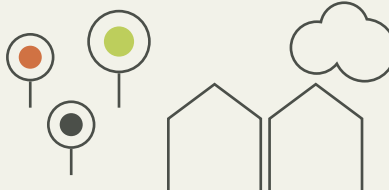




FLINT IS FAMILY
and
**THE AMERICAN
DREAM DENIED**

**EDUCATION
GUIDE**



There's a glossary in the back for words like this in **bold**.

Today we will look at three places in America – **Flint**, a city in Michigan, Gordon Plaza, a neighborhood in the city of **New Orleans**, and **Cancer Alley**, a name given to a stretch of communities and towns along the Mississippi River in Louisiana. All three places have suffered from **catastrophic** polluting. And in all instances, regular people like you have not only been directly affected by the pollution, they have spoken out against it, and have led the way for positive change.

Let's meet some of the people
in the photos in the rooms with white walls.



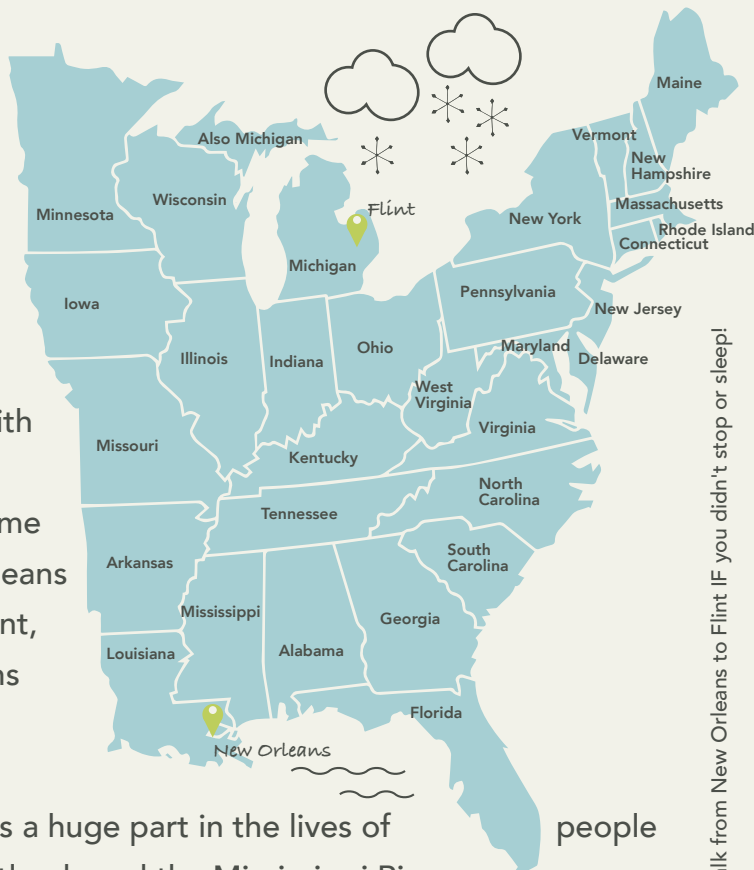
Ms. Sharon



Ms. Shannnon

Let's Go To Flint!

Flint, Michigan is over 1,100 miles away from New Orleans, Louisiana. If you were to walk from New Orleans to Flint, it would take you 360 hours. How many days is that? (Answer right.) Unlike New Orleans, Flint experiences very cold winters, with an average of 36 inches of snow each year! Flint is in a different time zone than New Orleans, which means right now, it is an hour later in Flint, Michigan than it is in New Orleans (and the rest of Louisiana).



But like New Orleans, water plays a huge part in the lives of people who live in Flint. In Louisiana, wetlands and the Mississippi River are really important. In Michigan, there are 11,000 lakes! They play an important role to the people and animals and plants that live near them as well. Oh also, you know how Louisiana looks like a boot? Michigan looks like a mitten, and the residents fondly refer to it as "the mitten"!

Which states would you travel through to get to Flint?

Answer: it would take 15 days to walk from New Orleans to Flint IF you didn't stop or sleep!

Who are these people?

The photos in this room are of people living in **Flint, Michigan** during the Flint Water **Crisis** in 2016. They were taken by the artist LaToya Ruby Frazier when she lived in Flint for 5 months, documenting life in a city that didn't have drinkable water. Look at this portrait, and you'll see the family who the artist lived with – Renee, Shea and Zion Cobb.

Shea Cobb
(Renee's
daughter &
Zion's mom)

Renee Cobb (Shea's
mom & Zion's
grandmother)



Zion Cobb
(Shea's daughter
& Renee's
grandaughter)



Here's a photo of
the artist (since
we like you!)

The artist doesn't appear in any of the photos in the exhibit. Instead, all of the photos on the blue walls are from her **perspective**.

Look at the photos in this room and try to imagine yourself as the artist, documenting important moments in the lives of the Cobbs and other Flint residents.

What is lead and why is it so bad?

Lead (pronounced led) is a heavy metal* that occurs naturally on the Earth and can be mined from special rocks called ores. People have known about and have used lead since prehistoric times (before history was recorded). Because there is so much of it in the Earth, it is **versatile**, that it is easy for humans to change its shape and size, it has been widely used all the way until a few decades ago. Until fairly recently, it was used in gasoline for cars, paint for houses and to make rust-resistant pipes that could carry water into people's homes. This last use is a big part of why it was hurting the residents of Flint.

