

Promising Practices: 8-18 Media

Challenge

Young people need to be heard. Youth provide insight and perspective on issues that are not often seriously considered by adults.

Program

Empowering youth through journalism, 8-18 Media is a non-profit youth development and leadership program of the Upper Peninsula Children's Museum in Marquette, Michigan. The program's mission is to empower youth by giving them a significant voice in the world.

8-18 Media provides a news service reported and edited by young people ages 8 to 18. The program serves children and adults—children who otherwise might not be heard by giving them an outlet for their voice and adults by making them aware of how kids view the world. 8-18 Media serves the entire community by promoting discussion of issues involving young people and is of interest to all ages.

Deeply committed to positive youth development, 8-18 Media offers a safe environment and structured activities for youth with caring, experienced adults and youth mentors. The program promotes self-esteem and a sense of purpose by offering young people a voice, but it also helps them develop the confidence and maturity they need to build a healthy future for themselves.

Members are involved in all decision making and planning of the stories they produce. They accept and live up to the responsibilities of seeing a story through to completion. Important life skills are also acquired such as good communication, organizational abilities, and increased sensitivity and understanding.

8-18 Media's story methodology utilizes tape recorders for interviews making the program accessible to children with varying levels of literacy skills. Participation has no academic prerequisite and membership is free to any child who wishes to join. The young journalists work in teams to cover stories. They determine what topics to cover, do research, develop the story angle, conduct interviews, and edit the stories. Approximately 75 young people participate each year.

8-18 Media stories are published regularly in a local magazine and featured on the U.P. Children's Museum site at www.upcmkids.org. Stories have also been selected for popular web sites such as "*The News Hour with Jim Lehrer*" and "*Connect For Kids*."

On radio and television, 8-18 Media commentaries and feature stories are transmitted weekly throughout the Upper Peninsula of Michigan on WMQT Radio and WNMU Public Radio 90. Recently, 8-18 Media has produced a series of video stories that were broadcast on local ABC affiliate WBKP 10 and Public TV 13.

Connection to National Model

Founded in 1993 by the U.P. Children's Museum, the program was part of the international organization of Children's Express until 2001. The methodology of producing stories by kids for an audience of all ages is based on the Children's Express model. Despite closure of Children's Express in the United States, former CE bureaus, in addition to 8-18 Media, share this common methodology: Children's PressLine in New York City, Y-Press in Indianapolis, and Children's Express in Japan and the United Kingdom. 8-18 Media retains close ties with all of these bureaus.

Results

8-18 Media has had an impact not only on the youth and adults involved in the program, but also on the community. The program gives youth a voice and establishes the importance of communicating a youth perspective about issues that affect them and their community. The process of submitting story ideas, working with a youth team for each story to research information, edit, write, and produce the final media product strengthens leadership, communication, organizational, research, and public speaking skills.

Adults benefit from 8-18 Media because youth are able to access information and opinions from other youth that adults could not access. The community gains insight into the youth perspective and view youth as valuable resources.

Recognitions, honors, and awards 8-18 Media has earned:

- Received First Place, 2003 Michigan Association of Broadcasters Awards of Excellence for special interest programming which aired on Public Radio 90
- Honored for its Majority Rules "What's Your Anti-Drug?" project by The Prevention Network of Michigan Model Project for 2002
- Honored in the "Good News Awards" from religious leaders in the Upper Peninsula each year since 1999 for stories that uplift and nourish the human spirit

Target

Youth ages 8 to 18

Organization

Upper Peninsula Children's Museum

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Sponsor Summary

8-18 Media is housed in the Upper Peninsula Children's Museum (UPCM) in Marquette. The UPCM is an umbrella organization that includes an interactive museum featuring displays and innovative programs within these subject areas: Art, Health, Science, Communication, Global Issues, the Environment, and related youth empowerment programming.

The UPCM provides a unique place for children and families to learn through participation. The UPCM:

1. Strengthens the cultural infrastructure of the Upper Peninsula and Northern Lower Peninsula of Michigan as well as Northern Wisconsin by providing an educational and cultural resource
2. Utilizes education, art, and culture as a means to stimulate community and economic development
3. Empowers youth to collaborate directly with artisans and planners to produce a museum center for, about, and belonging to them