Discussion Questions for the Shared Academic Experience – “Minding the Gap”

- What did you think of the film? What stayed with you? What did you relate to?

- Rockford, Ill is described as a city going through economic difficulty. How did you see this play out in the lives of the people in the film?

- While the film focuses predominantly on the three men (Zack, Keire and Bing), what was your reaction to the women and their stories—namely, Nina, Keire’s mother and Bing’s mother?

- How did you notice race playing out for each of the characters in the film?

- The film won a 2018 Peabody Award and the New York Film Critics Circle Award for Best Non-Fiction Film; it was nominated for five Critics’ Choice Awards, an Independent Spirit Award for Best Documentary Feature, and was named a Top Documentary by the National Board of Review; and it was nominated for the 2019 Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature. And yet the film remains relatively unknown and underexposed to the general public.
  - What are your thoughts on the technical qualities of the film and on the documentary genre as a whole?

Additional discussion questions from film discussion guide: https://www.mindingthegapfilm.com/resources

- As we see in the film, Bing recorded his friends over the course of twelve years, documenting how different their paths had become. Have your friends changed over the years? If so, how?

- The owner of the skate shop in Rockford acts as a kind of mentor and surrogate family member for the subjects of the documentary, especially Bing. Do you have someone in your life you consider a mentor? If so, what do you consider makes a mentor, and how has having a mentor helped you?

- By the end of the film, Zack reveals that he has a lot of emotions he keeps hidden. Do you feel like you also have to hide your emotions? Why do you express or not express your emotions?

- At the end of the film, everyone seems to move on with their lives despite how much they’ve been through. Where do you draw your hope and resilience from when times get tough?