

PRESS RELEASE

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Santa Fe's YOUTH MEDIA PROJECT Selected to Produce Radio Shows for International Conference in Melbourne, Australia.

After 5 years working in Northern New Mexico schools teaching digital literacy, the Youth Media Project (YMP) has climbed into the forefront internationally. A team of 3 YMP youth, all graduates of area schools, was selected to be the first youth group to win such an assignment for the Parliament of the World's Religions, a global conference that draws 8,000 people. The YMP team was chosen on the basis of a portfolio of work submitted to the conference planners, headquartered in Chicago. The student team will create radio compositions about critical interfaith issues, such as environmental preservation and conflict resolution. These will be broadcast globally. The YMP group leaves December 1 and will try for an interview with His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Youth Media Project Goes Global!

Last summer, the Youth Media Project covered a national conference. Broadcasts from that event in New England impressed the Australian conference planners who, for the first time, are inviting a team of youth to join the media professionals. For samples of work submitted for the assignment see <http://www.youthmediaproject.org>

Selected Team Members

Carmen Gallegos is a Mexican immigrant raised in New Mexico and now a proud US citizen. Carmen joined YMP as a freshman at Santa Fe's Capital High School, where she discovered an innate talent for the expressive arts. She attended YMP and Santa Fe Community College classes, which uniquely offer academic credit at both high school and college levels. Her radio stories garnered national recognition. Carmen then became Albuquerque's KUNM Youth Radio producer as a senior in high school, and continued to produce stellar broadcasts. She worked her way through high school, at times the sole support to her mother and two younger brothers, and is currently doing the same as a sophomore at Central New Mexico Community College.

Dolna Smithback is a sophomore at the New School in NYC, and this past semester served as an intern at *Democracy Now!* Dolna joined YMP as a junior at Monte del Sol High School in Santa Fe after meeting Amy Goodman (of *Democracy Now!*) in person at a TV broadcast. As part of YMP's after-school production team, Dolna produced stories about diversity, human dignity, and environmental justice. Born in India, Dolna has always been interested in the stories of those impacted by poverty, oppression and injustice.

Based on their stellar work in YMP, both Carmen and Dolna were awarded Americorps VISTA positions with the organization, and taught in a training institute at SFCC last summer. Radio pieces by Dolna Smithback and Carmen Gallegos can be found at <http://www.prx.org>.

Eliot Fisher, a graduate of Santa Fe Prep and Wesleyan University, is currently working for YMP through the Americorps VISTA program. Before that, he was coordinator of and taught in the Documentary Studies Certificate Program at the College of Santa Fe. He has directed Santa Fe's longest-running annual community theater show, the Fiesta Melodrama. He has also been working on an independent feature documentary about how immigration from Brazil to the US affects communities in both countries (<http://www.dreaminginamerican.com>). Having studied and practiced music, video, theater, and other media since he was very young, Eliot's recent goal has been to make teaching and community mentorship an integral part of his life as an artist.

Adult Sponsor

John Braman will coordinate the team in Australia. He co-authored (with YMP's director, Judy Goldberg) a 2009 article on the pedagogy of "new media" in schools for Youth Media Reporter

http://www.youthmediareporter.org/2009/10/traditional_and_youth_media_ed.html

Last summer, he worked for filmmaker Ed Radtke as line producer of a documentary in Costa Rica, and also directed, edited and produced "Leroy," a short film about a Viet Nam veteran which was sponsored by Warehouse 21. Awarded a N.E.H Fellowship to study world religions at Harvard's Pluralism Project, John is past president of the Independent Schools Association of the Central States. He serves Santa Fe Public Schools on the Strategic Planning Oversight Committee, and works for United World College as Director of Outreach Programs.

The Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions (CPWR)

For a link to the conference, see: <http://www.parliamentofreligions.org/CPWR> was created to cultivate harmony among the world's religious and spiritual communities and foster their engagement with the world and its guiding institutions in order to achieve a just, peaceful and sustainable world.

Youth Media Project

Youth Media Project (YMP) teaches the art of digital storytelling for a socially responsible world. It receives funding from New Mexico Community Foundation,

McCune Charitable Foundation, Santa Fe Community Foundation, Surdna Foundation, Kind World Foundation, Adobe Youth Voices, Vessel Foundation, SFCC, United World College, Connecting to Courage, Earth Care International, ENLACE/GEAR-UP, and Santa Fe Public Schools.

YMP partners with 8 educational organizations, serving over 200 students a year, teaching skills in writing, editing, communications, interviewing, and digital technology. Participants receive high school and/or college credit, stipends, a portfolio of edited radio compositions (suitable for college applications), and the opportunity to have their work broadcast on local, regional, national – and soon – international radio shows. The Australian assignment will launch a new programmatic element for YMP: coverage of international affairs through cross-cultural exchanges.

Contacts:

Judy Goldberg, Executive Director, YMP, 505-986-1880

judy@youthmediaproject.org

Photos: Eliot Fisher, Karmen Gallegos, Dolna Smithback, Judy Goldberg, John Braman

