

Finding Our Wings: A Community Documentary Program

By Kirsten D'Andrea Hollander

There can be no peace and ultimately no life without community.
—M. Scott Peck, “The Road Less Traveled”

This quote by M. Scott Peck is painted on one of the many beautiful ceramic tiles that line the foyer of Dunbar Middle School in East Baltimore, Md. I think of these tiles every time I meet with the girls who attend the new community documentary program sponsored by the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA). I often wonder if the girls notice the empowering quotes that are painted on these handcrafted tiles at the entrance to their school. I have come to realize this will be one of their documentarian assignments. The girls will find out who made these tiles and look within themselves to discover the meaning of these inspiring quotes. As I write this we are only three weeks into our community documentary class and we still have much to accomplish.

Arming Girls with Cameras and Microphones

The goal of the Finding Our Wings Community Documentary Program is to foster courage in teenage girls, currently ages 12 to 15 years old, who are attending middle school and high school primarily in East Baltimore. We seek to help the girls discover the courage required to fulfill their artistic visions and cultivate their documentarian voices.^[1] The first night of our class was on Valentine’s Day, 2008, in MICA’s Brown Center, and the girls immediately embraced the cameras and microphones we provided for them.

A "Finding Our Wings" documentary trailer. The Wings community documentary program is slated to see the current participating girls through their high-school graduations in 2011, 2012 and 2013.

It is important to address my two major inspirations to arm the girls with cameras. The Academy Award-winning documentary “Born into Brothels,” released in 2004, and its subsequent program, Kids with Cameras, are amazing examples of how children are empowered to understand themselves when they document what they see around them. The children in “Born into Brothels” came to understand the power of the individual and the power of taking positive action and they became human-rights educators.^[2] Another major inspiration was meeting St. Clair Bourne, a film director and producer who came to MICA in the fall of 2007. Bourne led a powerful discussion during MICA’s Black Panther film series and also held a heartfelt meeting with my undergraduate documentary students. Bourne was masterful at chronicling African life internationally by finding common links among people of African descent.^[3] In the short time I knew him he made it clear that documentary production is one of the most powerful means of connecting people to one another. On December 15, 2007, just a few weeks after Bourne told me to give the girls cameras “SO THEY CAN EXPRESS THEMSELVES,” he died at the age of 64, after post-surgical complications.^[4] I dedicate this paper to him.

MICA’s department of Continuing Studies has also recently developed a study-abroad program bringing community arts to northern Nicaragua. I am helping develop the community documentary curriculum for this program. During my first visit to Nicaragua I was deeply inspired by the people we met. These people believed that documentary film work could support their own initiatives in making art and music accessible to help Nicaraguan youth understand their own history and human rights.

Community Documentary Program Underway

The seven girls currently in the program have already begun to utilize their new videographic skills to research their family trees, interviewing mothers, a father, a grandfather and an aunt. The family-tree assignment has sparked the girls’ interest in learning about their own ancestries. Some of the girls were surprised to discover

that they did not have African roots but came from other lineages, such as Haitian or Puerto Rican. The girls continue to discuss their lineages when riding on the van to and from the MICA campus.

The students really like conducting the interviews. Literally moments after learning to operate the camera and microphones, the girls adopted confident personas, as if they were hosting their own talk show or were journalists reporting on a special news program:

Brienna: This is Brienna Brown with Denisha Harris, recording live at the Maryland Institute College of Art. Marquise Weems is the camera lady, you can't see her right now, but you will see her later. Denisha, what school do you go to right now?

Denisha: I go to Dunbar Middle in East Baltimore.

Brienna: What are your plans for your life when you get out of middle school?

Denisha: I would like to go to college — to Princeton's writer program and become a novelist or a film director.

Brienna: WOW nice future!

Next the girls sought out MICA undergraduate students to interview. The MICA undergrads have been very open and friendly with their new middle-school and high-school colleagues roaming the third-floor hallway of the Brown Center armed with camcorders. It is crucial that the Finding Our Wings participants are exposed to caring undergraduates. Girls in the East Baltimore community have a greater than 60 percent dropout rate from high school. And more than 30 percent of the babies in this community are born to girls between the ages of 15 and 19.^[5]

Sheila: Was it easy for you to get into this college?

A MICA Graphic Design Major: No it was not easy; it took two years of much effort to get a solid portfolio together to apply to this college. And sometimes I had to go to an after-school class to help finalize my portfolio of artwork. But it was worth it.

