

I'm Awesome U Know!



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The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice.¹

I'm Awesome U Know is the outcome of a unique, grass roots community film project. It involved many sectors of the Canberra community including Narrabundah Primary School and children involved in the On Track Program this year², ACT Government Education Department staff of the On Track program, Southside Community Services, PhotoAccess and film maker Edwin Daughtry, and the ACT Government through artsACT and the 2008 ACT Arts Fund.

Edwin Daughtry and I worked with two different groups of boys from the On Track program over a 10 week period. We began by teaching them how to use the still and digital cameras, then the sound equipment and tripods. We also taught them interviewing techniques and speaking to a camera. It was then over to them to direct each other to make the film with Edwin's guidance. The boys all had a go at using the equipment, being interviewed and directing proceedings. There was always an important duality—learning and participation balanced by fun.

The film will hopefully encourage the children to think and plan their futures and look at wider possibilities for the future. The film will help give structure to the futures of the children, while simultaneously showing the community how children think at present and what they hope for in the future.³

Over the weeks as we got to know the boys and as they became confident with film making, we saw them develop an understanding, not only of participating in the film but, more importantly, of themselves, their futures and telling their own individual stories. Their own personalities started to emerge and it became a reality, they all wanted their own individual voice to be heard in this film. The boys made the film and they dictated its structure.

In making the film we hoped to give a voice to this group of young Canberra boys. The film gave them an opportunity to express who they are and what is important to them both now and in the future. We hope the film has empowered the boys plus other children who may see the film. We also hope that the film will be informative and didactic for others as it uniquely represents a particular generation of boys at a particular time in Australian history.

Some very interesting but maybe not surprising messages come out of the film. The importance of family, the appreciation the boys have for the support and love of their families, the importance of friendship, the importance of mentors in the boys' lives⁴, a well developed understanding of their futures and the importance a good education will play in their choices. As one boy very clearly states in the film, '... you don't just come to school to play, you know.'⁵ Mature words for a primary school boy.

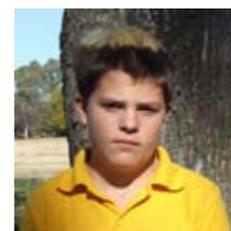
Edwin Daughtry and I particularly want to thank this group of awesome boys we were privileged to work with and whose sense of themselves often gave us goose bumps. We wish them every success for their futures.

Southside Community Services was pleased to again partner with PhotoAccess and the ACT Government. I want to acknowledge their support and commitment to ongoing community partnerships plus the support of the Narrabundah Primary School and the On Track Program.

Cathy Laudenbach

Film Concept and Project Coordinator

1. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
2. On Track is a special ACT Government initiative for young urban Aboriginal children. On Track is a partnership between Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation and the ACT Department of Education and Training. The participants come to the program from all over Canberra. The film was made with the boys on the program in semester 1 2008
3. From application for 2008 ACT Arts Fund grant
4. The On Track Program has a number of very skilled mentors lead by teacher Asish Chandra
5. Dean, from the film I'm AWESOME U Know



Acknowledgements

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artsACT

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Asish Chandra

Ed Whalan



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