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## news release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# THE FORGOTTEN DEAD to Premiere on PBS Western Reserve

*Joshua Tree Productions documentary sheds light  
on history of marginalized Summit County residents*

Kent, OH — Aug. 14, 2020 – Schneider Park in Akron seems like your typical family-friendly park. What local residents who enjoy the park may not realize, though, is how many bodies—and secrets—are buried beneath their feet. Find out the story when THE FORGOTTEN DEAD premieres on PBS Western Reserve (WNEO 45.1 / WEO 49.1) on Tuesday, Sept. 1, at 8 PM.

From the mid-19th to early 20th century, the green space that is now Schneider Park was a cemetery attached to the county poorhouse, which housed elderly and disabled people of that era. To tell the story of the people who resided there, a local theater troupe of actors with disabilities reenacts what life would have been like for them back then. THE FORGOTTEN DEAD strives to memorialize those who were marginalized in life, and forgotten in death, by challenging us all to rethink our perceptions of the people all around us living today with disabilities.

The production was created by Josh Gippin of Joshua Tree Productions in collaboration with University of Akron students and Theatre on the Spectrum. “This film was birthed at such a difficult historical moment, but it is quite timely,” Gippin said. “A public health crisis like COVID-19 has an outsized impact on the poor, elderly and disabled among us, and I think this film can offer some perspective. We have dug up some dark, disturbing secrets from our past, but the actors from Theatre on the Spectrum are sure to fill your heart with light and hope. If you’re emotional like me, get your tissues ready.”

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This project was made possible by University of Akron's EXL Center, which partners students with businesses in the community to gain hands-on experience in their fields. Gippin was brought on as a visiting professor for the Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 semesters and worked with students from the Anthropology Department and School of Communication, plus ZTV students and a few students from the School of Art, School of Music and the Marketing Department. This offered the students a unique opportunity for interdisciplinary collaboration.

Additional air dates for THE FORGOTTEN DEAD can be found at [PBSWesternReserve.org](http://PBSWesternReserve.org). Following the production's premiere, it will also be available for free viewing on demand on the station's website.

### **About PBS Western Reserve**

PBS Western Reserve is the brand name of Northeastern Educational Television of Ohio, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation.

A trusted community resource, PBS Western Reserve uses the power of commercial-free television and related services to enrich the lives of people through high-quality programming and educational services that teach, illuminate and inspire. It serves the largest population of Ohio's eight PBS member stations.

PBS Western Reserve (WNEO 45.1 / WEAO 49.1), a service of the organization, is the only broadcast television service that reaches all of Northeast Ohio. It is available to 4.9 million people in the Cleveland and Youngstown designated market areas. In an average month, more than 1 million people tune in. The organization also operates two standard definition channels: Fusion (WNEO 45.2 / WEAO 49.2) and FNX (WNEO 45.3 / WEAO 49.3).

For more information about the organization, visit [www.PBSWesternReserve.org](http://www.PBSWesternReserve.org) or call 1-800-554-4549.

### **About Joshua Tree Productions**

Producing educational documentaries in Akron, Ohio, for over 15 years, Joshua Tree Productions owner Josh Gippin is taking his show on the road for the next nine months. Josh and his wife, Shane Wynn, have dreamt of taking their kids out of school for a year to take a cross-country road trip. Since their kids can learn remotely this year, they are grabbing the opportunity and documenting their travels through photography and video. Learn more at [patreon.com/wherethewynnstakeyou](https://patreon.com/wherethewynnstakeyou).