



NEWS RELEASE

MAY 21, 2013

**GRAND BLANC 8TH GRADERS
TAKE ON AMERICAN CIVIL WAR
FOR TELEVISION**

SHOW NOMINATED FOR 2 EMMYS

**PREMIERE HOSTED BY STUDENTS
THURSDAY, MAY 30 - GBWMS - NOON**

GRAND BLANC, MI—Each spring, tens of thousands of Michigan eighth graders study the American Civil War. This year, they are getting help from their classmates at Grand Blanc West Middle School where media production students took on production of two 30 minutes programs covering Civil War topics including Michigan's contributions to the war. The shows are airing now around the state on public television stations and community access education channels.

Working with iMichigan Productions (iMP) producers, well-known Flint-based media professional Michael J. Thorp, and Mott Community College media students, the eighth graders created "Michael J. Thorp's The American Civil War Years (ACWY)." They made production decisions, created promotional spots for the show and appear in the program as segment hosts.

ACWY recently garnered two 2013 EMMY nominations from the Michigan Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences for Best Youth Program and Best Historical/Cultural Program.

According to iMP Producer/Director Rodney W. Brown, the show brings together Civil War reenactors who are committed to helping others understand the patriotism, dedication and sacrifice during the time of the Civil War, and today's returning veterans who, in their own words, talk about the very same commitments after service in combat situations around the world. "We hope the program helps young people better understand the concept of a 'citizen soldier' and why they go to war," Brown said. "We see this program really making the case for why people choose to be contributing citizens to their countries and on behalf of the rights of others."

Brown describes iMichigan Productions as an educational media production company. “We believe in peer-to-peer learning so sought out one of the area media production programs to get the kids input on this program.

“We’ve been so impressed with the students’ natural instincts about how the show should come together for their audience. They are so comfortable with the media and have contributed so much to the development of these programs. We’re really pleased with this collaboration.”

The students are advised by Media Production Instructor Michael Munley, who said, “The experience has given the students a better understanding of how what they do in school is intertwined with the community that exists beyond our school walls. This has allowed the kids to be a part of a wonderful real-life experience.”

Munley said the school would host its own premiere of the show Thursday, May 30 at noon for its students and their families.

Grand Blanc West eighth graders who worked on episodes 1 and 2 are Zoie Powers, Mackenzie Shriner, Jonathan Voth, Nyari Weatherly, and Bayleigh Ivan.

Additional students from the school are in production now with episodes 3 and 4, which will air later this year. Those students are Keely Bradish, Destiny Plair, Graycin Haskins, Lauren Hammond, Taylor Carto, Hon Tippett, Max Behm, Tyler Schlichting, Andrew LaPointe, Razan Al-Sewari, Brenden Campana, and Tai Sims.

“The students are excited about being part of the production that is going to public television. It has heightened their enthusiasm and expanded their knowledge of both the production aspects of video and the Civil War subject matter covered in their social studies classes,” Munley said.

The experience of the students working with iMP, he said, has been a “tremendous opportunity” for the students. “We’re very fortunate and appreciative to have had the opportunity to work with iMP to create these shows for a broad audience.”

Media interns from Mott Community College also assist iMP and the Grand Blanc West students. Those students are Jeff Ostby, Shanna Massey, Sean Stevens, Chad Osentoski, and Vincent Hughes.

Brown said iMP hopes to expand this program and work with other area schools and their media programs to produce programming for television, radio, Internet and social media. “We are dependent on sponsors who value the educational experience these programs offer students.”

Brown said the show is being released nationally so that teachers from around the country, who find value in the programming for their classrooms, will have it available. iMP already offers free downloads of its programming at iTunes University and Teacher Tube.

The first two episodes are airing now on the Grand Blanc Education Channel on Comcast at 7 a.m., 11 a.m., 7 p.m. and 11 p.m. Public television stations WTVS Detroit, WKAR East Lansing, WCUM Mt. Pleasant, and WGVU Grand Rapids also aired the show in May. For more information about air dates in your area visit <http://www.americancivilwaryears.com/airdates.html> . More information about the

show and sponsorship opportunities is available at
www.americancivilwayyears.com.

iMP is an educational media production company based in Grand Blanc and East Lansing.

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