

For information about future youth media initiatives, or to inquire about digital storytelling workshops, contact:

Kate Ranieri
484-664-3484

Lora Taub-Pervizpour
484-664-3880

Dept. of Media & Communication
Muhlenberg College

www.muhlenberg.edu/mediacom

MUHLENBERG
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Allentown Stories

**Youth document Allentown
in their own eyes and voices**

**Short films from the
Kids Access Media Project
(KAMP)**

Friday, August 25, 2006

6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

at the



31 N 5th Street
Allentown, PA

Directors' Notes

The Kids Access Media Project is a dream come true. Both of us have been involved with youth media projects for many years, in Allentown, and in communities as diverse as Berkeley, California, Sao Paulo, Brazil, and Lake Dreamland, Kentucky. In some ways, we have been preparing for K.A.M.P. for many years.

Each semester, we teach a course called Documentary Research, in which students create digital stories that document some aspect of their social world. This summer we took twelve community youth through the same process. With a focus on their community, and their relationships to the place they call home, we set out to help them document, produce and share the stories that matter to them most. For ten days, they travelled the twenty block distance along Chew Street between Salem U.C.C. and Muhlenberg College, and spent four hours a day engaged in documentary practices. Their stories reveal the exuberance they brought to their work and each other every day. Whether traveling down streets as photojournalists in 100 degree weather, or blogging in the stifling heat indoors at Muhlenberg when the central air went down, these young documentarians were unstoppable.

Allentown Stories crystallize the voices and visions of a group of engaged and creative young people. They also render powerfully the value and meaning that community holds in their lives. We were privileged to spend two weeks with them. As a community, we are privileged with an opportunity to learn from them, and we are grateful that the Allentown Art Museum has provided a meaningful space for K.A.M.P. youth to share their stories. Such a space truly does justice to the storytellers and their stories. Sincere thanks to David Brigham, the Museum's Executive Director, and to Rosemarie Rebar for making this possible.

K.A.M.P. was not just the effort of two individuals. It grew from an earlier collaboration with Congregations United for Neighborhood Action (CUNA) to provide educational media experiences for CUNA youth. It is an honor to continue to collaborate with Monica Sommerville, CUNA's Executive Director, who embraced the K.A.M.P. project and helped us connect it more deeply to CUNA's mission. Connections to community youth were organized by an outstanding young CUNA member, Louise Zver. Before participating in K.A.M.P., Louise skillfully recruited kids for the program, organized a pool of volunteer drivers to transport kids to and from K.A.M.P. and spent time with Nikki Dilks in Muhlenberg's Public Relations office to create K.A.M.P. publicity.

There are many at Muhlenberg to thank. Amy Chrzanowski, a Media & Communication / Theatre major, contributed countless talents. An expert digital storyteller herself, she was terrific in her role as mentor, research and tech assistant extraordinaire. Our colleagues in the Department of Media and Communication graciously contributed their time and expertise to enriching the youth experience. Susan G. Kahlenberg shared her expertise on media and consumer culture with the young documentarians, and Jeff Pooley guided them through the process of creating a CUNA youth web blog. Even from the remote outback of Australia, our department head, David Tafler, offered his virtual support (good on ya!). Deb Kipp was tireless in her efforts to find support for the program (and deserves a new pair of running shoes!) Our gratitude goes to Mrs. Fowler and the Fowler Family Charitable Gift Program, to Air Products and Chemicals, Inc., and to FLSmidth, Inc. for contributing to this initiative.

Kate Ranieri & Lora Taub-Pervizpour

CUNA is grateful for the opportunity to work with Muhlenberg College on this special youth organizing project. Established in 1999, CUNA has worked to develop local leaders who are effective at addressing community concerns. We believe that youth are important members of our community - they are our future leaders. This collaborative effort with Muhlenberg College provided an opportunity for young people to learn how to use media techniques to communicate about their experiences, their concerns, and their hopes for our city. We are particularly grateful for the training and guidance provided by Dr. Lora Taub-Pervizpour, Dr. Kate Ranieri and Amy Chrzanowski. CUNA's Youth Organizer, Louise Zver, did a great job coordinating the registration and transportation. Thank you to CUNA Leaders for providing transportation for the youth.

Monica Sommerville/ CUNA Director



K.A.M.P. youth, from left to right, front row: Tony Prentice, Ashley Marie Roman, Iesha Pridgen, Kirstin O'Hare; (second row) Joey Zver, Zana Zver; (third row) Louise Zver, Joan O'Hare, Laquanda Thomas; (back row) Christian Roman, Amy Chrzanowski, and Hydrea Hankerson (not pictured: Bobbi Ann Gabriel).

