



*Castle Museum of Saginaw County History*  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Faces and Stories of Immigration Explored  
in New Smithsonian Traveling Photography Exhibition**

*“My parents’ sole reason to emigrate from Barbados to the United States was to give my brother and me more opportunities and a better life. They have made many sacrifices, and I hope to make them proud and never let them down.”— Ishmael Alleyne, age 17*

Alleyne is one of 59 teenagers who participated in photographer Barbara Beirne’s study of recent immigrants’ experiences. In a new traveling exhibition from the Smithsonian, black-and-white photo-interviews—photographic portraits captioned by the subjects’ own words—offer a thought-provoking starting point for exploring immigration, acculturation and cultural diversity.

*“Becoming American: Teenagers & Immigration”* will premiere in Saginaw on December 19<sup>th</sup> at the Castle Museum of Saginaw County History. It will be on view through February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Developed by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service, the exhibition will travel around the country on a national tour through 2011.

“The young people presented in this exhibit give evidence that America, the land of immigrants, continues to attract courageous newcomers seeking freedom and opportunities,” stated Beirne. “These teenagers, who have struggled with the difficulties that accompany enormous change, bring with them the strength and determination needed to become an essential part of their adopted land. I look forward to watching their futures unfold.”

Beirne’s images capture first-generation immigrants and children of immigrants, revealing a diverse array of teenage responses to the immigrant

experience. By photographing her subjects in their own communities—on a basketball court, at a place of worship, in a parent’s shop, at school and within their homes—she presents sensitive portraits, which give viewers an opportunity to better understand the complexity of the newcomers’ lives.

Barbara Beirne has worked as a documentary photographer for more than 25 years. She has photographed in Belfast, Northern Ireland, India, Nepal and Ecuador. Her photographs have been widely exhibited in museums and galleries. Among her projects in the United States are photographs of women in Southern Appalachia. The images were featured in the well-received SITES exhibition “Serving Home and Community: Women of Southern Appalachia.” Beirne holds a master’s degree in photography from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York.

SITES has been sharing the wealth of Smithsonian collections and research programs with millions of people outside Washington, D.C., for more than 50 years. SITES connects Americans to their shared cultural heritage through a wide range of exhibitions about art, science and history, which are shown wherever people live, work and play. Exhibition descriptions and tour schedules are available at [www.sites.si.edu](http://www.sites.si.edu).

The Castle Museum is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Sunday from 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. The Historical Society of Saginaw County is committed to serve the community by telling the continuing story of the people of the Saginaw region through exploration, preservation, and presentation of their historical and cultural heritage.

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