

The Regent Park Focus Multimedia Arts Summer Program

2003 Report



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**REGENT PARK FOCUS MULTIMEDIA SUMMER
ARTS PROGRAM**

Report Summary

The Regent Park Focus Community Coalition Against Substance Abuse (Focus) is an organization dedicated to empowering youth through media technology. The organization comprises of E.Y.E. Video, Catch da Flava Radio, Catch da Flava Print and Online Newspaper and the Zapparoli Studio for Photography. Regent Park Focus also runs an annual Multimedia Arts Summer Program. This intensive eight week training program gives teens opportunities to discover media arts, acquire new skills, and meet new people. The following is a report of the 2003 Multimedia Summer Arts Program.

The 2003 Multimedia Arts Summer Program targeted youth ages 13-22 living in Regent Park and the surrounding community. The program began on July 2, 2003 and ran Mondays through Fridays from 10am-5pm. Over the two-month time-span, participants produced three public service announcements, one short docudrama, five radio shows, two audio-plays, numerous articles for the summer issue of Catch da Flava Newspaper, a collection of colour photo slideshows, a new media project, a soundscapes audio art CD and a series of individual super8 films. This was an incredible achievement considering that most of the students who took part in the program had no experience with cameras, audio or radio equipment prior to enrolment.

In return for their effort, participants were each awarded a small honorarium and certificates recognising the skills they had learnt over the course of the program. They were also provided with reference letters and copies of their work.

The Multimedia Arts Summer Program is unique because it gives low-income youth an opportunity to gain hands-on media experience for free! After the summer, participants often return to Focus in the school year to enrol in specific program areas and continue developing their skills. Youth who are involved in the after-school program are granted access to equipment, photography and editing studios, and are encouraged to assist in hosting Catch da Flava Radio and be involved with Catch da Flava Newspaper.

The Multimedia Arts Program provides young people with more than just a supportive and friendly place to spend their time; it also teaches important life skills such as teamwork, leadership, project management and problem-solving. These skills are invaluable in any career a youth may later wish to pursue.

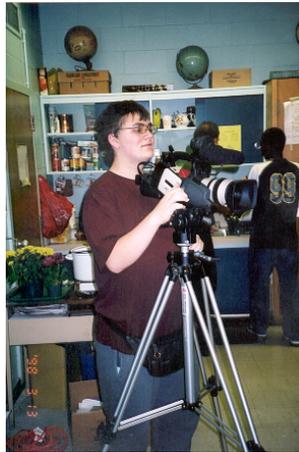
The following is a summary of the Multimedia Arts Summer Program activities. It includes short profiles of guest speakers that came to visit Focus, as well as participants' feedback on the activities in which they were engaged taken from their daily journals.

VIDEO

The goal of the video segment of the Multimedia Arts Summer Program was to teach young people about video production through the process of creating public service announcements (PSAs), docudramas and super8 films. To accomplish this each participant had to work in small groups and attend numerous production workshops led by professionals or experienced youth.

In making their videos, participants worked in small groups of four to six people to produce PSAs that revolved around youth and politics, as well a docudrama on illegal music downloading. The super8 films are short videos whose scenes must be filmed in sequence, as the camera used to shoot them cannot be rewound. As a result, these pieces are very challenging to produce and require a lot of planning. They were saved as the last video project of the program and were completed independently after students had become familiar with the processes of planning and filming.

The following is a summary of the video program activities. It includes short profiles of guest speakers that came to visit Focus, as well as participants' feedback on the activities in which they were engaged.



Monday July 7th, 2003 to Tuesday July 8th, 2003

Participants are shown public service announcements on drugs and a selection of docudramas from previous years. This is followed by exercises and small group discussions on different genres of films. Students suggest ideas for their own pieces.

Wednesday July 9th, 2003

Participants attend their first camera workshop where they are introduced to the functions and operation of the Cannon XL1 and the Canon G1. The students also learn how to white balance and to work the sound equipment. In the afternoon, Focus staff member **Brandi Costain** gives a discussion on how to render a video visually stimulating and how to obtain permission from the public to shoot a video.

"I learned about how to work a camera...It was really fun I really like the place!"

-Courtney Hogan, participant

Thursday July 10th, 2003 to Friday July 11th, 2003

Group facilitator **Vinh Duong** gives a workshop on video production where he reviews the pre-production, production, and post-production periods of filmmaking. On Friday the students are brought on a field trip to tour City TV, where they get a chance to learn more about the production process, meet local celebrities, and perform before a live audience. The group also ran into Nigel Holdbrooke, a former 1998 participant of the Regent Park Focus E.Y.E. Video Program. Nigel was working at Muchmusic as a cameraperson.



"I felt pretty good because I got to be put on the list to be a part of a singing show which Much is going to have sometime in the near future."

-Tamika Boyce, participant

"We learned how the shows we watch on City TV and Muchmusic go on air and the people behind the scenes...I felt really happy with the City TV tour."

-Emmanuel Kedini, staff



Thursday July 17th, 2003

The youth participate in another camera workshop with media artist **Naguss Demoz-Goshu** in preparation for the filming of their public service announcements. This year's

theme is youth and politics. Participants are arranged in production groups to plan their PSAs on youth voting and the government. The students then take the cameras outside on a video scavenger hunt where they must film different objects beginning with different letters of the alphabet, using varied camera angles.



