



THROUGH OUR EYES  
**SHELTER**  
FAMILY JOURNAL

# Dear Family,



*Through Our Eyes* is a documentary series about real children and their families. You may see yourself, family members, or someone else you know in these stories. This journal is about one thing we all need, shelter. Watch the episode titled “Shelter” together and use this journal to explore your ideas, questions, and how to help make our world a kinder place for everyone.

## Meet the Children



**Nicholas** loves school and being near the ocean. Home for him and his mom, Jessica, is their car and temporary housing.

“My dream is to be somewhere really safe, in an apartment. Somewhere peaceful, very peaceful and joyful. Somewhere that you can stay calm.”

– Nicholas, 10 years old



**Skylar** loves drawing and building things. She lives with her parents and younger brother. Home is often motel rooms.

“I would probably like to live in a house. Where we can’t move anymore.”

– Skylar, 8 years old



**Victoria** is a young activist and loves being in the community garden. She lives with her mom and younger sister. Home is a reclaimed empty house.

“Every person, whoever they are, doesn’t matter, should have a house.”

– Victoria, 10 years old

# Family Viewing Tips

Watching a video before sharing it with your child is much like reading a book first. It helps you prepare for questions your child may have. As you watch, jot down ways in which your family is the same as those in the stories. Ideas could include:

- Family qualities such as love, hope, kindness
- Daily activities and routines (e.g., brushing teeth, going to school, helping others)
- Family structures, e.g., parents and other caregivers, siblings, community, and more

Finding commonalities helps children see the strength in all families, especially those who are facing and going through challenges.

## before

### Home is where the love lives!

Talk with your child about the meaning of home and listen for the ways in which their ideas will be expressed in the video. Share that your child will meet children who live in places that may be different from yours. Reassure that all the children in the video live with families who love and care for them, too.

## during

### Follow your child's lead.

The children in the stories may be younger, older, or the same as your child's age. As you watch the video together, pause the viewing to check in. Does your child have any questions? How is your child feeling? Should you continue the viewing or take a break? Following your child's lead gives you the opportunity to do more listening and sharing. See the "Questions Kids Ask" list on the next page for additional support.

## after

### How can you and your child help your community?

Thinking about why families may have to find new shelter may bring forward a lot of emotions and feelings for your child (and perhaps for you). Attend to the feelings first. When ready, explore ways to put your feelings into action. Perhaps it's making and donating care kits and clothing to your child's school or to a local agency or faith-based setting.

# Questions Kids Ask

Talking about houselessness, homelessness, and our need to have a safe home and shelter can be challenging. To support you, here are a few questions children may ask. In all cases, follow your child's lead. Talk about these ideas when you and your child are calm. Holding such courageous conversations with your child can take place during everyday moments, such as making a meal or as you do laundry together. Model how talking helps us use our words to share how we feel and what is happening. Sharing can help us feel better.

## **What does homelessness mean?**

*There are times when people don't have a secure place to call home. They may need to live with others, in temporary housing called homeless shelters, in motel or hotel rooms, and in cars and vans.*

## **Why do some people sleep or stay on the street (subway, hallways, alleyways)?**

*Some people are homeless or houseless and don't have a permanent place to live right now.*

## **Why do some people carry a lot of big bags or push around a shopping cart?**

*I am not sure why. If the person is without a secure place to live, they may need to keep all their belongings with them in bags or in a shopping cart.*

## **How did they become homeless?**

*Like we learned from the video, "Shelter," every family is different. There are many reasons. One additional thing we learned is that the children are loved and have families who care for and about them.*

## **Will we ever be homeless/houseless?**

*Our home is wherever we are. I am here to keep you safe and protected, no matter where we live. Home is always the place where our love lives.*

## **How can we help?**

*We know that it is best not to go up to a stranger or someone we don't know well and trust. We can help in other ways, such as donating clothing and household items we don't use or need anymore. We can volunteer. We can also make "care kits" to keep in our car and leave on benches or at our school. These bags can have wet wipes, socks, a clean comb, and other things people need every day.*

These are your drawing and writing pages! Share your ideas, questions, and how you can help make our world a kinder place.