K.A.M.P. Donors

Major funding for K.A.M.P. comes from:

The Fowler Family Charitable Gift Program



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Dan's Camera City

And special thanks to:



For interviewing and being interviewed by the kids!

Most people, at some time in life, find themselves recording and preserving significant experiences. These acts—compiling or interpreting a family photo album, discovering and writing down the history of a church or town, photographing a landscape in transition or a neighborhood in crisis, or even snapping photos at a graduation—range broadly, yet they share one important trait: the familiar impulse to document.

We may want to preserve something for posterity, to acknowledge an accomplishment, to promote change, but always as we document we engage in something larger than ourselves, something beyond the confines of our singular lives. This connection is the beginning of understanding how documentary work fits naturally with community life.

—Tom Rankin, Director, Center for Documentary Studies, Duke University

DIGITAL STORIES

Caution! Children at Play by Joey Zver and Tony Prentice. This story about traffic and safety for community youth playing outdoors sends a powerful message to drivers.

Young Girlz United by Hydrea Hankerson, Laquanda Thomas and Iesha Pridgen. Through step dancing, these young girls find a source of recreation, exercise, friendship and pride.

The Good, the Bad, and the Difference by Bobbi Ann Gabriel and Kirstin O'Hare. Some say graffiti is art, but from the perspective of these young filmmakers, graffiti detracts from the beauty and pleasure of community parks where children play.

Skool by Christian Roman. This film reveals a young filmmaker wrestling with the best and worst parts of school. Taking aim at school uniforms and meaningless homework, the film leaves audiences hopeful with the powerful memory of a third grade teacher.

Expense by Zana Zver. Organized cheerleading teams can offer young people a positive form of exercise and community. But, as this film exposes, the high costs of membership are nothing to cheer about. The film raises important questions about who has access to organized afterschool recreation.

Litter by Joan O'Hare and Ashley Marie Roman. This informative film documents the efforts of Allentown community members to keep the city litter-free and exposes some of the common myths about litter.

Youth Recreation by Louise Zver. Featuring some of the city's most attractive parks, and others in need of repair, this film documents the importance of open, safe and creative spaces for youth recreation.

THE FILMMAKERS

Louise Zver wears multiple hats, a lot for the young mother of two year old, Eli. She attends Allen High School and works at Congregation United for Neighborhood Action. She is the KAMP coordinator, recruiting community youth, and organizing a team of volunteers to transport KAMPers back and forth. Louise says that making movies was a great experience.

Ashley Marie Roman is 11 years old and attends Lehigh Valley Academy as a fifth grader. She lives at home with her mom, dad, two brothers and two dogs, Snoopy and Princess. Her favorite food is pizza. Her favorite hobby is soccer.

Joan O'Hare is 11 years and attends Jefferson South Mountain Middle School. One of her favorite pastimes is breaking bottles and crumpling paper (but she does not litter!) She also enjoys drawing.

Fourteen years old, **Christian Roman** attends Lehigh Valley Academy in Bethlehem. He enjoys all types of sports, watching TV and playing computer games.

Kirstin O'Hare is a rising fifth grader who says she's a happy girl, especially when making movies.

Bobbi Ann Gabriel is 11 years old. And while she will be attending the Stephen Decatur Middle School in Ocean City, Maryland very soon, says she loves making movies during KAMP here in Allentown

Zana Zver enjoys singing, dancing and cooking. She says the people who inspire her are her mother and Keyshia Cole. At 12 years of age, Zana is a student at Trexler Middle School. KAMP has been fun for Zana, especially making her movie.

Eleven years old, **Hydrea Hankerson** co-founded Young Girlz United for girls who like to dance and step. She loves to clean everything in the house except the dishes.

Laquanda Thomas, a 10 year old at Jefferson School, loves to play sports. Best of all, she says that she loves to step dance with Young Girlz United because it's cool and she gets to create new steps.

Another Young Girlz United step dancer, **Iesha Pridgen** loves to spend a lot of time in her bedroom dancing to different music. She also enjoys designing clothes, styling hair and playing games. She is a rising fifth grader at Raub Middle School. Her KAMP favorites were playing games and making her movie.

Tony Prentice is 14 years old and will be starting 8th grade at South Mountain Middle School in September. He likes to play game cube in his spare time.

Joey Zver lives in downtown Allentown. He will be 10 in October and is going into the 5th grade at Washington Elementary. He enjoys playing outside.