Naguss Demoz-Goshu is a media artist and a board member on the advisory committee for Focus. He produces short documentaries, manages community audio and video programming for youth in Parkdale, and is a community activist.

"Today was another great experience for me...we actually got a workshop on how to use a video camera, which was pretty cool...I guess I felt pretty proud of myself for finally learning how to use a video camera properly."

-Jayanthini Kandasamy, participant

Friday July 18th, 2003

Everyone is invited to go tour the CBC studios and to learn about how its shows are produced.

"I felt pretty disappointed in the group because many people were being really disrespectful to the tour guides at CBC."

-Tamika Boyce, participant

"The CBC tour was alright, however it was shorter than last time and not worth the price."

-Riel Moxon-Emre, staff

Monday July 21st, 2003 to Tuesday July 22nd, 2003

While the youth work on their PSA storyboards at Regent Park Focus, some of the staff attend a two day web-streaming workshop at InterAccess taught by **Lewis Kaye**.

On Tuesday the students attend a final video production workshop instructed by group facilitator **Riel Moxon-Emre**. He reviews how to set up the camera, the roles of a production crew and director, and audio troubleshooting. The participants practice various shots and set-ups with the camera.

Lewis Kaye was the Access Co-ordinator at InterAccess for three years before becoming an instructor. He does web-streaming for professional artists to help them promote their work online.

"I learnt a lot about video streaming on the web and video compression. I felt good about the skills that I learnt today for they are very applicable to the video production that I work with."

-Riel Moxon-Emre, staff

"I learnt that each time a scene is done, a director, cameraman, soundperson and subject/actor is needed...I felt that the video workshop was something I will pick up easier once I get my hands on a camera and start producing my own film."

-Linh Thai, participant

Wednesday July 23rd, 2003

Program Co-ordinator **Adonis Huggins** conducts a super8 film workshop. He introduces the super8 camera to the students and explains the concepts and properties of a super8 film. Planning, camera work and plot are discussed.

"Today was a very slow day. No one had much energy in them and most of the few who showed up left...I didn't give much energy and I felt I should have tried to put more energy in my group. Maybe tomorrow things will be better I hope.."

-Herman Browne, participant

Friday July 25th, 2003

The participants attend a tour of the Star TV studio. The tour guide discusses the history of television and the production process.

"Today is definitely a long day...in the afternoon we went to a private TV place and the guys there are really weird. One of them swears too much and the other talks on and on about his knowledge. The most scary part is the [guard] dog—it is evil!! I didn't enjoy today at all."

-Joey Chen, participant

"I learnt about pirated VHF signals and the expense it costs to have a pirated TV channel...I felt a lot of people were not interested in what [the tour guide] had to say. I was pretty upset with the group for not listening or showing interest."

-Vinh Duong, staff

Saturday July 26th, 2003 to Sunday July 27th, 2003

Focus staff **Brandi Costain** brings three female youth (Crystal Fung, Jayanthini Kandasamy and Linh Thai) to a unique video workshop held in the wilderness in Canada's only queer and transgender natural space. The event is organised by Camp Sis and its aim is to teach women the basics of story-making and filming. Over the weekend, the youths manage to plan and shoot two short videos, which will later be edited at Focus.

Monday July 28th, 2003 to Friday August 1st, 2003

Mervin Jarmin, a Community Art Activist, comes to Focus on Monday to give a workshop on the Linker software developed by Mongrel. The Linker program allows people to link images, text and audio files on a computer free of charge. Following the workshop, the participants are sent out to collect audio and visual data, which they learn to integrate into a Linker interface when they visit InterAccess on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

Mervin Jarmin is a Jamaican-born Community Art Activist, an Interactive Multimedia Designer, a Human Computer Interface expert and a member of the Mongrel Collective, "the avant-garde of digitally engaging street culture." His motto is: "Art is life."



"I did lots of stuff...like go to Linker and did our project on our country and where our parents came from. We also downloaded music from the computer...I felt OK because I put lots of time into my Linker project."

-Colin Bingham, participant

"Today I felt great because our group finished our Linker project and we also learned how to use it...Today was very productive and I learned a lot today and I had fun."

-Crystal Fung, participant

"I actually learned a lot today, I learned how to edit the video we made. I also learned how to edit the music I brought...And I can't wait till the next session."

-Jayanthini Kandasamy, participant



Thursday July 31st, 2003

One of the youth groups goes to the Ralph Thorton Centre to shoot their PSA, which protests against government cutbacks to community centres. The students involved are Agazi Aftewerki, Tunjib Ahmed, Farid Jabil and Iftekhar Chowdhury.

Friday August 1st, 2003

A community screening of the Linker project is held at the Focus Centre in the early evening. Staff, youth, members of InterAccess, and friends of the students all attend the showing. The seven finished media art projects are presented by the individuals or groups that created them, and they resemble pictorial maps with images that bring up audio, video and text files when they are passed over with a mouse.

"I felt good about presenting the Linker projects at the viewing, it was really effective."

