

Celebrating Solutions - Media Giraffe Profile

Celebrating Solutions

Ellison Horne - Creator / co-producer

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-- *Ellison Horne, in a Sept. 2005 Media Giraffe Project interview*"

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About

SOURCE: Media Giraffe Project interview, September, 2005

Ellison Horne is a San Francisco Bay-area independent filmmaker and originator of the *Celebrating Solutions!* television project. He worked in early childhood education for about 20 years, and then in independent film-making for 25 years.

Horne has produced, directed and edited video documentaries for youth empowerment projects for schools, hospitals and social-service agencies around both Seattle, where he grew up, and San Francisco. He served three consecutive terms as president of the board of the San Francisco Community Television Corp. (CTC), which oversees management of *Access Cable 29* and was responsible for building the first state-of-the-art community access training and broadcast media center, in the heart of that city.

He is a member of the San Francisco Film Arts Foundation and the Bay Area Black Journalists Association and has lectured on professional videography-related topics at San Francisco State University and UC-Extension in both Berkeley and San Francisco.

Horne says the media industry is heavily weighted more toward the merchandising end than as a real community building resource. "It really bothers me that we have these phenomenal ways of communicating and most of it is being used for merchandising," he says.

Celebrating Solutions! - is designed to be a live multi-site television event with celebrity presenters, upbeat entertainment, interactive web programming, and compelling video vignettes emphasizing exciting solutions to neighborhood problems across the nation.

He started trying to organize this in 2002 but it has yet to be fully realized. It continues to be in development and is currently being supported by United Way of the Bay Area which is the fiscal sponsor for the project.

"It's been really challenging. Mainly the whole industry of the media is set to operate and function in a particular way leaving little room for innovation," he says. "There are many challenges to bring forward something this far reaching, bringing together all forms of communication streams -- radio, telephony,

television, Internet. In addition it absolutely needs to be a live event, convening the public with an invitation to participate in real time."

Ellison recommends looking at a documentary by Adam Curtis, a filmmaker for the BBC. He has done a series called the "The Century of the Self". It is an aggregation of historical information about the creation of the mass consumer society we have today, stemming from the psychological research of Sigmund Freud and ruthlessly implemented by his nephew, Edward Bernays--who in the 1920s coined the term "Public Relations". It was shown on the BBC in 2002 and in 2004 at the San Francisco Film Festival. It is currently on an extended run at the Roxy Theater in San Francisco.

Curtis' new documentary, aired in October and in January of this year on the BCC and it's called, "The Power of Nightmares." It is a powerful three-part, one-hour each episode, investigative survey of the fabrication of the "War on Terrorism."

Ellison is also co-founder of a non-profit film production company called LunaMedia.org. In 2005, LunaMedia finished a short film called, "Hope", based on Hopi philosophy and the teachings of Native American storyteller, Willy Whitefeather. It is the story, told without any words, of humans relation to the earth and community. And the opportunities inherent in following a different path.

INFORMATION BELOW SUPPLIED BY ELLISON HORNE:

Celebrating Solutions Mission Statement:

To cultivate a solutions ecology by harnessing the power of media and technology to share stories, foster connections, and inspire action for positive social change.

The goals of Celebrating Solutions:

- To create a new genre of positive interactive media to promote community health and safety
- To develop a database of practical initiatives that have demonstrably improved people's lives
- To publicize this database with a series of special events, covered by TV and newspapers
- To foster a culture that encourages people to take responsibility for their health and safety

This project also fundamentally strengthens civic engagement and participatory democracy, which are themselves healthy activities in the broadest sense. It empowers groups and communities who have often been considered "part of the problem" to become "part of the solution."

The focal point of Celebrating Solutions! is a neighbor-to-neighbor exchange of real solutions. With the theme, "Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods," the broadcast will showcase communities working together to identify, solve and sustain meaningful approaches to community problems.

The on-going aspect of the project is embodied in its website, a resource-rich growing database in which neighbors can both search for and post successful solutions, like "Create a Park" in the midst of Silicon Valley's concrete jungle.

Vandalism, litter, and a general lack of security used to characterize the area surrounding downtown San Jose in the heart of Silicon Valley.

Since 1996, neighbors began meeting as the University Neighborhood Coalition (UNC) to take actions aimed at revitalizing their multi-ethnic, economically diverse community which borders the campus of San Jose State University. Through volunteer days and grassroots fundraising, the UNC is transforming the formerly vandalized neighborhood into a flourishing community where residents can feel safe and proud to live.

Links

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