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**Adults Living with Down Syndrome Strive for Independence in ‘The Grown-Ups,’
Airing September 4, 2017 on POV**

Legal Limitations on Conscious Adults Come to Light



CREDIT: ÁLVARO REYES

The 30th season of POV continues with **The Grown-Ups**, a glimpse into the lives of adults in Chile living with Down syndrome from director Maite Alberdi. With both humor and heartbreak, the film illuminates legal, financial and societal restrictions that diminish the freedoms of Chile’s developmentally disabled population.

The Grown-Ups will have its national broadcast premiere on the PBS documentary series POV (Point of View) on **Monday, September 4, 2017 at 10 p.m.** (check local listings). POV is American television's longest-running independent documentary series, now in its 30th season. **The Grown-Ups** is a co-presentation with Latino Public Broadcasting (LPB).

Alberdi places the viewer in a center for individuals with Down syndrome, where the film’s main characters attend school and staff an in-house catering business. One of the regular therapy sessions the middle-aged students attend takes place in a room with a sign that reads, “Taller Adultez Consciente,” Spanish for “Conscious Adult Workshop.”

Inside, counselors help students cultivate a sense of self-worth and independence. However, the experiences of the central characters in the outside world seldom reflect those lessons. “I’m sick of school. So bored. I’ve been here for 40 years... I can’t do the same thing my whole life.” So says Anita, an older woman and longtime trainee who provides the opening narration to the film. Yet the film is often

humorous and joyful. During a race for class president, one student tersely accuses another of acting like the late Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet. In another scene, Anita acts out her boyfriend's birthday cake-related fantasy.

Indeed, Anita is composed yet sullen—able to conceive of a more fulfilled existence, but also painfully aware of the obstacles keeping her from it. Anita is dating Andrés, another member of the center. Aside from the occasional lovers' quarrel, they are sweetly devoted to each other. After Anita's father dies, Andrés proposes and asks her to move in with him. That introduces the first of many heart-wrenching limitations on the students: a priest tells Andrés that while some sympathetic churches will host wedding ceremonies for couples with Down syndrome, their union will never be legally recognized in Chile.

In another difficult scene, Anita reveals that she has entered menopause and no longer has the option to have a child. She considers adoption, but it's suggested that this, too, would be severely restricted or altogether prohibited under Chilean law.

Ricardo, a third member of the center, aspires to become financially independent through his work in both the catering department and at a nearby assisted living facility. He's a clear leader in the kitchen, where, according to Anita, he "gives directions all day long," and he shows care, patience and professionalism at the nursing home even when faced with difficult residents.

But like Anita and Andrés, Ricardo is unable to achieve a level of independence most people take for granted. Ricardo's combined wages from these two positions amount to less than 30 dollars per month. A counselor points out the wide gulf between this figure and the roughly 500 dollars per month Ricardo would require to live on his own. "I have two jobs but I'm really tired. I work and work, but I don't earn anything, and I don't know what to do," Ricardo despairs at one point.

The Grown-Ups concludes with Anita and Andrés' involuntary separation. Fearing that the relationship is creating too much anxiety in Andrés' life, his family decides to end his stay at the training center and move him to a relative's home elsewhere in the country. This serves as a final stark reminder that the power to make life-altering and potentially devastating decisions is out of the hands of all of the film's subjects.

"The unforgettable characters at the center of this film highlight important questions about the constraints placed on those deemed 'less than' by various societal institutions," said POV executive producer Chris White. "A remarkable and impassioned work, it forces us to consider the pain that can be imposed by varying notions of how much freedom is appropriate for those living with developmental disabilities."

The Grown-Ups will stream online on pov.org in concurrence with its broadcast.

About the Filmmaker

Maite Alberdi, Director and Writer

As a director, Maite Alberdi has developed a highly particular style that allows her to craft intimate portrayals of her subjects through everyday stories in small-scale worlds. In 2011, her well-received first feature film, *The Lifeguard*, premiered at IDFA. Through Micromundo, her production company, she directed the film **Tea Time**, which has received many major film awards, including the IDFA Alliance of Women Film Journalists' EDA Award for Best Female-Directed Documentary, and was recognized as best documentary at the Miami Film Festival, EBS International Documentary Film Festival, DocsBarcelona and FIGG, among others. It was also a nominee for the Goya Award for Best Iberoamerican Film. In 2016, she premiered her short film *I Am Not From Here*, which is nominated for the European Film Awards.

Credits:

Director, Producer: Maite Alberdi
Co-Producers: Denis Vaslin, Fleur Knopperts, Sebastián Brahm
Editors: Juan Eduardo Murillo, Menno Boerema
Cinematographer: Pablo Valdés
Executive Producers for POV: Justine Nagan, Chris White

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Produced by American Documentary, Inc., POV is public television's premier showcase for nonfiction films. Since 1988, POV has been the home for the world's boldest contemporary filmmakers, celebrating intriguing personal stories that spark conversation and inspire action. Always an innovator, POV discovers fresh new voices and creates interactive experiences that shine a light on social issues and elevate the art of storytelling. With our documentary broadcasts, original online programming and dynamic community engagement campaigns, we are committed to supporting films that capture the imagination and present diverse perspectives.

POV films have won 36 Emmy® Awards, 19 George Foster Peabody Awards, 12 Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Awards, three Academy Awards®, the first-ever George Polk Documentary Film Award and the Prix Italia. The POV series has been honored with a Special News & Documentary Emmy Award for Excellence in Television Documentary Filmmaking, three IDA Awards for Best Curated Series and the National Association of Latino Independent Producers Award for Corporate Commitment to Diversity. Learn more at www.pbs.org/pov/.

POV Community Engagement and Education (www.pbs.org/pov/engage/)

POV's Community Engagement and Education team works with educators, community organizations and PBS stations to present more than 650 free screenings every year. In addition, we distribute free discussion guides and standards-aligned lesson plans for each of our films. With our community partners, we inspire dialogue around the most important social issues of our time.

POV Digital (www.pbs.org/pov/)

Since 1994, POV Digital has driven new storytelling initiatives and interactive production for POV. The department created PBS's first program website and its first web-based documentary (*POV's Borders*) and has won major awards, including a Webby Award (and six nominations) and an Online News Association Award. POV Digital continues to explore the future of independent nonfiction media through its digital productions and the POV Hackathon lab, where media makers and technologists collaborate to reinvent storytelling forms. @povdocs on Twitter.

American Documentary, Inc. (www.amdoc.org)

American Documentary, Inc. (AmDoc) is a multimedia company dedicated to creating, identifying and presenting contemporary stories that express opinions and perspectives rarely featured in mainstream media outlets. AmDoc is a catalyst for public culture, developing collaborative strategic engagement activities around socially relevant content on television, online and in community settings. These activities are designed to trigger action, from dialogue and feedback to educational opportunities and community participation.

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