-Riel Moxon-Emre, staff

Wednesday August 6th, 2003

The participants work on the storyboards for their super8 films. One group shoots their PSA, which speaks out against the lack of funding and equipment in schools and the necessity for youth to get involved in stopping it. The participants involved are Colin Bingh, Herman Browne, Crystal Fung, Jayanthini Kandasamy and Linh Thai.

"In the afternoon, our group went to a youth centre on Queen and River to shoot our video. It was fun. Raymond was very experienced at shooting a video. He knew how to shoot in different angles and positions. I am just glad and happy that I am in this video!!!"

-Yang Shen, participant



Monday August 12th, 2003

One group goes out to try and get interviews for their docudrama on employment and SIN numbers. (This docudrama is unfinished.)

"We went to the Eaton Centre for our project but only got a few people on camera a lot of people only talked to us off camera. I learned that a lot of people are camera shy."

-Jissa Ibrahim,

participant

Wednesday August 13th, 2003

One group finishes shooting their PSA. It features a youth translating a politician's jargon into everyday vocabulary so that the audience hears the real message behind his speech. The production crew includes: Heraldo Garcia, Courtney Hogan, Toni Li, and Shane Thymes. They also begin learning the basics of Final Cut Pro, the program used at Focus to edit videos.

"We also had to do our PSA all over again. After we shot it, we started to edit it. I had fun finishing our PSA and editing our PSA."

-Heraldo Garcia, participant



Monday August 18th to Tuesday August 26th, 2003

The youth write their super8 storyboards as well as research and discuss their docudramas.

"In the afternoon, I worked on my super8 film script. I have a good idea for a film and Adonis said that it was good. Now I just have to get actors and film it. I think my film is going to be good."

-Agazi Aftewerki, participant

"This morning we are supposed to do our storyboards but not many people are participating."

-Joey Chen, participant

"I learnt nothing in the morning, because we just worked on our super eight film storyboards...we didn't do anything that required a lot of work."

-Crystal Fung, participant

Friday August 22nd, 2003

One group completes the shooting of their docudrama on illegal downloading at HMV. Members include Tunjib Ahmed, Agazi Aftewerki, Iftekhar Chowdhury and Farid Jabil.

“Today me and my group were working on the longer 5 min. film we tried going to several stores but they would not give us an interview so we went to a friend’s house and filmed some stuff there... We got a lot of footage and we are going to edit them maybe on Monday.”

-Agazi Aftewerki, participant

“First we went and tried to film stores, and interview but everyone said no, so we went to this kid’s house and finished a lot of footage. We are basically done so all we have to do is edit. I think the film is going to be hype.”

-Iftekhar Chowdhury, participant



Monday August 25th, 2003 to Wednesday August 29th, 2003

The youth learn to use the super8 cameras and take turns shooting their films.

"In the afternoon, I went over to Jarvis to shoot my super8 film with my friends. Ray came afterward to be my cameraman. I had a lot of fun making my super8 film. It was one of my greatest experiences with learning!!!"

-Yang Shen, participant

Wednesday August 27th, 2003

The students that shot the docudrama on illegal music downloading edit their film.



By the end of the program, all participants had independently completed their Linker projects, super8 films and group PSAs. With the exception of the illegal downloading video, a group decision was made to stop production of the docudramas due to the lack of time. The finished products will be shown at various screenings and festivals throughout the year. Further information about the video summer activities will be posted at www.catchdaflava.com.

RADIO

Catch da Flava Radio is aired bi-monthly on every first and third Tuesday evening from 7:20pm-8:00pm on CKLN 88.1FM. The show is produced and hosted by youth and brings in a variety of guests and callers to discuss issues that affect young people.

During the summer the participants in the Multimedia Arts Summer Program were divided into groups. Each group was given the task of producing one show on any topic of their choosing, as long as it was relevant to youth. Additionally, groups joined together to write and perform two audio-plays, produced under the supervision of professional theatrical artists. The final component of the radio section of the summer program required each youth to take part in a soundscapes audio arts project taught by poet Lynn Harrigan.



Monday July 7th, 2003

Students listen to a selection of radio show excerpts to get an idea of what the format should be for their upcoming radio shows.

Monday July 14th, 2003

Guest DJ **Michael Jones, AKA DJ Tek9**, presents an introductory DJing workshop where he gives an overview the history of DJing and explains the difference between club and battle DJing. The workshop concludes with a question and answer period.

Michael Jones, AKA DJ Tek9, is a professional DJ from Hamilton. He has been in the business for numerous years and has performed in various cities across southern Ontario, including several popular Toronto nightclubs.

Wednesday July 16th, 2003 to Thursday July 17th, 2003

The youth are split into two large groups that each work with a different artist to create their audio-plays. One of the guest artists is actress, writer and comedian **Marcia Johnson**. She begins her session with an auto-writing exercise in which the participants are instructed to write continuously on a given topic for ten minutes. Today's topic is music. She then divides the students into pairs in order to form short dialogues with the material they had produced during the previous exercise. This prepares them for writing their longer audio-plays.

The youth that are not in Marcia's group work with **Tien Providence**, who is an experienced playwright, author and radio host. He has his group act out and discuss a scene from one of his pieces, and then asks individuals to take on the role of one of the characters in the play to answer random questions from their character's perspective. This activity fosters communication between group members and encourages them to experiment with different personas to create a believable cast for their audio-play.