*Not this kind of
heavy metal!



In 2014, the city of Flint switched their water supply from Lake Huron (one of the Great Lakes, Lake Huron is so huge and pretty clean) to the Flint River (which runs through Flint, but is very polluted) in order to save money. The people in charge of this plan didn't treat the water correctly, and the river water allowed the lead from the pipes to break off and enter the water 100,000 people had to drink.

It took a long time for people to understand and accept that lead is a poison when it enters our bodies. No amount of lead is safe for people, but high levels of lead can hurt anyone, especially babies, toddlers and children.

Okay so lead sounds kinda scary, but information is power.

So if you want to learn more and take control of the facts, ask the person at the front desk of the museum for some more science-y facts about lead!



Why is everything in Black and White?

The artist LaToya Ruby Frazier uses Black and White photography to link the past to the present. In the 1940's many photographers were making pictures of ordinary people in America to get a better sense of the country. Looked at together, it was easy to see how similar people were, even when they may seem so different.

Back then, there was a lengthy and tricky process to make a photograph. Black and white pictures were very common because they were cheaper to make and more reliable than color film. It is only recently that you could take a photo on a phone and see it immediately, adjust the colors and add stickers!



By making her photographs black and white, the artist is reminding us of that time, when photographers were interested in regular people and the challenges we face. In doing so, she makes a point that we are all important and have a story to tell.

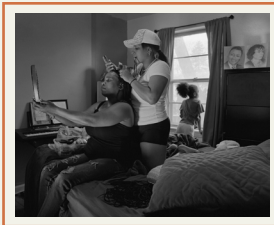
What is your story?

Why so many photographs?

Photographs are able to most accurately depict people and places, because it is made by capturing an actual moment seen through a camera. Even though it is very easy to “fake” a photograph with a computer or a phone, the **medium** still conveys a sense of honesty and realism that many other art forms do not as easily.



Now that you know that, why do you think the artist wanted to use photography?



Besides that it might be smelly, some trash can be very dangerous to our health if we kept it around. Some trash not only takes hundreds or even thousands of years to decompose, but becomes more **toxic** as it ages.

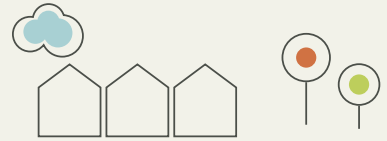


Think about the street that you live on and all the houses on it. That's YOUR neighborhood. What happens in your neighborhood often affects everyone there, and it is easy to be aware of: if the street floods, when a dog barks late at night, if someone is having a loud party, which houses have delicious fruit trees or gardens with pretty flowers.

Now imagine if the neighborhood you live in USED to be a dump where all the trash in the city was taken to. Now what happens when the street floods? What if you dug in the ground where the trash was? Think of how this would affect the trees there with roots weaving through the buried trash. Do you think it would be good for them? Do you think it would be good for you?

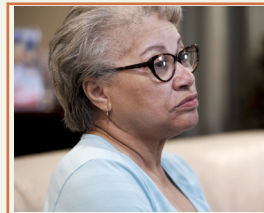
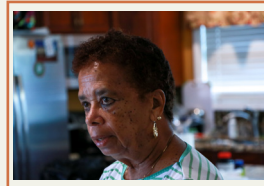
The artist Hannah Chalew drew the houses from photographs, but used her imagination to show what is under the homes of Gordon Plaza. She also made the paper from recycled paper and plastic!

What is the American Dream?



It can mean a lot of things, because the **American Dream** is the idea that *anyone* can work towards their own idea of lasting happiness and success, as all people are created equal. For the residents of Gordon Plaza, part of their American Dream was owning their own home, one that would be a place of protection and comfort as they started families and lived healthy lives in New Orleans.

How was the American Dream denied for the residents of Gordon Plaza? Listen to the headphones in the rooms with white walls to find out. What are they doing about it?



What is fair?



Depends on who you ask! Fairness is something we may have to work for, because we want what is best for ourselves and recognize the other person - or people - want what is best for themselves. That might be something different, as people don't always agree on what is fair, and sometimes it leads to an argument. Serious arguments often have to get settled in a court by a judge. Sometimes the groups can find a solution with the help of a lawyer. Not every solution is fair in everyone's eyes.

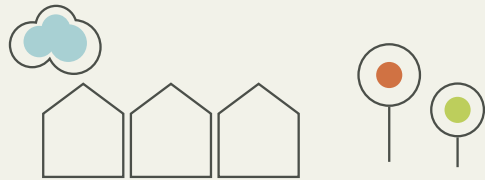
Think of a time when you got into an argument.

How was it settled? Were you able to come to a solution or compromise on your own, or did an adult have to help? Do you think it was a fair solution?

Which faces best show how you felt?



Glossary



American Dream - an idea by which opportunity is equally available to every American, allowing the highest goals to be achieved.

catastrophic (cat-ah-strah-fic) adj., involving or causing great damage or suffering suddenly; extremely unfortunate

crisis (kri-sis) n., - a time of intense difficulty, trouble, or danger

medium (me-d-um) n., - in art, medium refers to the materials used to make an artwork. Photography is a medium.

perspective (per-spek-tiv) n., - a particular attitude towards or way of regarding something; one's point of view

toxic (tahk-sik) adj., poisonous

versatile (ver-sa-tile) adj., able to adapt to many different functions; easily changeable

