



Marni and Kris Jamieson

Marni and Kris have mild cognitive impairments and learning disabilities. They protest the stigmatizing label of "mentally retarded." Marni works in a sheltered workshop, and Kris works part-time in a retail store. The award-winning documentary "Lifestyles of the Poor and Unknown," made by Marni's sister, portrays the Jamiesons' day-to-day lives, feelings, and dreams through their own often humorous perspectives.

Topics Include:

Disability Awareness
Overcoming Adversity
Character Development

Documentary Film:

Lifestyles of the Poor and Unknown

The Jamiesons were featured in a 47-minute documentary, "Lifestyles of the Poor and Unknown." This stereotype-shattering film gets inside the hearts and minds of Marni and Kris, a developmentally disabled married couple living and working in New York City.

Their story, filmed by a sister, reveals contrasting, sometimes irreverent perspectives on their lives and the prejudice they face. The film invites questions about what 'intelligence' is and what it means to be human, without being saccharine or condescending.

Testimonials

"Marni and Kris work, marry, cook, plan and take vacations, have parties, laugh a lot, and remind us all that life may be fully experienced by individuals who are too often viewed primarily in terms of their limitations." -- Arlyn Roffman, Ph.D. Professor, Lesley University, author of Meeting the Challenge of Learning Disabilities in Adulthood

"A poignant documentary...gives excellent and honest insight into the issues that face this couple by letting them tell their own story with wit and humor as they bring us into the workplace and into their home. Though Marni and Kris have educational deficits, they have tremendous maturity in their views on love, marriage, and relationships which they can teach the rest of us." -- Florence Lai, M.D., Neurologist, Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School

"Sensitive and realistic...reflects the multi-faceted elements in the lives of two persons who have disabilities...an excellent educational tool for schools, civic groups, parent groups, advocates, and self-advocates." -- Robert Fletcher, DSW, Executive Director, the National Association for the Dually Diagnosed, an association for persons with developmental disabilities and mental health needs

"This film shows that individuals with developmental disabilities live real lives with real problems and real fulfillment as well. Their experiences are just like everyone else's."-- Lucie Chansky, parent of son with profound mental retardation

"This film challenged both myself and the class on many of our notions of diagnoses, "normality", developmental disabilities, and how these issues are contextualized within our highly industrialized, competitive, capitalist society. This couple faces issues that all of us struggle within our daily lives. We were all very moved by the production. It presents many important points that can change the consciousness of those seeking to be 'helpers' in our society." -- William Sanchez, Ph.D. Department of Counseling Psychology, Rehabilitation, and Special Education, Northeastern University

"Opens a window into the lives of people who may seem very different, but are actually much like all of us ... applies to the diversity of the human condition as a whole." -- Stephen Shore, author of the book, Beyond the Wall: Personal Experiences with Autism and Asperger Syndrome