Marcia Johnson has been acting for over twenty years and doing stand-up comedy for over ten years. More recently she has begun to write. In 1996 she was named Poet Inebriate with her entry, "I Want to Take a Guy from Stomp Home with Me," and her play "Perfect on Paper" which she wrote, directed and starred in, was accepted for the 2001 Toronto Fringe Festival. A radio adaptation of "Perfect on Paper" will be aired on CBC in December 2003.



Tien Providence is a native of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and was the Artistic Director for the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Cultural Group from 1991-1994. In 2002 he conducted a workshop on "The Session" at the Caribbean Theatre Festival. He is also a radio host on CKLN 88.1FM for Jazz Zone every Friday from 7am-11am, and a co-host on Stage Left Mondays on Mondays, 2pm-2:30pm. He is currently preparing to direct an updated version of his play "Back Home" for the 2003 Toronto Fringe Festival.



"Today we learned that we will be doing a radio show that we have to write a script for. I am looking forward to this because we have to do improv in the following weeks and poetry which I enjoy."

-Herman Browne, participant

"...we learned about how radio-plays are made and we also read a script. I felt I've learned more about the radio and about how media affects controversy."

-Heraldo Gracia, participant

"I did read the act of "Pete" and a little "aside." I lean how to act a person. I feel I can read more than last time I been here. I feel I progress a lot!"

-Tony Li, participant

Monday July 21st, 2003

In the morning **Spiria Fearon** from FLOW 93.5FM comes in to Focus to discuss the process of getting into the radio business and relates many of her personal experiences to the youth, emphasising the obstacles and sacrifices she had to overcome. The participants are then separated into groups to discuss their radio show topics.

Spiria Fearon has been in the radio industry since high school, but she also has a background in television, voice-work, acting and modelling. Her first job was at a post-college co-op at Global News, which lasted four years. Spiria now hosts the Morning

Rush on FLOW 93.5FM from 5:30am-10:00am. She has been with FLOW for over two years.



"In the morning FLOW 93.5 came and we talked about all the stuff that happens in a radio show. It was cool...I hope this program stays fun so everyone can have as much fun as I have."

-Agazi Afewerki, participant

"I learnt that before you decide to enter the media industry, try to get a taste of what the place is like. [Spiria] made me realise there's a lot more to having her job than playing music and reading news. There's a lot of expectations and courses to cover. I felt that the speaker's story was inspirational because of the long road she took. I really respect what she does."

-Linh Thai, participant

Tuesday July 22nd, 2003 to Wednesday July 23rd, 2003

Tien Providence and **Marcia Johnson** return to continue working on the audio-plays with the students. Marcia's group pairs off and creates a longer dialogue based on another auto-writing exercise with the ambiguous title, "A journey with my mother." Tien's group brainstorms topics for their audio-play and begins to develop plots. The youth collectively make character sketches that eventually lead to the formation of a rough story outline.

"In the afternoon, we wrote our story, the radio one...I had fun, today was a hype day."

-Iftekhhar Chowdhury, participant

Tuesday July 29th, 2003

Tien Providence continues work on the audio-play his group started the previous week. **Marcia Johnson** helps her group develop character and plot sketches.

In the evening, one of the groups organises and broadcasts their first radio-show on Catch da Flava Radio. The theme is the Caribana long-weekend celebrations, and they discuss its history and give details about the event. The show is produced and hosted by participants Colin Bingham, Herman Browne, Joey Chen, Crystal Fung, Jayanthini Kandasamy, Yang Shen and Linh Thai. Raymond Wilson, a youth leader, facilitates the group.

"...what I'm not really looking forward to is the radio show tonight. I'm sooo worried that I'm going to fail or screw up something. I hope everything goes [like] clockwork today."

-Herman Browne, participant



Tuesday August 5th, 2003

The second summer radio show is held. Tonight's topic is youth and the prison system, with host Tunjib Ahmed. The other members of the production crew are Iftekhar Chowdhury, Agazi Aftewerki and Farid Jabil. **Riel Moxon-Emre** facilitates the group.

"Today we discussed about our radio show. We came up with some good ideas...The show had several problems due to technical difficulties but we still found a way to finish it by using the telephone to communicate the conversations. But at the end, it was all good and fun."

-Agazi Aftewerki, participant



Wednesday August 6th, 2003

Tien Providence holds a radio workshop with his group. They reread the script they wrote during the last session and continue to edit and finalise their audio-play.

"Tien is a motivational instructor that displays enthusiasm for his work with us."

-Riel Moxon-Emre, staff

Friday August 8th, 2003

Marcia Johnson discusses the characters her group invented during the previous workshop and they work on incorporating their plot into the dialogue. The drafts of the

first and second scenes of their play, “Too Young for Love,” are completed as a group. Characterisation and sound effects are also discussed.

"Marcia taught quite a bit today about doing a play on the radio. I learned how we can change the way our voice sounds, how we have to remember to establish the little details because we can't show facial expression in radio. I felt great today because I actually enjoyed working on the audio-play in the morning and I think we accomplished a lot."

