



## WSSU students work with kids on production

By Anthony Nelson  
ARGUS REPORTER

Students at Winston-Salem State University were part of Celebrate Home and Hood, a live performance and film production from at-risk youth.

Kerwin Graham, Zack "TJ" James, Derek Monk and Darryl "D-Mack" Smith helped mentor eight inner-city kids who wrote and acted in the production.

"It is important to allow the youth to express their concerns. This show not only gave them that opportunity, but it gave them the access to networks so that they can get prepared early if they want to do this type of work," said Graham, a mass communications major.

Tonya Sheffield, a WSSU graduate, was part of the initial planning process and co-directed the

performance that was held for three days this summer at the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art. Sheffield, along with Lynn Rhoades, a local minister and teacher at Wake Forest University, and Nathan Ross Freeman, a local playwright and screenwriter, all contributed to the production.

"I had done a television program called Scenario working with young people, teaching them television production. Rhoades and Freeman had worked with young people in theatre, so we decided to mix film with theatre," said Sheffield.

Rhoades has done work with the Strategic Approach to Community Safety, the forerunner of the Center for Community Safety, to address safety issues in the communities.

She said, "It occurred to me that we needed to hear the voices of the youth who were being addressed. What better way than to engage youth through video, rap, poetry and music."

The show contained footage of the kids in their homes, where they recorded their thoughts.

Poems and raps added personal touches to the youth's concerns. They spoke on issues ranging from better school supplies to equal opportunity to be heard and understood.

Graham said, "Seeing the kids environment changed my perception, because I'm from Hickory. It gave me insight on what they are experiencing growing up."

The four WSSU students were among 13 college students from the area who participated.

Graham, James, Monk and

Smith instructed students in their area of interest. Graham and James, a mass communications major, collaborated on filming and editing the project.

Graham was responsible for arranging all the music. Each mentor spent five hours a day during the summer working on the project. They were responsible for taking the kids home, and listening and talking with the kids. Monk, also a WSSU alumna, implemented the art and creative design and assisted Smith with webpage development.

Smith, a senior mass communication major, coordinated the Internet for the students. He showed each youth how to create Web pages and use their e-mail. The Web site, [www.geocities.com/youngvisionaries](http://www.geocities.com/youngvisionaries), served as means of advertising.

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to become a pediatrician.

Although she sees that she will have a lot more to learn, she values the opportunities to use the knowledge she has to act as a tutor and role model for her peers.

"Ro" said, "I just love to be able to share what I've learned with other people."

When Patrick is not helping others on an indi-

vidual basis, she is able to reach others through organizations on campus. She is a member of the Honors Program, HCOP, Project Strengthen, the Peer Educator Club, and Northern Connections. She also serves as a director and treasurer for the Inspirational Voices of Winston-Salem State University gospel choir, a stage-hand for the Moziq Modeling Troupe, and a Ram Ambassador.

As a student leader, Patrick continuously works with the Student Government Association and the class councils. She has held the positions of SGA Treasurer and Junior Class president among others.

But as she spoke of her title as Miss WSSU, she said, "Not only is it an honor to me, but it is a privilege for me to represent my school on such a level."

Patrick has a desire to show students the leader-

ship opportunities that have been available to her while creating others so that they will develop a commitment to service before they depart from WSSU.

"It's our job, it's our responsibility to serve our community, as well as our institution while we're here," Ro" added.

During her reign, she plans to focus on community service, improving school spirit, and mending the communication gaps that exist between

students and faculty.

She wants students to feel confident that the faculty and administration are actively concerned with their education both inside and outside of the classroom. Thus, encouraging them to have a growing level of pride for WSSU and a desire to continue giving back to the community, and the institution.

Patrick plans to take the university to another level by promoting a philosophy of noncomplacency.

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future. I think that most of the males on campus think day to day," said Ruffin. "I think we suffer from looking at the small picture rather than the big picture."

As for what he wants to accomplish as Mr. Ram, Ruffin's said there are several goals he would like accomplish.

He said school spirit is another big concern and that he has noticed a decline in spirit over the past two years. This is something that he would like to see turned around.

"The newer heads, freshmen, sophomores tend to go with the flow. If they see that the same people they see every day, are not doing something. Because John boy doesn't go to an event, doesn't mean that it's not going to

be a good event."

"You have got to get away from the norm."

He added, "You should be able to go to an event that is not only entertaining, but you should be able to get some growth out of it. I think we should set our tone to what you want to do and not what everyone else wants to do."

Ruffin said there are many student organizations around WSSU that could be a great allies in raising the level of spirit.

"These fraternities and sororities can really grab the attention of the young kids who are coming in."

When asked if he had anything in mind for what he will do during his time as Mr. Ram, Ruffin said that he is looking to bring several speakers to the campus in the spring.

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Swink first became actively involved with student government in 2001 when she served as administrative assistant.

Now, Swink has many things she wants to improve on campus. She wants to help students find with school spirit and get involvement.

"Gaining the respect back from the students is an important part of this year. In the last few years respect has been lacking because the students feel that if there is nothing to do on the weekends, then they'll just go home," said Swink.

"We have had great student participation so far, and of course there's not going to be anything to do if there's nobody to do it with. I just hope that the students are a little more accepting of our ideas, and keep an open mind to new things cause there's a lot of things we still want and will do," said Swink.

Setting goals, playing an active roll in the administration and leadership responsibilities defines what an SGA president does.

"Kristie is a natural born leader, and although she knows it, she remains

humble. God blessed her with the social skills and ability to lead any body of people for any purpose, positively," said Mamie Madden, Swink's best friend since junior high school.

Swink is a Southern belle. This Decatur, Ga., native loves to listen to her favorite rap group, Outkast; hang with her Delta Sigma Theta sorority sisters and be an active mass communications major. Her concentration is public relations and advertising.

"I really didn't know Kristie when I first got to WSSU, but now that I have gotten to know her she really is a wonderful friend and soror. The students looked up to her before she became SGA president and will continue to do so now that she is," said Stephanie Price Swink's Delta Sigma Theta sorority sister.

However, Swink did not run for president to win a popularity contest.

"Running for president was no way of a winning a popularity contest. This came from the love I have for the students and the support that they feel and care about on the campus of WSSU. Not forgetting that I am a student makes it even clear on how we feel as a student body," Swink said.