

Seattle's SCAN Community Media Provides Young Filmmakers the Road Beyond YouTube

■ BY MARSHALL PARKER

Attending summer video camp provides new horizons for a visually impaired middle-schooler.

Summer video camp is almost always exciting for the kids who attend it. For many, it is a revelation, the opening of a new door. For some, though, it can be frustrating. This is the story of Jonathan Taylor-Kantz and his experience and growth at a Seattle video summer camp in 2008.

First some background: SCAN Community Media, the nonprofit organization that runs Seattle and King County's Media Access Center and channel, began new partnerships in 2008. One series of partners was formed specifically for the purpose of developing co-branded youth camps for the summer. One of those partners was Pacific Science Center, an interactive museum that is a staple in the landmark Seattle Center, from which the Space Needle reaches into the sky.

The co-branded camp during the summer of 2008 had the theme of Global Warming. The fifteen middle school-aged kids who signed up for it were ripe for the opportunity to create television and have their friends all see it on their own TVs.

Jonathan was teamed with two girls. This might have posed a problem for some boys his age, but Jonathan found it agreeable enough. The process of learning about the effects of global climate change and possible solutions to it that everyone can work toward was well received by most of the young people at the camp.

Planning the script and shooting video at the park and in the studio were fairly fun for Jonathan, but posed challenges for him, too. Undaunted by being legally blind, Jonathan found that he could work with most of the

equipment if he got really, really close to it and concentrated.

The difficulty reached a peak for his crew members, though, when it came to editing. When Jonathan moved close enough to the laptop screen to be able to see it, he blocked his teammates' view. Though Jonathan's needs were being met, his two teammates found that they could not work as co-editors with him. And Jonathan was strong willed enough to want to see his project through to the end.

The girls were not able to finish camp, yet Jonathan relished being the lone filmmaker left on the project. Emboldened, he put his own unique stamp into every frame.

He worked with the Pacific Science Center instructor, Steve Yasukawa, to create his own soundtrack using Apple's GarageBand program. He enjoyed this part of the process a great deal.

Volunteer Ruth Gregory, who teaches film study at nearby Shoreline Community College, gave Jonathan support as he worked through the editing process. "I really admired his confidence and resolve," said Gregory. "He was really a 'mini-auteur' and very clear minded in his vision."

Taaj Middleton put the camp together and taught sections of the video production classes. As SCAN's youth programs manager, she was concerned when she realized that one of her campers had special needs.

"I started off a bit concerned that [Jonathan] would not get as much out of the camp as other kids. And continued to be concerned when I noticed his frustration while developing his own way of working with the equipment," said Middleton. "But my concern quickly



Undaunted by being legally blind, Jonathan edits his project.

turned to awe. He was not fazed one bit by his limitations. And when he was the only one left in his crew, he just blazed right on."

When the projects were completed, the campers did a special TV show in SCAN's studio with their parents. Participants answered questions about global warming in a game show called *Are You Smarter Than Your Camper?* The campers also got the chance to screen their films. Jonathan's film was roundly hailed as one of the camp's best productions.

And what did Jonathan think about his camp experience?

"SCAN Camp was awesome," he said. "That's all I have to say. We learned a whole bunch of stuff. We learned a whole bunch of

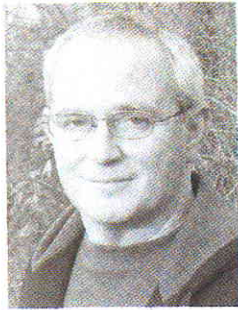
global warning stuff. My PSA, *The Nightmare*, was about a kid having a nightmare about pollutants, global warming, and climate change. Everything that has to do with all of those things. Don't have your kids have to fix it. You should fix it yourselves so your kids won't have nightmares about it."

"It would be cool to have a show on SCAN," he added. A lot of stuff in the political world and a whole lot of other stuff I don't agree with and I would like my right to say so."

Jonathan is planning on coming back to SCAN to create more projects. He, his campmates, and those from all of the other camps this year have the opportunity to continue work at SCAN on projects.

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Marshall Parker served two years as executive director at SCAN in Seattle. Previous to that he worked at Houston Media Source for eleven years. Mr. Parker also serves on the NW Regional Board of the ACM.

Another filmmaker from Jonathan's camp, Joseph, is interning for SCAN. He has been sent out on various assignments, including the opening of the new Rainier Vista Boys & Girls Club, where SCAN operates their video and sound recording studio.

There are a number of places where kids can learn filmmaking. YouTube and other services offer distribution opportunities on the Internet. Yet there is a special cachet about seeing your work on television. Knowing that you are sharing the same distribution system as every other production somehow makes your work feel more legitimate.

Television also increases the chances of your work being seen. SCAN distributes into over 500,000 homes in King County and Southern Snohomish County on Comcast 77

and Broadstripe 23. The channel also streams live online at www.scantv.org. That easy access is very powerful. For your video to be found on YouTube, you have to send people your link or be lucky enough to be the one out of the 10,000 uploads per hour that catches someone's attention.

Access is a term that is often used in the disabilities world. It is wonderful when that term also means access to media, to a television channel where you can show your creativity, just like Jonathan and the other campers in Seattle were able to do. This same amazing process happens every day at all of the access centers around the country that offer youth programs.

Jonathan's video can be seen on SCAN's website: www.scantv.org. #CMR



Jonathan works with one of the two middle school girls on his team.