-Jayanthini Kandasamy, participant

"I learnt the process it takes to write a play that'll be presented on the radio, it's harder in the sense that we have to fill the audience in what's happening but naturally. I felt that it was difficult to write an audio-play especially when it's with a group so everyone has their own opinion."

-Linh Thai, participant



Friday August 12th, 2003

In the morning, poet **Lynn Harrigan** conducts an audio arts soundscapes workshop with the participants. Soundscapes are digital audio pieces that synthesise music and sounds in an exploratory way. The youth begin by listening to and discussing various poems recorded on a CD. This is followed by several writing exercises that entails students to describe images and ideas in terms of the five senses. They then must explain the significance of a personal object that they have chosen to show the group. The workshop concludes with an assignment to write the first draft of a poem.

Lynn Harrigan is a member of the League of Canadian Poets. She teaches creative writing to high school students and as a poet enjoys working on multimedia projects with visual artists and musicians.



"Today a poet named Lynn came. I really enjoyed the poems she shared with us, also I wrote some poems which was quite fun."

-Farid Jabil, participant

"Today we worked on poetry which was rather refreshing since I haven't done it in awhile. The instructor was great well spoken and all. I must say she has been my favourite guest so far."

-Eve Zorowski,

participant

After lunch, **Marcia Johnson** helps her group write the draft of scene three and the outline of scene four of her group's audio-play. **Tien Providence** finishes the initial draft of their play, except for the ending.

"I think the [audio-play] story is very original and emotional and most importantly very real. I think everyone in the group is interested in the topic, and most of them supported this play by putting their own ideas. What I like the most is that Marcia doesn't tell us what the play should be about, instead she gives us ideas and leads us to a good play by helping us to think on our own."

-Joey Chen, participant

Wednesday August 13th, 2003

Lynn Harrigan returns to continue her audio arts workshop. The students free-write poetry while listening to ambient music. Afterwards they complete and edit the poems that were written yesterday and then rehearse them for the soundscapes CD, which the participants will record before the week is over. The soundscapes CD will feature the youths' poems accompanied by music and other audio clips.

"This morning was our second morning with Lynn. We had a pretty productive morning...I guess I learned just a little bit more about poetry. Just about reading your poem, like the pace, tone etc....I felt good in the morning because writing the poetry isn't bad."

-Jayanthini Kandasamy. participant

Thursday August 14th, 2003

The audio art workshop continues with **Lynn Harrigan**. The participants edit and rehearse their poems and then choose appropriate music and audio clips to accompany their pieces on the soundscapes CD. Some students get a chance to record their poems through the computer. The recording will be completed next session.

"Today was very good. In the morning I mostly worked on my audio poem and I have already completed recording...I'm almost done so I'm very happy."

-Tunjib Ahmed, participant

"Lynn came in for the third day to start our recording. We then decided the sound effects playing in the background...I learnt that recording a poem is effective with lots of emotion. A back drop seems to make it more interesting as well."

-Linh Thai, participant



Monday August 18th, 2003

This is the final day in the audio arts workshop with **Lynn Harrigan**. The youth individually record their poems, music and sound effects on the soundscapes CD. Meanwhile, she plays acting games with the other students.

"Today we mostly focused on making our poems and recording them...I think this poem project is the most interesting project next to the Linker one. It's really fun and meaningful to do, and it is something that's truly from us (our ideas, our selves)."

-Joey Chen, participant

"I felt pretty good today, kind of tired though. I had fun today because I'm done recording my poem and I'm really happy about that."

-Crystal Fung, participant

Tuesday August 19th, 2003

Audio-play workshops continue with **Marcia Johnson** and **Tien Providence**. Both groups complete and edit their audio-play scripts. Marcia's group determines where to produce the necessary sound effects for their play, and the characters' roles are assigned to various participants. Recording will take place next week.

"Today was a good day for me. In the morning we worked on the script about the radio show. I think we did good on the script but then there may be a problem with our guests though because they may not be able to come so now we have to add more stuff to the radio show. But other than that I think it will be a great success, I hope."

-Agazi Aftewerki, participant

"I get to perfect voice acting skills again. I'm looking forward to it a lot more than I let on."

-Herman Browne, participant

Agazi Afewerki, Iftekhar Chowdhury, and Farid Jabil host the third Catch da Flava radio show of the summer. The topic of this evening's show is poverty among visible minorities, with guest Debra Dineen from Pathways to Education. After this segment there is a discussion about urban western poetry and the blackout that had occurred in the previous week.

Wednesday August 20th, 2003

Tien Providence comes to Focus to finish editing their audio-play script. Staff and participants are cast in the play, which will be recorded the following week. The play is entitled "Beauty Lies."



Tuesday August 26th, 2003

Tien Providence and **Marcia Johnson** both return to conduct a final audio-play workshop. The youth rehearse and record the two plays, which will be edited and complemented with sound effects.

"...we recorded our radio play. It was fun...I tried my best I thought I did pretty good. Hopefully the radio play will be hype! This story was not as good as Marcia's but I believe it will be hype still because my voice is in it!"

-Iftekhar Chowdhury, participant

"Today, the group recorded the radio play. I had no vocal acting part, as I was bored as they recorded. This was an extremely boring day and I hope for a more exciting day, tomorrow."