Sheila: What are you working on right now? (The MICA student goes on to explain the graphic design project that she is laying out on her computer screen.)

When the Wings girls get on the van to go to MICA they always say, "We are going to college!"

Understanding Human Rights to Health, Creativity and Education

Next the girls will be interviewing students and teachers at their schools, finding out what inspires the teachers to teach and what motivates their fellow students to go to school. I am also supporting the girls to try to interview the principals of their schools with regard to the overall goals of the institution. The girls will take a field trip to the Baltimore City Health Department to interview Dr. Jacquelyn Duval-Harvey, the deputy commissioner for youth and families. In turn, they will also interview Victoria Proctor, who is a pediatric nurse, massage therapist and nutritionist.^[6] In this way they will be using their documentarian skills to investigate the broad continuum of health and wellness that is available to them. They will discover the health and educational benefits their community holds for them (as well as where these services need to be improved) and what options they have the right to look for to improve the quality of their own lives.

As a community documentary class we work consciously to balance the investigation of our human rights with the equally important nurturance artistic voice through assignments such as video poetry, video diaries and video songs. Here is a video poem one of the Wings girls has shared on tape:

My name is Jasmine Dorsey; I am going to read a poem called "Don't Quit." I don't know who wrote it.

When things go wrong, as they sometimes will,
When the road you are trudging seems all up-hill,
When funds are low but the debts are high,
And you want to smile but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest if you must but don't you quit.
Life is strange with its twists and turns
As every one of us sometimes learns...
Success is failure turned inside out,
The silver tint in the clouds of doubt.
You can never tell how close you are,
It may be near when it seems so far.
So stick to the fight when it is your hardest hit.
It's when things seem worst that you mustn't quit. [7]

Our Collaborative Community Documentary Process

Though I cite some important statistics in this paper, the majority of what is shared will continue to be based on the privilege of being with the girls and acknowledging them within the context in which we have come together. This includes how the girls watch me and the other student mentors operate the camcorders. The girls notice everything, from how we ask interview questions to how we hold the cameras, to how we set the camera's white balance. Then when these things come up in the class the girls say, "Hey, I saw you doing that!" At every turn, they are more and more eager to learn these skills for themselves.

The girls are also eager to share their self-captured video footage with the class. Ultimately their footage will be integrated into the 90-minute community documentary, which I am editing myself. One of the reasons I will be doing the physical editing is that this program has yet to secure the funding to get the girls access to a computer facility with editing equipment. [8] Thus far, our funding has been for the purchase of five camcorder packages that are rotating amongst the currently participating girls.

I am however, showing the girls on a weekly basis how the footage they have captured is being integrated with the footage I have captured of them. Their desires about how their footage is being represented are being honored to the utmost degree. The girls will also work with me to plan a screening of our community documentary at Dunbar Middle School and at MICA. In addition, the Girl Scouts of Central Maryland and the Y of Central Maryland Urban Services have already contacted me to inquire about Wings documentary screenings for their youth.

Another level of collaboration in this project is to reach out to other girls who cannot be in the program at this time. This includes current Wings girls interviewing other students and, in particular, seeking out girls who were involved in the original Wingsseed events in 2007.

Documentary Production as a Catalyst to Graduating from High School

The Wingscommunity documentary program is slated to see the currently participating girls through their high-school graduations in 2011, 2012 and 2013. Thus, the documentary will need to be screened in various stages of completion to meet our goals for outreach.

The “Boys of Baraka” documentary, directed by Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady, serves as credible inspiration to track the educational experiences of the currently participating Wings girls. In the Baraka film, a boarding school in Africa is shut down and the boys, from East Baltimore, who had received scholarships to attend this school, must return to the Baltimore public school system. Even though the boys had to deal with a great deal of disappointment on returning to Baltimore, such as re-acclimation to the gang environment in their neighborhoods and no longer receiving individual attention at school, they somehow come to an inner wisdom. Ultimately, being able to tap into the innocence of their boyhood at the Baraka school prepared them to be men, regardless of the challenges they faced.[\[9\]](#)

Collective Perspective

The following dialogue represents a collective perspective captured through interviews with the Wings girls, both those participating in the current Wings Community Documentary Program as well as girls who attended the original seed events in 2007. Some of this dialogue has emerged from my interviewing the girls, from the girls interviewing each other, and from the girl’s self-interviews.

