and poverty can affect rates of recidivism.
3. When Burton leaves prison the first time, a guard tells her, "You'll be back." Whereas negative reinforcement hinders positive change, how can positive reinforcement promote positive change? Discuss how this relates to recidivism.
4. What are some ways in which A New Way of Life creates a positive cycle of change that goes beyond the individuals who are housed there?
5. What does true rehabilitation look like? What changes are required in both culture and policy to achieve this goal?

### *Citizen Changemakers:*

1. How can people recently released from prison overcome the structural and societal barriers that they will inevitably face?
2. How could you, whatever your issue or organization is, connect with ex-offenders and programs that try to reintegrate them into the community? How could they become an asset to your work?
3. What does true rehabilitation look like? What changes are required in both culture and policy to achieve this goal?
4. Susan Burton sees herself in the women she helps. How does empathy improve outcomes? What resources can improve circumstances in your own community?
5. A New Way of Life could be one way to disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline. Can you think of other opportunities to intervene in this cycle in a positive way?



## Heartsong Church and Memphis Islamic Center, *When a Mosque Moves Across the Street*

When an Islamic center purchased a plot of land opposite a church in Memphis, Tennessee, the local Muslim community expected hostility. Pastor Steve Stone had something else in mind.

### *Educators:*

1. Before the Islamic center moved across the street, members of Heartsong Church were forced to confront their prejudices about Muslims. Name a time you were forced to confront your own prejudices. How did you change as a result of this experience?
2. Why was putting up the sign welcoming the Islamic center so meaningful? What kinds of small but meaningful actions could you take in your community to foster a sense of inclusivity?
3. Name some benefits of letting go of stereotypes. How does this benefit both those who are stereotyped and those doing the stereotyping? How has this affected your own life?
4. What are some ways that groups of people with differing beliefs can come together and encourage cooperation and dialogue? Discuss the specifics of how Heartsong Church and the MIC did this: how were they successful?
5. How can communities of differing beliefs foster inclusion and understanding? For example, MIC and Heartsong created joint events, like blood drives and a community Thanksgiving. What are some opportunities in your own community?

### *Citizen Changemakers:*

1. Discuss ways in which leaders make moral courage contagious. How can setting an example, exposing people to differences, and building structured reflection help? What other factors are relevant?
2. Putting up the sign welcoming the Memphis Islamic Center was a small, but incredibly meaningful, action. What kinds of small but meaningful actions could you take in your community?
3. Imagine coming to the realization that Mark Sharpe did, and saying “I am the problem.” What door does that open up? How could that make you an Upstander?
4. How can a majority act to include a minority, and how might this benefit both groups?
5. How can communities of differing beliefs foster inclusion and understanding? MIC and Heartsong created joint events, like blood drives and a community Thanksgiving. Are there events in your community where people of different backgrounds or worldviews come together like this? If not, what kinds of activities or events could be effective in your community?



## [David Vobora, A Gym for Veterans With No Limbs](#)

Former pro football player David Vobora gave up a lucrative career in private fitness to work with wounded warriors. His workouts have brought them new strength and inspiration.

### *Educators:*

1. Name some services and resources that are necessary to support service-disabled veterans.
2. How did David Vobora help to change the narrative about service-disabled veterans, and why is this so important?
3. What are some simple actions you can take to support and respect service-disabled veterans?
4. How can service-disabled veterans be understood as assets and as agents of positive change?
5. How can finding purpose in life help someone to heal? What are the ways in which Vobora and the veterans in the story find their purpose?

### *Citizen Changemakers:*

1. How does this story showcase perseverance and toughness? How can these ideas be used to shape perceptions and create change?
2. How did David Vobora help to change the narrative about service-disabled veterans, and how could you do the same?
3. Vobora saw a need for a place for service-disabled veterans to come together and exercise. Name one need that you see in your community, and one step you can take towards solving it.
4. How does community give people purpose? How does purpose create self-worth? Why are these concepts important in creating positive change in your community?
5. Vobora helps service-disabled veterans to be seen, and to see themselves, as assets. What other communities would benefit from this kind of shift in perspective, and how would it benefit your community?

## [Sue Rahr, Tackling Police Brutality with Empathy](#)

Susan Rahr is transforming the way police officers are trained in Washington State. Instead of preparing them to wage a war on crime, she wants them to become guardians of the community.