-Heraldo Garcia, participant

"Today was a different day from the rest. We actually got to start and finish recording our audio-play...we really didn't get opportunities to learn much. I felt pretty happy all day. I really enjoyed doing our audio-play..."

-Jayanthini Kandasamy, participant

Wednesday August 27, 2003

Tien's group listens carefully to the recording of their audio-play. Upon reflection on their work, the group feels that there is unnecessary profanity, subtle racism, chauvinism and sizism in the script. They decide will rewrite their piece and re-record it at a later date.

"After lunch, we listened to our radio play. It had too many problems, so we decided to change the script. It was a busy and exciting day..."

-Heraldo Garcia, participant

Sound effects and music will be added to the completed audio-plays, which will be made available to participants and the public at www.catchdaflava.com and on CD, accompanied by the soundscapes music and poetry compilation.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Lawrence Millar was the resident photography instructor for the Summer Multimedia Arts Program and was a demanding teacher. His workshops were always well planned and informative. Unfortunately his approach to photography was at times much too serious for introductory-level photographers. Nevertheless, under his guidance, participants learnt the basics of photography and the elements of a good photograph. Youths who expressed a particular interest in darkroom photography were also taught how to develop black-and-white photographs. The end results of this component of the program were nine vibrant musical photo slideshows.



Friday July 11th, 2003

Students tour the Gallery 44 photo exhibit. This exhibit features youth poetry as well as work previously produced by members of Regent Park Focus.

"We went to Gallery 44, which wasn't that fun!...I was very upset over the gallery visit."

-Emmanuel Kedini,

staff

"Today, we went to the gallery and looked at pictures, even though some people weren't looking at any, they were playing cards. I was kinda bored while we were there..."

-Claudia Skorniewska, participant

Tuesday July 15th, 2003

Lawrence Millar spends the day sharpening the youths' observational skills. After providing an overview of the photography course, he encourages participants to "see" as opposed to "look" by having them critique some slides of his work. The students then go off individually to find five novel observations about their everyday surroundings. This activity is succeeded by another photo slideshow, which concludes the day.

Lawrence Millar is a member of Gallery 44 Centre for Photography and has a lifetime of photography and darkroom skills. He also taught high school and spent seventeen years in professional broadcasting at the CBC. Lawrence is passionate about teaching photography to young people.



"Today a photographer came...he is a nice man, and he told us many important stuff about photography, but sometimes when he talks, it was boring, but overall I learned a lot. Today we observed many things in the neighbourhood and I saw so many things in a different view. I'll always remember "The first time you see something, it will be the last time to see it the first time!" "

-Joey Chen, participant

"Today I walked around and looked for different interesting aspects about taking pictures. I learned that if you wanna be a good photographer you will have to be able to see and care about things we take for granted around us. I felt that the photography part of the workshop is going to turn out well although I didn't really connect with the inner beauty of photography."

-Christopher Husbands, participant

"The majority of the day was spent on the photo workshop... the youth participants seemed to lack interest in some of the exercises."

-Riel Moxon-Emre, staff

Thursday July 24th, 2003

Lawrence Millar returns and introduces the parts and functions of a camera and its film. This is followed by a photo slideshow that he uses as a tool to discuss light. Cameras are distributed to the group and then more slides are shown to demonstrate the effects of shutter speed, aperture and different lenses. After a brief tutorial on how to load film, there is a final slideshow demonstration about the quality of work that can be produced using the cameras. The workshop ends with a framing exercise where students explore the Focus Centre with their cameras and show Lawrence what pictures they would take, without actually taking them. During their leisure time, students are expected to shoot photographs of subjects revolving around a chosen theme. Lawrence will pick up their film for development one week later.

"Today I learned how to use a camera and how to take shots. It was OK. It felt very boring because I didn't do anything...I got a camera that was cool."

-Tunjib Ahmed, participant

"Photography day...I learned a bit more about techniques possible with the camera through the aperture and shutter speed. How to manual-focus an auto-focus-only camera. I felt the day was tiring, a bit boring but very educational. Lawrence is a great teacher."

-Vinh Duong, staff

"Today we did a photography workshop, looked at photos, got cameras, discussed how to use them and angles, lighting and that stuff. It was alright most of the time but had its boring times."

-Jissa Ibrahim,

participant

Thursday August 7th, 2003

Lawrence Millar presents slides of the developed film. The participants critique one another's work through votes and comments. Lawrence discusses the etiquette of asking strangers to have their pictures taken, and during a slideshow gives suggestions on how to improve photographs in terms of subject, lighting, composition and atmosphere.

"All day all we did was looking at peoples' pictures and it was boring because Lawrence was talking too much. Other than that it was kool...The pictures I took were OK and I felt very good today."

-Tunjib Ahmed, participant



Thursday August 14th, 2003

Lawrence Millar presents the remainder of the participants' pictures from their first rolls of film in a photo slideshow. The pictures are critiqued and the youth are assigned their individual themes for their second rolls of film.

"Today was hype...I actually did not get yelled at, or dissed up cause my pictures were tough. My next pictures will be more hype!"