My name is Lashanda, I’m 15, and I live in East Baltimore with my mom and my younger sister who's 12. My older brother died when he was 12. I miss you Ernie and I will see you again. My mom says that she's working two jobs because she wants to have enough money for our education so that me and my sister can have a better future than she had. It's hard sometimes because I have to take care of my sister while my mom is always working so hard.

I had to interview family members for my homework for my video class. I had to get up at 4 a.m. yesterday morning to interview my mother about her being a secretary at the hospital. I had to catch her between her two jobs. The other girls in the class had to get up really early too if they wanted to interview their mothers. Often after my video class I get dropped at my grandmother’s house because my mom is still at work. I actually live with my grandmother more often than at my mother’s place right now.

While this is a compilation dialogue, it reflects experiences mentioned most often by Wings participants.[\[10\]](#) The following is more compilation dialogue regarding anger, belonging and aspirations.

A boy at our school got banked [killed] this past year and I don't think that people should bank one another. I think that when people are angry enough to do that they should do something else with their anger. Like maybe they could write in their journal like I do. Or they could write out their anger on a piece of paper and crumble it up and throw it away. Or they could go talk to somebody – that would be my advice. They don't realize how much the families hurt when somebody dies that way.

I see the gangs on the corners – I know some of those people, I knew them when they were younger. I think they think they have nowhere else to go, nowhere else to belong. I'm glad I can belong with my mother my sister and my grandmother – and at my school too. The teachers call us “princesses,” trying to make us feel special. At the 8th grade graduation they told us they love us. I really want to graduate high school – a lot of kids in my neighborhood don't graduate but I really want to. I want to go to college and become a nurse, pediatrician or social worker. I want to do something to take care of people or do something that puts kids in a safe home.

This interview dialogue exemplifies that documentary production creates a means of self-reflection for the girls to openly address their aspirations, as well their relationships with their own communities, schools and families.

Community Service: An Essential Part of Collegiate Life

Shannon Fitzgerald (a MICA video major) and Nicole Figliola (a MICA Masters of Teaching student) have stepped forward to help mentor the girls. Fitzgerald is receiving three independent study credits toward her

undergraduate video major. Figliola has taken on a teaching-assistant position with a modest stipend that she will spend toward her graduate tuition. Patrick Wright, the chair of the MICA Video Department, has also approved a 180-hour internship. Our video majors are required to complete a 180-hour internship for their undergraduate degrees. We are in the process of creating more outreach across campus to make these positions better known.

Both Figliola and Fitzgerald are gaining hands-on experience in fundraising and curriculum planning, which not only includes developing lessons to teach the girls documentary skills but organizing a healthy snack and dinner for each evening the class meets. In addition, we also work together to choose clips from historical and contemporary documentaries to screen in class. Thus, the girls can thoroughly contemplate how other documentaries have been put together and how to express themselves in their own documentaries.



Danisha sings in MICA sound studio [Click here to enlarge](#)

The student mentors are also riding the MICA van service that makes its rounds between MICA, Dunbar Middle School, Maryland Academy of Arts and Sciences and Frederick Douglass High School, all Baltimore City schools.^[11] After class on Thursday evenings, the van service goes directly to the girls' homes in East and East Baltimore. This has been quite a reality check – visiting communities outside of the familiar MICA campus. Bearing witness to some of the girls' living conditions can be quite a challenging experience. Figliola's and Fitzgerald's participation truly serves MICA's community arts pedagogy, which prioritizes applying leadership skills to real situations; working collaboratively with peers; transcending campus life to elevate one's critical and social consciousness; and gaining a greater understanding of the Baltimore community and how to be of service to its members "long-term."

Reflections from the MICA Student Mentors

“Working with the girls in the Wings at MICA program has had a profound significance in helping me to confront the reasons why as a middle school student I was initially drawn to the art of videography. As a student at MICA I have strived to absorb as many new technical and conceptual ideas as I can – sometimes I feel as though I've neglected the artistry of it all. When I was younger, my appreciation of films and videos was almost exclusively for their expressive qualities and their ability to convey emotions that I didn't feel were possible in the context of a still image or traditional work. The opportunity to be with the girls as they operate a video camera for the first time has inspired me to reevaluate my own work and reconnect with the camera as a tool for creation. Despite the obstacles the girls face in both their home and school lives, they are eager to work towards learning a craft and putting it to use. The experience has been cyclical in that I appreciate their excitement as much they appreciate the opportunity Wings at MICA has provided. (Shannon Lenise Fitzgerald, MICA undergraduate video major)

The Wings at MICA program has gotten me out of the bubble I live in. I've known about the challenges people face in other parts of Baltimore, but until now I had never come face to face with them. Before this program, I had an idea in my head of the look and lifestyle of East and West Baltimore, and now I know there's so much more than what I imaged in my mind.

