



## **A Plus Launches “The New Americans,” A Digital Documentary Series Spotlighting Immigrants Who Make America Great**

June Series Coincides with Immigrant Heritage Month

**COS COB, CT – June 6, 2018** – Marking the first co-production of original content since Chicken Soup for the Soul acquired a majority ownership stake in Ashton Kutcher’s APlus.com last year, the two companies have come together to produce a powerful new documentary digital series called “The New Americans.”

“The New Americans” is an 8-episode series of digital portraits of people who have immigrated to this country, and made America their home. The June series will run throughout Immigrant Heritage Month, with a new episode airing every Monday in June and will wrap up in early July.

Cate Matthews, executive editor, stated “We are thrilled to announce the launch of this series, which has come about from the growing collaboration between Chicken Soup for the Soul and APlus.com. The timing of this series couldn’t be more important. As our culture seems to be putting up walls, Chicken Soup for the Soul and A Plus remain dedicated to telling stories of diversity and inclusion.”

The eight episodes include:

### The Dancer from Iraq

Hussein Smko’s journey with dancing started when he was nine years old. He learned hip-hop from by an American soldier stationed in the Kurdish city of Erbil, northern Iraq, in 2003. Wishing to further his training, and finding a lack of opportunity in Iraq, Hussein went online and connected with Jonathan Hollander, Artistic Director of Battery Dance in New York City. Hollander offered to let Hussein train with members of the New York company remotely via video conferencing. Thrilled with his progress, he eventually offered Hussein a fellowship to come to the U.S. and dance in the company’s new show, which they hope will help transform Americans’ perception of Muslims.

### Eat Offbeat

When Manal Kahi finished graduate school, she wanted to do something to make a difference, so she decided to open her own catering business called Eat Offbeat, which hires refugee cooks through the International Rescue Committee. Whatever the difficulties of their past, today the primarily female chefs from Nepal, Syria, Iraq, Eritrea and Senegal are given the creative reins to design dishes influenced by their homelands. The results are out of this world: New Yorkers love supporting refugees as they eat up new flavors and learn about new cultures.

### La Fantasma (The Firewoman of Poughkeepsie)

In the US, only 7% of firefighters are women. Ingrid Sanchez-Eger, the president of the Dutchess County Volunteer Firefighters Association, hails from Costa Rica, but lives to help her local community. While working two jobs as a single mom to support her kids, Ingrid finds time to DJ, translate at the local schools, and work as a volunteer firefighter in Poughkeepsie, NY, where she is a chief responder. They call her “La Fantasma,” the ghost, because it doesn’t seem possible one person could be in so many places! Last year, her own house burnt to the ground, but this has not stopped her. “I’ve seen worse, and I’ll come out of this too.”



#### **ABOUT A PLUS**

A Plus, a Chicken Soup for the Soul company, is a digital media company devoted to delivering positive journalism to its readers. Its growth to hundreds of millions of monthly content views has been powered by a dynamic combination of proprietary technology and commitment to high-quality, empathetic storytelling. A Plus aims to challenge the status quo in media by focusing its content mission on positivity and social change.

#### **MEDIA CONTACT**

Kate Barrette  
RooneyPartners LLC  
kbarrette@rooneyco.com  
(212) 223-0561