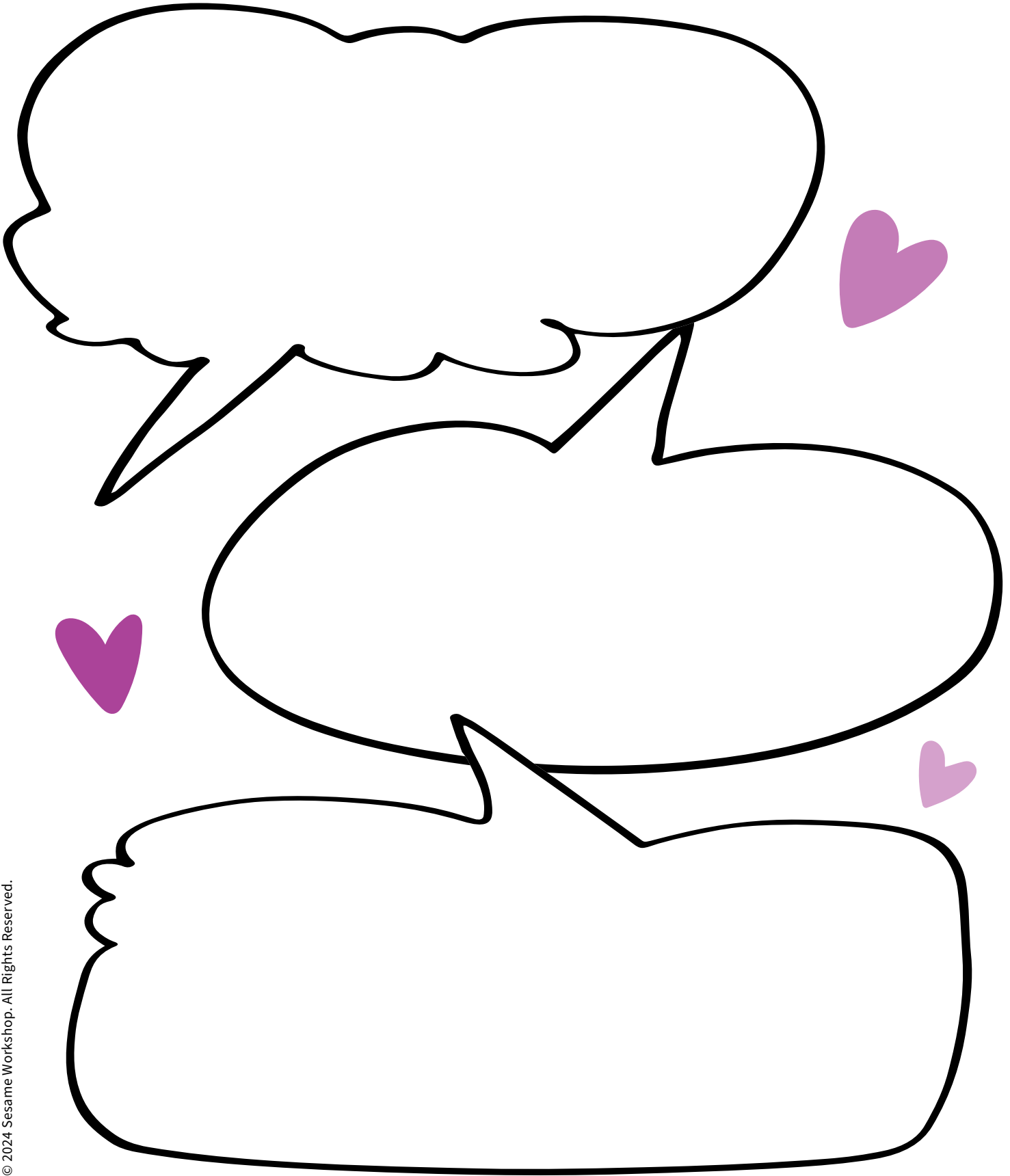


# MY JOURNAL: SHELTER

shel·ter: **Shel·ter** is something that covers us.  
People and animals need a place to eat, sleep,  
and protect them.

What does **home** mean to you?  
Draw and write your ideas.

