

Media Department Hosts Students — Abby Beshkin

Eleven area high-school students had the chance in August to become real New York City reporters, traversing the city to cover press conferences and interview sources and returning to use the Edward A. Walsh Media Lab as their newsroom.

From July 27 through Aug. 13, the Department of Communication and Media Studies hosted a group of students, mostly high-school juniors and seniors, participating in the Black Media Foundation's summer journalism workshop.

The Edward A. Walsh Media Lab at Rose Hill's Faculty Memorial Hall served as a home base for the students, who were able to take advantage of the 18 state-of-the-art

In between conducting interviews and covering press conferences, students attended seminars in the Walsh Media Lab on journalism basics: how to structure a news story, how to write a lead and how to interview sources. The workshop also included a photojournalism component, taught by Clarence Sheppard, the artistic and technical director of the Black Media Foundation and a former *Daily News* photographer.

functional place to learn and teach. The new technologies we house in the lab are the cutting edge, and with them we stay on top of instruction in the field."

"We treated the students as real reporters," said Natalie Byfield, executive director of the Black Media Foundation. "The program was intensive, because they covered stories, and at the same time did the hands-on work of getting a paper out."

One student, Vonti McRae, a recent graduate of Transit Technology High School in Brooklyn, obtained permission to interview police officers — not an easy feat for even the most seasoned reporters — for a feature on police corruption. Alanna Ramprasad, who will be a sophomore at the Academy of Mount Saint Ursula in the Bronx, wrote her major story on athletes and performance pressure they often get from trainers and coaches: "I didn't know it was going to be



Robin Andersen, center, professor of communication and media studies, works with high school students at the Edward A. Walsh Media Lab to write and edit news stories. The students took part in a three-week journalism workshop sponsored by the Black Media Foundation and hosted by Fordham's Department of Communication and Media Studies. — Photo by Bruce Gilbert

this much work," she said, but it "was really great experience for anything I'll do later. It taught all the different aspects of journalism."

Throughout the three weeks, students met with news producers from Fox and NBC networks, as well as with a member of *Newsday's* editorial board. Participants also had the chance to tour NY1, New York City's all-news cable channel. "Producers and other people in the field talked a lot about how to be prepared and

how to take advantage of opportunities that are going to come their way," Byfield said.

Students spent the three weeks researching and crafting their stories; on Aug. 13, they presented their finished product, a 12-page newspaper, at a ceremony in the new William D. Walsh Family Library.

"We wanted to make it a compelling experience for them," said Byfield. "That's how you bring new people into the field."

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Macintosh computers to develop skills in Internet research and become comfortable with writing their stories on computers. The lab, which opened last year, also houses audio production equipment as well as two multimedia workstations with capabilities for creating and editing digital video.

Robin Andersen, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Communication and Media Studies, said the Walsh Media Lab was the ideal place for aspiring reporters to learn the tricks of the trade. "A lot of effort went into designing the lab, so that it would be not only a state-of-the-art facility, but also a comfortable,