-Iftekhar Chowdhury, participant

"Today was another one of those days where I didn't learn much from Lawrence...I felt really bad, because Lawrence is so boring, and he makes me fall asleep."

-Jayanthini Kandasamy, participant

Thursday August 21st, 2003

Lawrence Millar returns to Focus with slides of the participants' second rolls of film. The youth are given an assignment to take portrait shots of one another as a group project. Lawrence also gives a brief introduction to the basics of darkroom photography including how to process raw film and make contact sheets. A slideshow and critique of the students' most recent work concludes the workshop. Final rolls of film are handed out to some participants, which will be picked up for development by Lawrence early next week.

"I learnt one thing today, actually, which is surprising because Lawrence was here and we usually never learn anything, but today we learnt how to take a portrait, and that was very interesting..."

-Crystal Fung, participant

"Today, the group took portraits...After lunch, we looked at some slides. Some of the slides had good pictures...I liked looking at the slides."

-Heraldo Garcia, participant

"I felt upset my pictures came too overexposed. I am happy some of them turned out well though and they actually got a reaction out of people. I don't have any idea what music I could collaborate with my photographs."

-Linh Thai, participant



Monday August 25th, 2003

Lawrence Millar shows the remainder of the photo slides for group critiquing. He briefly talks about the use of reflectors in place of flash. The youth begin editing and combining their rolls of film for slideshow presentations. These will be accompanied by ambient or atmospheric music that the students will personally select.

"In the afternoon we looked at more slides, Lawrence came in and attempted to help us with editing the slides...I think I did learn a little bit in the afternoon, how to combine slides, besides that I didn't learn anything else...I was also pretty mad in the afternoon because Lawrence was making me mad when he kept criticising my pictures."

-Crystal Fung, participant

"After lunch we came in to find Lawrence loading slides. We ended up viewing slides...Lawrence also taught us more about how to organise the slides. I felt pretty happy today, because we got to relax a lot. I also thought we accomplished a lot for the day."

-Jayanthini Kandasamy, participant

Wednesday August 27th, 2003

Lawrence Millar returns to help the youth choose which slides to include in their slideshows. The photos for each one are compiled either individually or in pairs and will be presented with appropriate music chosen by the participants.

"Today in the morning I was looking at our pictures with Lawrence. I saw a lot of good pictures and I got good feedback from Lawrence and everyone else...I had a good time."

-Agazi Afewerki, participant

"In the morning Lawrence came in again, and as we always do, we viewed out slides. We viewed our slides with music...I learned quite a bit more about using music with photography and how important it can be."

-Jayanthini Kandasamy, participant

The slideshows will be archived, and exceptional photos will be turned into printed photographs to be displayed in the upcoming Focus art gallery.

NEWSPAPER

Catch da Flava Newspaper is published quarterly and features youth-written articles aimed at young people and residents of the Regent Park community. Its main focus is on current issues that affect its target audience. The print version is distributed to households, schools and community centres across Toronto and the online version can be found at www.catchdaflava.com. Participants in the Multimedia Arts Summer Program made a tremendous contribution to the 2003 summer issue of Catch da Flava Newspaper. Students were encouraged to write an article for the paper on any topic that concerned them. Brandi Costain, Catch da Flava's editor-in-chief, supervised this portion of the Multimedia Arts Summer Program.



Monday July 7th, 2003

Brandi Costain reviews the different sections of Catch da Flava Newspaper with the participants in order to get them thinking about what topics they might want to write about.



Tuesday July 8th, 2003

In random groups, the students brainstorm what comprises the elements of a news story. **Brandi Costain** discusses the main elements of news and reporting, how to find a story, and what makes an effective story.

"I learned about how to write an effective story and how and what is good research...I also felt that working in groups allowed us to learn and listen to the ideas of others."

-Tamika Boyce, participant

"I learned...how to brainstorm about news. I felt happy today it was fun and exciting..."

-Jamal Robinson,

participant

Friday July 18th, 2003

Journalist **Dalton Higgins** gives the youth a motivational speech on how to package oneself in order to get a job in journalism, and also gives advice on how to find stories. He stresses that success in the writing industry does not rely on education alone.

Dalton Higgins is a columnist for NOW Magazine, which is a free alternative newsmagazine distributed all over Toronto.

"I learnt a lot from Dalton. Very inspirational speaker. He taught us that a portfolio of finished work and performance is better than any degree in media-related jobs. I felt the youth felt inspired and uplifted by Dalton's words."

-Vinh Duong, staff

"I felt that Dalton was a good speaker and his story was very inspirational...it kept me thinking about what I want to do myself."

-Linh Thai, participant

Tuesday July 22nd, 2003

Brandi Costain assigns individual topics for articles to the youth and also discusses how to research a story.

Friday August 1st 2003

Brandi Costain presents a newspaper workshop where she helps the participants finalise their topics and gather information for articles. She explains how an article should be structured.

"We talked about our articles with Brandi. We told her what our ideas are and when we'll have the first draft done."

-Jissa Ibrahim,

participant



Friday August 8th, 2003

Youth work on unfinished articles with **Brandi Costain**. She helps them research, write and edit their work.

"Today was very good because I worked on my article. And it was fun and I felt very good...I'm going to interview a basketball player in the weekend so that's kool."

