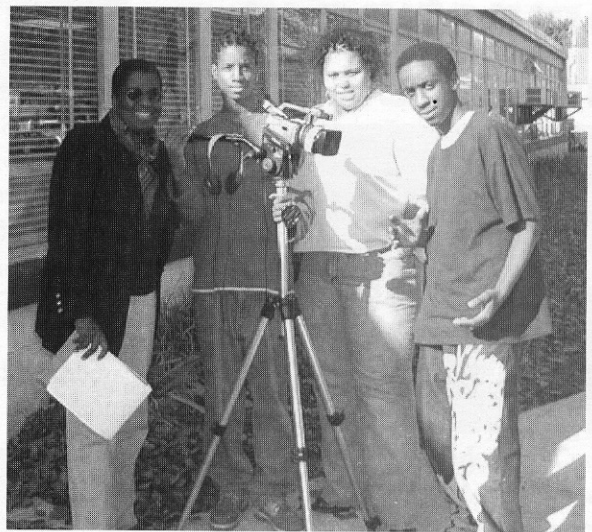


Voices of America Share Their Stories via Film

Through a relationship with Black Media Foundation (BMF), an organization that seeks to assist in developing student skills in the communications arts fields, eight students from the Eastern Suffolk BOCES Centereach Learning Center, whose population consists of youths aged 14-21 who are at-risk and exhibit dysfunctional and maladaptive behavior in response to their environment, will have an opportunity to tell their own stories via film. For three hours each Wednesday, these students will meet and learn advance computer techniques for movie production. The eight students were selected based on their behavior management level and interest in this program. They will work together in groups as they prepare their final project, films exploring "Who Am I?".

"As educators in an alternative setting, our task is to provide educational services to children with disabilities that gives them an opportunity to succeed once they graduate," stated Keith Ferry, principal of the Centereach Learning Center. "We believe that our students will benefit greatly from the video workshop exercise, as they will learn the importance of working closely toward a common goal – a key component of success in business. We will monitor the value of this program and hope to expand it in future years."

The mission of the BMF is to increase the number of voices in the fabric of America. The organization does this in two ways: improving the level of communication art skills in communities outside the so-called mainstream and increasing the amount of storytelling about these communities. An outlet for cultural expression is necessary for legitimizing the thoughts and the feelings that are particular to such communities. Legitimizing voices, such as those of disabled students, helps give them authority, placing them on equal footing with voices that make up the fabric of American society.



Pictured (L. to R.): Natalie Byfield, BMF representative, Shaquan Fortune-Samuels (Bay Shore SD), Krystal Colman (Wm. Floyd), and Randy Smith (Longwood SD), taking a break from working on their Anti-Violence video project.



Jacob Guterrez (Central Islip SD) works with Clarence Sheppard, BMF Representative, getting camera angles for their Anti-Drug video project.

The cast takes its bows:

Snoopy, Michael D., Mt. Sinai S.D.; Frieda, Benita H., Central Islip S.D.; Peppermint Patty, Dawn D., Central Islip S.D.; Violet, Ann Marie C., Central Islip S.D.; Sally, Antonella L., Mt. Sinai S.D.; Linus, Eddie R.,



Central Islip; Lucy, Michelle C., Central Islip S.D.; Shermey, Paul F., Rocky Point S.D.; Pig Pen, Jared K., Rocky Point S.D.; Under Study, Francisco Q., Brentwood S.D.

Mrs. Warsaw's Social Communication Interaction Program students sing their holidays songs: Sam M., Rocky Point S.D.; William M., Islip S.D.; Andrew R., Bay Shore S.D.; Joe C.,



Eastport S.D.; Mariel C., Sachem S.D.; Brian K., Islip S.D.; Jasmin T., Central Islip S.D.; Michael W., Massapequa S.D.; Rachel A., Sachem S.D.; Jillian C., Bayport-Bluepoint S.D.; Douglas L., Central Islip S.D.; Vanessa T., Central Islip S.D.; Jayson R., Brentwood S.D.