This is not to say the girls are the problem or that they have problems "it's as if people live in two separate worlds rather than two different parts of the city. It's no longer just numbers on a news report, a caption under a picture in the newspaper, or even the lyrics of a rap song. The girls' situations have become tangible to me. I witness not only neighborhoods shifting from lit windows to boarded up entryways, but I've begun gaining a true sense of who these young women are. This program doesn't feel like a charity, it's an interaction. I don't feel some overwhelming need to make a difference; I want, instead, to come into awareness and support the girls' awareness. (Nicole Antoinette Figliola, MICA graduate student, Masters of Teaching)

The mentors and I meet every Monday afternoon to streamline plans for the next Wings at MICA class and to discuss our working budget. We are also very fortunate to have Alison Welch, founder of the original Wingsprogram and former East Baltimore Development Inc. employee, as a behind-the-scenes member of our team. Welch is also serving as co-producer of our community documentary, "Finding Our Wings."[\[12\]](#) As a team of four, we continually look at how we strive to prepare the girls to be creative and investigative documentarians.

The following our collective response:

In a society where the Arts are faltering due to budgets in the school systems, it's essential that creativity be pursued through experience. The girls are already taking action in their lives and in their communities by recording oral histories and by asking investigative questions. They will be able to see their lives through a different angle as they become more and more aware of their artistic and contemplative selves. They are building confidence through interviewing others and putting their faces in front of the camera.

In addition, the girls will have a passionate activity to hold onto when their lives get tough in school or in their families, which is often a given in the communities in which they live. In turn, the girls have already begun to witness their own beauty and that of their urban communities. We want and need to continue to support this as they create space for authentic conversation in their families, schools and communities. The human right of creative and authentic conversation must be a constant "not only within the girl's East Baltimore community but also between the girls' community and the privileged MICA community.

Lastly, we strive to ensure these girls don't lose their voice as girls/women, students and citizens. It's not that we are giving them a chance at something; it's more as though we're providing an environment to see beyond chance, and into the capabilities of choice.

Goals for the Immediate Future

The MICA student mentors are also witnessing firsthand my development of programming policies with the goal of the Wings at MICA class becoming an ongoing fall and spring semester event. I am currently in dialogue with MICA's Continuing Studies (CS) department regarding the integration of exemplary youth who will emerge from this program into MICA's pre-college program. CS is eager to learn more about the girls and help me learn more about potential scholarship funds that could be applied toward pre-college tuition. Some of the Wings girls could be earning college credits as soon as the summers of their sophomore and junior years of high school.

Health and Wellness Awareness for the Wings Girls – Soon To Be Women

The girls, the mentors and I have had a significant van ride by the time we settle into our college classroom. First we have a snack of fresh fruits and nuts. We have not yet been able to interest the girls in drinking much clear water, but they are drinking fruit flavored mineral water, and that is a start toward ample hydration. The mentors and I continue to stress how important ample clear water is. Next we utilize basic stretching and deep breathing. Linking simple breath to stretching exercises in the classroom quiets the chatter about cute-looking boys, etc., and gets the girls focused. We save valuable classroom time this way and it makes everyone feel good.[\[13\]](#)

I also observe firsthand the overweight and diabetic struggle that is modeled for these young girls by a high ratio of the adult women who work in their schools. Liz Garbus, the documentarian who made "Girlhood," discusses medical injustice and what it can be like for families who do not have privileged status. She brings this up in her director's commentary because one of her subjects in "Girlhood," Shanae, watches her mother die in the hospital while waiting for an operation for her heart. Shanae's mother was a diabetic and suffered many health complications.[14]



Sheila and Marqise interview MICA Freshman at an exhibition [Click here to enlarge](#)

During the Wings sleepover event in 2007, Victoria Proctor, the aforementioned pediatric nurse and nutritionist, explained to the girls that African-American women are the largest number of victims of diabetes and obesity in the United States. Proctor went on to explain how exercise affects the heart, diabetes and cholesterol. She also made it very clear that this issue of health is not just about older women because diabetes is now known to show up as early as 10 years old.[15]

A very lively conversation proceeded about what the girls like to eat:

Jasmine: I eat Burger King every day. Today, I had a double cheeseburger and fries and it was lovely. It is what I like. I also like my chicken boxes.

