

## MEDIA INFORMATION

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**Press materials:** [pbs.org/pressroom](https://pbs.org/pressroom) or [thirteen.org/pressroom](https://thirteen.org/pressroom)

### ***The Calling: A Medical School Journey* Premieres Monday, March 17 on PBS**

*New Documentary Follows Students at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx*

**NEW YORK (Feb. \_\_2025) — *The Calling: A Medical School Journey***, a new documentary directed by Asako Gladsjo, follows the intellectual and emotional journey of a group of students at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx. Captured through verité scenes and personal video diaries, the film offers a rare inside look at America's health care system through the eyes of these aspiring practitioners as they learn what it takes to become a doctor in one of the country's most underserved communities. ***The Calling: A Medical School Journey* premieres on Monday, March 17 at 10 p.m. ET on PBS** ([check local listings](#)), [PBS.org](https://PBS.org) and the [PBS App](#).

Filmed over the course of a year, ***The Calling: A Medical School Journey*** follows the students as they share the humbling challenges they face, their crises of self-doubt and exhaustion, and the moments of encouragement that inspire them to go on.

The film follows the journey of eight remarkable students, including:

- **Alexandra**, a fourth-year student and the youngest daughter of Dominican immigrants, who hopes to find a family medicine residency that will allow her to stay in the Bronx and serve the community she loves.
- **Andrew**, a Haitian American first-year student from Queens, who hopes to mentor other aspiring physicians from underrepresented backgrounds.
- **Chetali**, a third-year student from the Detroit area, who feels called to emergency medicine, a field that links the social side of medicine to a wide range of specialties and embodies her desire to care for patients of all backgrounds.
- **Cameron**, a third-year student from Yonkers, who comes from a family of nurses and hopes to become the first doctor in his family, with a specialty in orthopedics or sports medicine.

- **Cory**, a third-year student from New Jersey who is driven by a life-threatening childhood illness that required multiple brain surgeries and is interested in pursuing a career in pediatric neurology.
- **Ghaith**, a first-year student originally from Syria, who credits his parents — both doctors — with inspiring his decision to pursue a career in cardiology.
- **Jordan**, a first-year student from New Jersey and a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army Reserve, who is attending medical school through an Army scholarship program. His father, a New York City firefighter who perished in the Sept. 11 attacks, inspired him to serve.
- **Le'Shauna**, a fourth-year student and the first in her family to attend college, who dreams of leaving the harsh urban environment that has shaped her family's past and hopes to secure a radiology residency at a top hospital in the South.

Filmed in the corridors and classrooms at Albert Einstein — which announced in February 2024 that it is now tuition-free, thanks to a \$1 billion gift from longtime faculty member Dr. Ruth Gottesman — and at its teaching hospital, Montefiore Medical Center, ***The Calling: A Medical School Journey*** follows the first-year students as they struggle to keep up with the punishing workload, meet and dissect their first cadavers, and engage with real patients for the first time. Meanwhile, the third-year students rotate through different medical specialties, juggling long shifts in the hospital with marathon study sessions for the all-important exams that will help determine where they will do their residencies. Through it all, the film chronicles the students' hopes, fears and incredible growth as they navigate the many challenges facing today's medical practitioners.

"Meeting the students, faculty and physician mentors at Einstein was such a humbling experience," said director Gladsjo. "I hope that young people from diverse backgrounds who might consider pursuing medicine will take inspiration from the film's subjects and make our health care system better for everyone."

"Following medical students around and capturing their experience in the pressure cooker of medical school is no easy feat," said Head of HHMI Tangled Bank Studios Jared Lipworth. "Asako and her team were able to capture the raw and emotional journey these students were on, and we expect their stories will have a real and lasting impact on viewers."

"Our medical education systems are under a great deal of scrutiny these days," says Tim Smith, who developed the film project and is an executive producer. "This film will give its viewers confidence that tomorrow's doctors have both the heart and intellectual firepower to make medical care better for all of us."

"This project has been a significant commitment for everyone involved, and we hope it inspires young people from all backgrounds to pursue careers in medicine. We're delighted that these remarkable stories will now reach a wide audience through PBS," said Charles Tremayne, executive producer.

"The WNET Group is proud to present this powerful film, which offers an intimate look at the inspiring journey of medical students at Albert Einstein College of Medicine — an

institution that has shaped New York City's medical community for generations," said Stephen Segaller, the vice president of programming at The WNET Group.

***The Calling: A Medical School Journey*** will stream simultaneously with broadcast and be available on all station-branded PBS platforms, including [PBS.org](https://www.pbs.org) and the PBS app, available on iOS, Android, Roku, Apple TV, Amazon Fire TV, Android TV, Samsung Smart TV, Chromecast and Vizio.

***The Calling: A Medical School Journey*** is a Cineflix Media and HHMI Tangled Bank Studios Production, in association with The WNET Group. Directed by Asako Gladsjo. Executive producers: Tim Smith, Charles Tremayne, J.C. Mills, Wilma L. Davis, Sean B. Carroll. For The WNET Group: Benjamin Phelps is supervising producer, Lesley Norman is executive producer, and Stephen Segaller is executive in charge.