### *Educators:*

1. What is the relationship between police and your community?
2. Discuss why it is important for the community to feel supported by the police, and the police to feel supported by the community. Name three actions that can be taken where you live to improve the relationship between police and community members.
3. What is the difference between a “guardian mindset” and a “warrior mindset” in policing?
4. Initially when she started instituting reforms, Sue Rahr encountered resistance and skepticism. How did she overcome this? Identify at least one step that can be taken to begin to overcome barriers to police reform in your community.
5. Rahr was able to use her position at the police academy to influence the attitude of new recruits. How can you use the positions that you hold to influence the attitudes of others in a positive way?

### *Citizen Changemakers:*

1. What is the relationship between police and your community?
2. Discuss why it is important for the community to feel supported by the police, and the police to feel supported by the community. Name three actions that can be taken where you live to improve the relationship between police and community members.
3. What is the difference between a “guardian mindset” and a “warrior mindset” in policing? How does that difference play out in other areas of social and political life?
4. Sue Rahr says that when she first started asking questions about situations regarding the use of force, the answers she was getting “weren’t satisfying.” How did she take this feeling and convert it into meaningful action and change? How could you open up this conversation in your own community?
5. Police departments often value tradition. What strategies can you use to foster change in environments with a strong culture of traditions?



## [Rising Tide Car Wash, Washing Away Prejudice](#)

John D’Eri set out to find a job for his son, Andrew, who is autistic. His journey led him to open a car wash where 85 percent of the employees are on the autism spectrum — and business is booming.

### *Educators:*

1. John D’Eri started hiring employees with mental disabilities because his son is on the autism spectrum. How can intimately knowing people who are different than us change our worldviews? Have you been affected by this?
2. What is neuro-diversity? What is the value of neuro-diversity, and diversity in general, in this story? Describe how viewing difference as a valuable asset can lead to personal and business successes.
3. What is the difference between sympathy and respect for people with disabilities?
4. D’Eri created opportunities for people with disabilities to participate and contribute in ways that work for them. Identify similar opportunities that could be created in your own school or community.
5. How might it change people’s perceptions of people with autism or other disabilities to see them working in a public job like at a car wash? How might it change autistic people’s perceptions of themselves?

### *Citizen Changemakers:*

1. John D’Eri started hiring employees with mental disabilities because his son is on the autism spectrum. How can intimately knowing people who are different than us change our worldviews? Have you been affected by this?
2. How can you ensure that your work provides opportunities for people with disabilities to participate and contribute in ways that work for them?
3. When thinking about people with disabilities, what is the difference between sympathy and respect?
4. In this story, we see the combination of business success and social good. What are other ways that you can create this kind of win/win situation, when something is both a social good and good for business.
5. Thomas, when speaking about the business, included that he “wouldn’t be doing it if it were charity.” How does this mindset change the work that they do?



## Robert Clark, *Opportunity Youth Pays it Forward*

After spending his teenage years in and out of jail, Robert Clark turned his life around. Now he's committed himself to helping the at-risk youth of Newark do the same, by leading them in building homes for poor families.

### *Educators:*

1. What does Dorothy Stoneman mean when she says that there is a range of talent that is being locked out of society? What are the ways in which she is helping to change this dynamic?
2. What does Robert Clark mean when he says that YouthBuild not only impacts those in the program, but also their children? Discuss how the program creates a positive cycle of opportunity.
3. Clark says "They loved me until I learned to love myself". Unpack this statement. Think about the power of opportunity, love, and expectation. How do these work together to create positive change?
4. If you could provide one opportunity for members of your community, what would that be? What change would you see as a result of that opportunity?
5. What is the role of mentoring in this story? Do we have a responsibility to mentor others?

### *Citizen Changemakers:*

1. When we succeed, do we have a responsibility to give back to our communities? What does it mean to become a mentor? How can we give back to others at all stages of our life?
2. How can organizations change to better unlock the talent of young people? How do you ensure that people are able to find the "voice they didn't know they had"?
3. Robert Clark says "They loved me until I learned to love myself". Unpack this statement. Think about the power of opportunity, love, and expectation. How do these work together to create positive change?
4. Clark says that YouthBuild not only impacts those in the program, but also their children. How does the program create a positive cycle of opportunity? In your work, whatever it is, how can you create a similar positive cycle that impacts future generations?
5. In the video Clark says, "There is something about giving back that binds us to community... The more we can give young people those opportunities, the stronger we can be as a country." What changes in a community when people feel bound together in this way? What opportunities are there in your own work and in your own community for young people to give back?