Dr. Harvey: Try saying "I eat it because I am used to it" instead of saying "It is what I like." There are many foods you have not been exposed to yet. And chicken boxes are the throwaway parts of chickens that are seasoned, fried and sold cheaply. It tastes good going into your mouth but when they get inside our bodies they are messing us up.

Not one girl addressed getting the leftover chicken parts; they did not know what to do with that information.

Victoria Proctor said, "Chicken boxes are loaded with everything that will hurt you in five years. High fructose corn syrup and trans fats are put in our inner cities because they are cheap to make and can be easily sold. But for right now, it is not about cutting foods out but introducing a fresh fruit or vegetable to your diet every day so that your taste buds get use to healthy foods. Then the unhealthy foods will begin to fall away over time.

Sha'Dae, an obese girl in the room, was listening to all this with a big pillow covering her body, yet she truly looked happy to be with women who cared. I was astonished to see such a heartfelt smile on her face.

Passion Lee said "Thank you for helping me experience these new things and telling me what I did not know."

A shadowy thing happened that night at the retreat. Veggie Annie, our cook for the retreat, made homemade oatmeal cookies with lots of chocolate chips. She was trying to win the girl's affection because they were upset with what she had made earlier for dinner. The girls ate the cookies right before they went to bed. When they woke in the morning it was if they were hung over. They no longer cared that they were at a beautiful retreat center. They said hurtful things to each other and did not want to do any of the activities. Their vibrancy was gone and it was very obvious how vulnerable their blood sugars had already become at such a young age. The girls have to understand how nutrition and blood sugar affect their well being if they are to graduate high school and employ their amazing talents.

Documenting Graduation Ceremonies for Reflective Inspiration

An important part of our community documentary process will be to film the girls' 8th-Grade graduations as well as their anticipated high-school graduations. I filmed the 2007 Dunbar Middle School 8th-Grade graduation last spring. The excitement, joy, pride, heartfelt singing and the enthusiastic attendance of friends

and family was overwhelmingly beautiful. I particularly enjoyed filming the 8th-Grade graduates as they turned to their friends and families in the auditorium to sing to and applaud the loved ones who supported their graduations. I believe that having documentary footage of their 8th-Grade graduations to review will serve as means to tap into the pride and sense of accomplishment that keeps one on a track to persevere toward high-school graduation.

The keynote speaker, Steve Vassor, the director of the Hampden Community Center in Baltimore, delivered the following comments at this 8th-Grade graduation.

I love you and am proud of your accomplishments. I love you. I look forward to being invited to your high-school graduations in 2011. (Pause)...During your high-school career someone will tell you that they love you to get you to take off your clothes or to take up a gun. What decision will you make? Will you have the courage to not give in to the peer pressure and to complete your education?

After capturing this on tape, I interviewed some of the girls about how they felt about hearing this at their graduation. None of the girls would address what this meant to them personally. The girls certainly remembered what Steve Vassor said because they could repeat it back to me without much prompting. The majority of the girls said they thought it was good advice for others. It was hard for the girls to talk to me (and my camera) about this. In addition, when I asked them what they knew about love, most of the girls would automatically assume I was asking about sexual love and would reply, “*Nothing!*” After getting past this gate, they would speak openly and extensively about the love they had for their families.

Brittany said, “I know that love is not something that comes quickly; it has to be in your heart. It’s not a casual ‘oh, I love you’ €” it is inside your soul. (Brittany puts her hand on her heart.) Like how I love my mother and my father, I love them the most. That’s inside my heart. That’s not me saying I love you when I don’t. It is what love really is.”

One of the girls’ assignments as documentarians will be to interview each other and create video-diary work regarding the authentic love that nourishes their souls and address any concerns they have with love professed to get peers “to take off their clothes or take up a gun.”