Major funding for *The Calling: A Medical School Journey* was provided by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, with additional funding from Burroughs Wellcome Fund, the Blavatnik Family Foundation, and the Pieter and Yvette Eenkema van Dijk Foundation. The film was produced with the participation of the Ontario Creates – Government of Ontario Production Services Tax Credit and the Canadian Film or Video Production Services Tax Credit.

#### **About the Filmmaker**

**Asako Gladsjo (Director)** is an award-winning documentary director, producer, and writer who lives in Harlem, just two miles from the Albert Einstein medical complex. Her recent credits include *Eyes on the Prize III: We Who Believe in Freedom Cannot Rest* (Series Producer and Director) for HBO and Trilogy Films; *Rise and Rebuild: A Tale of Three Cities*, co-directed with Sam Pollard for One Story Up and Tribeca Studios; *Why We Hate* (Senior Producer), executive produced by Steven Spielberg and Alex Gibney for Discovery; *(Un)Well* (Director/Producer) for Netflix; and NAACP Image Award winner *By Whatever Means Necessary* (Series Writer/Senior Producer), executive produced by Forest Whitaker and Nina Yang Bongiovi for Epix. She also directed and senior produced the acclaimed six-hour PBS series *The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross* with Henry Louis Gates Jr., which won Emmy, DuPont, Peabody, and NAACP Image awards, the Emmy-nominated PBS special *Black America Since MLK: And Still I Rise* and multiple seasons of the PBS series *Finding Your Roots* and *African American Lives*.

#### **About HHMI Tangled Bank Studios**

[HHMI Tangled Bank Studios](https://www.hhmi.org/tangled-bank-studios) is a mission-driven impact studio that seeks to shine a light on some of the most significant scientific challenges, issues, and breakthroughs of our time. Recent films include ***Ending HIV in America***, ***Blue Carbon***, ***Every Little Thing***, ***Wild Hope***, ***Hunt for the Oldest DNA***, ***Wilding***, ***Blue Whales: Return of the Giants***, and Oscar-nominated ***All That Breathes***, the only film to win best documentary at both the Sundance and Cannes film festivals. Other notable films include Emmy Award-winners ***The Serengeti Rules*** and ***The Farthest – Voyager in Space***; Emmy-nominated ***My Garden of a Thousand Bees***, ***Battle to Beat Malaria***, and ***Nature's Fear Factor***; and Peabody Award-winner ***Inventing Tomorrow***. To extend the reach and impact of each film, the studio undertakes educational and public outreach efforts in partnership with purpose-focused organizations.

#### **About Cineflix Media**

Independently owned and creatively led for more than 25 years, [Cineflix](#) has never lost the belief that creatives are core, and a win-win commercial approach is what brings great content to the world.

Cineflix creates, produces, and distributes must-watch TV for the global marketplace with operations in Montreal, Toronto, New York, London, and Dublin. A leading international media company, the Cineflix group includes Cineflix Productions, Cineflix Rights, and Cineflix Studios, as well as joint venture companies Buccaneer, Connect3 Media, Husk Media, and Shiny Screens Entertainment. Cineflix also share strategic partnerships through first-look deals and co-productions with a hub of producers from the US, UK, and Canada. With a catalogue of more than 6,000 hours of select programming across a wide range of genres, Cineflix is behind some of TV's most popular and long-running shows.

### **About The WNET Group**

[The WNET Group](#) creates inspiring media content and meaningful experiences for diverse audiences nationwide. It is the community-supported home of New York's [THIRTEEN](#) – America's flagship PBS station – [WLIW](#), THIRTEEN PBS KIDS, WLIW World and Create; [NJ PBS](#), New Jersey's statewide public television network; Long Island's only NPR station WLIW-FM; [ALL ARTS](#), the arts and culture media provider; newsroom [NJ Spotlight News](#); and FAST channel PBS Nature. Through these channels and streaming platforms, The WNET Group brings arts, culture, education, news, documentary, entertainment, and DIY programming to more than five million viewers each month. The WNET Group's award-winning productions include signature PBS series ***Nature***, ***Great Performances***, ***American Masters***, and ***Amanpour and Company*** and trusted local news programs like ***NJ Spotlight News with Briana Vannozzi***. Inspiring curiosity and nurturing dreams, The WNET Group's award-winning Kids' Media and Education team produces the PBS KIDS series ***Cyberchase***, interactive ***Mission US*** history games, and resources for families, teachers and caregivers. A leading nonprofit public media producer for more than 60 years, The WNET Group presents and distributes content that fosters lifelong learning, including initiatives addressing poverty, jobs, economic opportunity, social justice, understanding, and the environment. Through Passport, station members can stream new and archival programming anytime, anywhere. The WNET Group represents the best in public media. Join us.

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