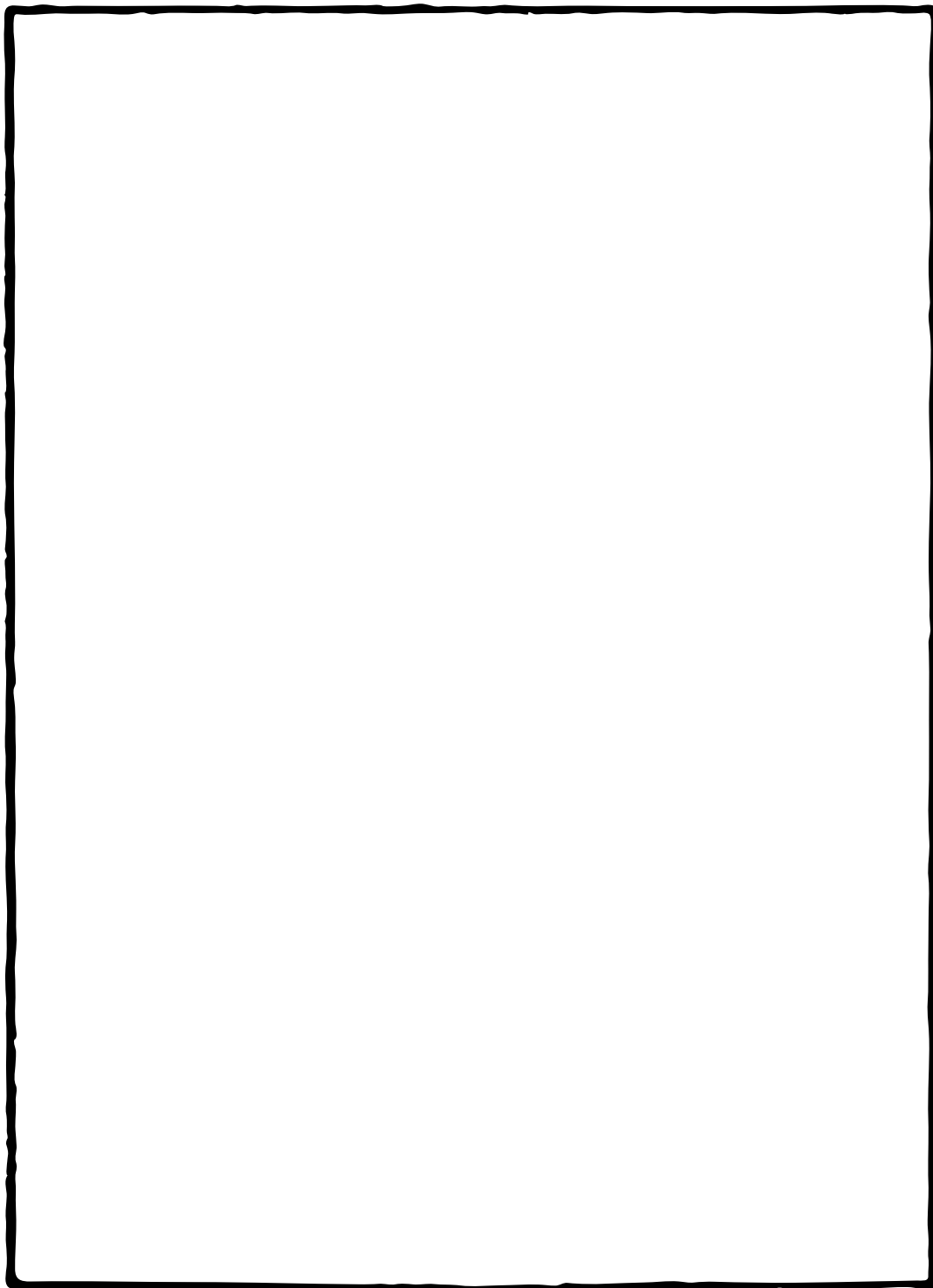
What would you like to ask Nicholas, Skylar, and Victoria?  
What would you say to them if you were to meet them?



The page features three large, empty speech bubbles for writing. The top bubble is cloud-shaped with a tail pointing down and to the left. The middle bubble is oval-shaped with a tail pointing down and to the left. The bottom bubble is rounded rectangular with a tail pointing up and to the left. Three purple hearts are scattered around the bubbles: one to the right of the top bubble, one to the left of the middle bubble, and one to the right of the bottom bubble.



Home is where the love lives!  
Who is in your family?





# About Shelter

This real-world story is about the meaning of home. Home provides us with safety. It is also a place that helps us with our everyday activities like attending school and playing together. In this episode, you will meet three children and their families, who are currently unhoused. While each family's circumstance is different and their futures may be uncertain, they are bound by love and a determination to keep their dreams alive.

For more information and  
resources, please scan this  
QR code:



**About Sesame Workshop.** Sesame Workshop is the global impact nonprofit behind *Sesame Street* and so much more. For over 50 years, we have worked at the intersection of education, media, and research, creating joyful experiences that enrich minds and expand hearts, all in service of empowering each generation to build a better world. Our beloved characters, iconic shows, outreach in communities, and more bring playful early learning to families in more than 150 countries and advance our mission to help children everywhere grow smarter, stronger, and kinder.

**About Meralta Films.** Meralta Films is a Los Angeles and Mumbai-based production company founded by the Oscar and Emmy-nominated director and producer, Smriti Mundhra. The company is focused on creating premium fiction and non-fiction content from the perspective of the global majority. Recent projects include the Oscar-nominated and Critics' Choice Award-winning documentary *St. Louis Superman*, Emmy-nominated series *Indian Matchmaking*, and the DGA Award and AFI DOCS Audience Award-winning, NAACP Image Award, and Emmy Award-nominated documentary, *Shelter*.

**About the Filmmaker.** Smriti Mundhra is a DGA-winning, Academy Award-nominated, and three-time Emmy-nominated filmmaker. Recently, Smriti created and directed *The Romantics*, a four-part documentary series about the history of Bollywood for Netflix. The series features interviews and footage from 35 of Bollywood's biggest stars. Her 2019 documentary short, *St. Louis Superman* was nominated for an Oscar and tells the story of a battle rapper-turned-Congressman lobbying for gun rights. Her debut feature documentary, *A Suitable Girl*, premiered at Tribeca Film Festival '17 and won her the Best New Documentary Director Award.

Funding for *Through Our Eyes* was provided in part by the Hobson/Lucas Family Foundation.

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