-Tunjib Ahmed, participant

"I tried very hard to get the kids to do their articles. I did research for some people, I wrote all questions for others just because they were acting completely clueless. I went over each person's article and talked about the articles with the writers...Near the end of the day I gave up...I learned that it's hard to ask the youth to write when they don't value or appreciate...writing."

-Brandi Costain, staff

Monday August 11th, 2003

The youth write and print their articles. **Brandi Costain** goes over their spelling and grammar errors so that they can retype their work in their own time.

"Today I collected the rest of the articles. There are still outstanding articles. I reviewed the articles I have, edited them and gave them back to their respective writers. I felt that

today was a very unproductive day."

-Brandi Costain, staff

Friday August 22nd, 2003

The youth tour the building of NOW Magazine. Founder Alison Klein shows them the various departments and introduces them to some of the staff. The participants learn about the submission, layout, advertising and circulation procedures of a major newspaper.

"Today, the group went to where NOW Magazine was produced. We got to see the Lounge, where people worked and where the computers were. I learned a lot on how a magazine is made. It was a day crammed with info and I'm looking forward to the weekend."

-Heraldo Gracia, participant

"We took a tour of the NOW Magazine building we found out where they did the printing and publishing. They gave us free drinks and told us the history of the building and company it was fun."

*-Jissa Ibrahim,
participant*

"I learnt where each part of the newspaper is developed in each department it seems that each part of the newspaper we overlook every day has people putting so much effort .I felt that there's so much effort put into a newspaper. There's also so much people involved and so many stages it goes through."

-Linh Thai, participant



The newspaper segment of the Multimedia Arts Summer Program ends here, but production of the summer issue of Catch da Flava Newspaper continues. In ensuing weeks **Brandi Costain** will edit all the submitted articles, including the ones written by Focus youth staff and outside contributors. The summer 2003 issue of the newspaper is due out in early fall.

THE PROGRAM STAFF

Program Coordinator



Adonis Huggins is a graduate of the Community Worker Program at George Brown College and has been Program Coordinator at the Regent Park Focus since the early nineties. He is responsible for organising the various components of the Multimedia Arts Program and is dedicated to expanding and improving the Focus Centre and its activities. His work is recognised not only within the community but also throughout Toronto and in the media.

Group Facilitators



Vinh Duong is currently studying systems networking technologies at Centennial College. Vinh has been with the Regent Park Focus for the last five years. He began as a participant and then graduated to become a youth instructor. He teaches video and audio

work and assists in all other areas of the Multimedia Arts Program. Vinh provides invaluable technical support to the program and has also produced several award-winning videos.



Emmanuel Kedini has been with the Regent Park Focus for the past four years. He edits videos and is a group leader in the Multimedia Arts Summer Program. His award-winning film “The Last Witness” has gained considerable attention throughout Toronto for its strong anti-violence message. Emmanuel aspires to be a filmmaker, and when he is not at Focus, he works as a security guard on film sets. At the end of the summer when Emmanuel finishes his instructor-in-training, he will become a full-time facilitator.



Riel Moxon-Emre is currently in his fourth year studying new media at Ryerson University. He spent two years in the Multimedia Arts Program as a participant before graduating to become a video production instructor. At present, he is the Design and Layout Co-ordinator for Catch da Flava Newspaper.



Raymond Wilson is an instructor-in-training at the Regent Park Focus, and as such has spent two years editing videos and facilitating youth groups. He also assists in numerous youth projects throughout the year. His current interests lie in music production and writing, and he is aspiring to become a filmmaker.

Editor-in-Chief of Catch da Flava Newspaper



Brandi Costain is currently in her fourth year at Ryerson University studying broadcast journalism. She has been the editor-in-chief of Catch da Flava newspaper for three years and aspires to be a storyteller in many different mediums. Her interests are incredibly broad, but her main goal is to someday become the producer of a respected documentary show.

Catch da Flava Facilitator



Bo Wen Chan is currently specialising in psychology at the University of Toronto with a minor in English. She is an aspiring fiction writer with a strong background in visual arts and music. Her literary and artistic work has appeared in various small publications. Prior to becoming an instructor-in-training in summer 2003, she contributed to E.Y.E Video and Catch da Flava Newspaper. Bo Wen will graduate as a facilitator at the end of the summer.

Administrative Assistant



Sarah Ayers has received two diplomas for her work in the social service sector and is a certified Life Skills coach. Sarah became involved with the Regent Park Focus as a placement student because of her interest in grassroots media. At the end of her

placement in May 2003, she successfully applied for the position of administrative assistant.

Thank you to the following youth who allowed us to share their journals with the public:



Agazi Afterwerki



Colin Bingham



Courtney Hogan



Crystal Fung



Eve Zorawski



Farid Jabil



Heraldo Garcia



**Herman Browne
Robinson**



Iftekhar Chowdury



Jamal



**Jayanthini
Kandasamy**



Jissa Ibrahim



**Yang Shen and
Joe Chen**



Linh Thai



Shane Thymes



Tony Li



Yang Shen

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CONTACT US

The Regent Park Focus welcomes all inquiries. For any information, questions and/or comments regarding the Regent Park Focus or its programs and events, please contact us at:

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