Though the girls could not speak directly about sexual love, they did address teen pregnancy during a skit they performed at the Wingsleepover in the spring of 2007. Jasmine said, “Are you ready Ms. Kirsten?” (Meaning is my camcorder ready to roll) “...ring, ring, ring...” (Jasmine pretended to be a boy and created a deep voice,) “Hello” (hears crying on the phone) “What’s wrong with you? What the hell is wrong with you? What’s wrong? Do I have to ask four times?” Lokia, the girl who was play-acting on the other cell phone really began to cry and walked off the stage. Dr. Harvey, one of the mentors present, said, “Let’s be supportive of her.”

Lokia returned to the stage and continued to cry. After a pause she began to play-act again and said, “I love you a lot.” Jasmine, as the “boy,” then asked again, “What’s wrong with you?” The girl responded, “I’ve been a bit down.” The boy said, “You can tell me what is wrong.” The girl said, “I am pregnant.” Jasmine, role-playing the boy, made a sweeping gesture with her arm high above her head and slammed closed “his” cell phone. The girls said the moral of the story was not to get pregnant or you will be raising the baby alone.

It is important to remember that almost one-third (29.4%) of all births are to adolescent girls aged 15 to 19, and that 81% of children 18 and under live in single-parent homes in East Baltimore.[\[16\]](#)

Because it is very clear that acting in skits provides the girls with another outlet for communication, we will utilize skits in our community documentary class as another means for the girls to film each other. I have also asked the girls to pick songs they would like to sing in the MICA sound studio. Some of these young women have amazing singing voices that continuously emerge while they are simply being with themselves. It is beautiful to witness.

I also interviewed Steve Vassor a couple of weeks after his keynote address to the 8th-Grade graduates. His response to his speech about becoming pregnant too young, joining a gang or selling drugs was simply this:

I needed to address everyone in the auditorium, the young people who were graduating, their families, and also the family and friends who are drug dealers, gang members and people who had just gotten out of jail. They were all in the auditorium. I overheard their blatant conversations about which of the graduates in their yellow caps and gowns were their little soldiers (drug runners). Before I began to speak I had to really gather up my strength. I needed the young people to not only hear what I had to say but to feel it. The drug dealers, etc., needed to hear the young people listening to the fact they have a choice not to succumb to this pressure. At an extraordinary event such as a graduation, EVERYONE puts down their stuff and is truly there to celebrate accomplishment. For a brief moment in time, the madness stops and EVERYONE shows up to LOVE the children. For a brief moment...

There is another amazing hand-painted tile that always catches my eye when I visit Dunbar. It is complex and beautiful like the 8th-Grade graduation ceremony and these young girls' lives.

Did you hear about the rose that grew from concrete? Proving nature's law is wrong; it learned to walk without having feet. Funny it seems, but by keeping its dreams, it learned to breathe fresh air. Long live the rose that grew from concrete when no one else ever cared. (Tupac Shakur)

Just tonight I asked the girls if they knew the "Rose" poem by Tupac. Brittany recited it back to the class. We talked about the complexity of being human: holding a rose in one hand and challenging situations in the other. Just tonight I made it clear to the girls that I intend to film them through their high-school graduations. They want the whole package – they want to continue filming each other and themselves. They want to continue interviewing people in their communities. They want me and the student mentors to continue to film them. They want to graduate from high school. They want to go to pre-college. They want to go to college. They told me tonight that they know a lot kids don't graduate from high school in their communities. So we went around the room and each girl said with a confident voice the year she will graduate high school – "2011, 2012 and 2013."

My editor suggested that I conclude this paper with what this program has meant to me thus far. What can I say except that I have fallen in love with the inner wisdom of these girls – girls soon to be women. In order for this program to continue and expand with an editing-skills class it will need more funding. In order for the community documentary to be completed and reach an expedient number of girls, the documentary will need more funding. So the work continues and suggestions for funding outside of the MICA community are greatly appreciated.

In closing, one last quote from Teshavionna, current Wings participant: "I enjoy Wings – it's nice to be with girls and women. I feel like they really care about me. It is good to feel creative and beautiful. I feel courage to finish high school."

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Departments. She has received numerous awards, has had work seen on PBS, in film festivals around the U.S. and has enjoyed film distribution in 18 countries. She is also a yoga instructor.

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Notes

[1] This program has been especially designed for middle-school and high-school girls who participated in the 2007 Finding Your Wings Program, which was a series of events involving art, health and wellness. The name of the program shifted to "Finding Our Wings" when we received a grant from MICA's Center for Applied Research to arm the girls with their own camcorders. The criteria for the ten available spots are that the girls still have to be attending Dunbar Middle School or must have graduated from the 8th grade from Dunbar and currently be attending high school. The intended documentary to emerge from this program will start with what the girls learned at Dunbar and how the Finding Our Wings initiatives empower their lives. The use of the butterfly symbol for the project captures the potential of metamorphosis for each girl participating.

