

# A Summer Experience I'll Never Forget

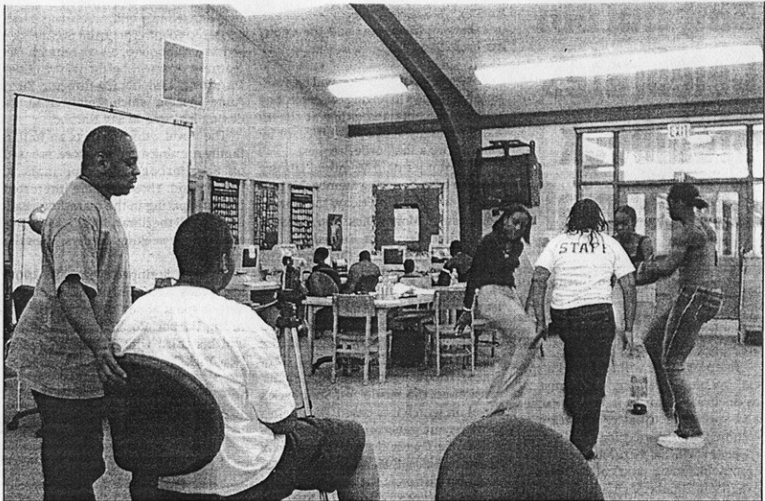
By Steve Rewinski

When you work at a place entitled Social Thinking And Reasoning, the norm is certainly not expected. But still, I never expected to be asked to shoot an independent film. The task was to help a group called The BlackMedia Foundation, Inc., create a film called "Who Am I."

The BF is a private organization founded by Clarence Sheppard and Natalie Byfield, two former New York Post journalists in 1993. The group teaches young and budding journalists the art of grassroots journalism, by traveling into the youngsters' own environments and aiding in the creation of locally minded media outlets, such as videos, newspapers, and pamphlets.

Another way they get the message out is through a three-week intensive program run through the Fordham University Communications Department. There were seven students who were assigned to this task, and from the start we were told that we were to work hard, fast, and with precision... and with only three days of filming, we had little time to spare.

Day one, we split into two production crews to hit the streets of Southampton and interview anyone and everyone we felt appropriate, locals and tourists alike. We were first taught how to use the camera, how to find good lighting, how to record sound properly, and what questions to ask. It was difficult to go up to random people on the street, people we did not know, but after the first few were finished we all felt like professionals. In only a few short hours, both crews had more than a sufficient amount of footage.



Clarence Sheppard of the Black Media Foundation oversees young people from the Social Thinking and Reasoning program, filming and performing at Southampton Intermediate School this summer.

Independent

The following two days, our task was to create and shoot a short skit, a dance, and to record more footage. We had much to do, and not much time to do it. We worked hard and fast, and when push came to shove, the seven of us pulled through. Sheppard would review the footage we filmed as well as film evening games of the summer high school girls basketball team from his home, he would then edit it all into the finished project. The film also in-

corporated poetry, both original and some by Maya Angelou.

I've never done something like this before. It was amazing, almost surreal to see a short film that you helped to create. I was pondering long about the many issues that the arose in the film: racism, sexism, personal knowledge, and knowledge of our world. It taught me that it is important to know where we, personally and as humans, came from and where we are going.

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For more information on The BF, or to sign up for their summer program, visit [www.bmf.net](http://www.bmf.net).



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