[2] Director Zana Briski put cameras into the hands of children who lived in a red light district of Calcutta, India. Later she and Co-director Kauffman formed Kids with Cameras, a program that exhibits children's photographs to raise funds and empower the children's lives. The "Born into Brothels" documentary production

taught the children that poverty does not have to prevent education. The filmmakers articulate in their director's commentary that they and the children they documented ultimately became family.

[3] St. Claire Bourne made over 40 films, including the feature-length "Half Past Autumn: The Life and Works of Gordon Parks" (2000) for HBO. With actor Wesley Snipes as executive producer, Bourne directed "John Henricke Clark: A Great Mighty Walk" (1996), a feature-length documentary about the respected historian and pan-African activist. He also made "Paul Robeson: Here I Stand! A New History in Documentary" (Ellis 274).

[4] Bourne always e-mailed in capital letters. I lifted his text "SO THEY CAN EXPRESS THEMSELVES," from the last personal e-mail he sent me before he died.

[5] Data for East Baltimore as shown here represents the Perkins/Middle East Community Statistical Area (Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance).

[6] The girls previously met Duval-Harvey and Proctor when they served as mentors during the original Finding Your Wings programming, which commenced during the spring and summer of 2007. During these months the girls attended a series of events including yoga, drawing, sailing, an overnight retreat, belly-dancing instruction, vegetarian cooking and eating, portrait sessions and interviews on camera. The 8th Graders had their graduation filmed. These activities were led by women volunteers and were funded with more than \$6,000 raised through a community-based grant from East Baltimore Development Inc.; a grant from the Kristin Rita Strouse Foundation; and private, individual donations. The difference with the forthcoming interviews on health and wellness is that the girls will be conducting the interviews.

[7] The author of the "Don't Quit Poem" is indeed unknown.

[8] The fact that the girls not yet having access to an editing facility ironically works out for the best at this moment in time. They really need the span of this semester to understand their own community documentary objectives and to hone their camera and microphone skills. They will need a second-level class to address the art of editing.

[9] "Ewing and Grady describe in their director's commentary that they and the boy's families they documented ultimately became family. The co-directors ended up with 600 hours of footage. '[The boys] never ceased to surprise us with all they had to offer,' Grady says. They spent a year cutting it into an 84-minute saga of hope and growth, of disappointment and reckoning" (Pitts).

[10] This also serves as an important framework for how the Wings community documentary will ultimately be edited. Some of the girls popped in only briefly during the original Wings seed program. Yet I and current Wings girls want to include every girl who participated in any of the Wings events in the final edit of the community documentary. Thus, some of the girls and what they shared will have to be integrated into a collective perspective, the emerging voice of their generation in their particular Baltimore community. This voice will ultimately accentuate the stories of the girls who sustain with the Wings program through their high school graduations and emerge in the forefront of the documentary.

[11] We also have one student from the Polytechnic Institute of Baltimore City. Jasmine has gotten permission from her mother to take the subway to the Wings class at MICA.

[12] Alison Welch, M.A., is the founder of the original Wings initiative and she brings her experience of having worked at East Baltimore Development Inc. for two years, with primary responsibility for establishing a pre-K-8 school for the community. Currently, Welch works from her Philadelphia residence because she is home with her infant daughter. Welch is passionate about working with teen girls, serving as a "Big Sister" for five years. she has a Master's in Organization Development, a Bachelor's in Economics, and yoga teacher certification.

[13] For any educator who is interested in integrating deep breathing exercises into the classroom, I highly recommend [The Breathing Book: Good Health and Vitality through Essential Breath Work](#) (Farhi, et al.).

[14] Liz Garbus also describes that she became extended family to Shanae and was invited to her mother's funeral but was told she could not film the funeral. Shanae wanted Garbus at the funeral just as friend.

[15] Victoria Proctor is also an exercise consultant who is on the Hopkins research staff for a 12-year study determining the long-term effects of exercise for people over 60. Proctor also explained to the girls the difference between an alkaline and acidic state and the importance of drinking eight eight-ounce glasses of water a day.

[16] Data for East Baltimore as shown here represents the Perkins/Middle East Community Statistical Area (Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance).

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