

# MEE NEWSLETTER

Volume No. 2

MOTIVATIONAL EDUCATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT

NOVEMBER 1994

## Youth Violence Prevention

*When "Stop the violence" is met by "I can't believe what you say, because I see what you do."*

Youth violence is an issue that is at the forefront of America's consciousness. It is inescapable, whether on our television and movie screens, or on our street corners. The search for solutions to violence, especially as perpetrated by young African American males, has produced much heat, yet little light.

Part of the roadblock to formulating real solutions is a tendency for adults look to the wrong places when seeking answers. Instead of decrying the disillusionment and uncaring attitudes of today's youth, we adults need to examine ourselves. For where do our kids get the message that violence is an acceptable means to solve disagreements? From us. The retort from urban youth, tough as it is to swallow is: "I can't believe what you say, because I see what you do!"

Violence is not a youth issue, not a Black and White issue, not a poor people's issue. It is an American problem. Even when we factor out violence perpetrated by minorities (who seem to receive the most intense media and political scrutiny),  
*(continued on Page 3)*

## MEE Wins Emmy Award!!



MEE has received the **Regional Emmy Award for Outstanding Children's Programming One Time Only Special for "A Matter of Degrees."** This video targets inner city youth "at risk" of dropping out of school by utilizing credible rap artists, authentic interviews from youth peers and "focus group" sessions. It features teens who rebounded from interpersonal problems or poor decision-making and returned to school for their diplomas. "A Matter of Degrees" highlights urban youth who have taken control of their lives.

The production is based on The MEE Report, published in May 1992. The 23-minute program is a powerful and effective tool to reach inner city youth ambivalent about their education. "A Matter of Degrees" is an example of a recovery message which MEE's research identifies as the type least provided to urban youth.

"A Matter of Degrees," co-produced by Noble Films and MEE, was aired in September 1993 on Philadelphia's FOX affiliate, WTXF-TV Channel 29.

## Our Brother from South Africa Tours East Coast as Guest of MEE...

Following our successful South Africa project for the United Nations International Children's agency (UNICEF), MEE has the pleasure of hosting **Matubatuba Boinehelo Chrysostomus** from South Africa for the month of November.

Affectionately referred to as Chrys, Mr. Matubatuba is recognized throughout South Africa as a pioneer in HIV/AIDS outreach and awareness targeting youth. As founder and member of the AIDS and Sexuality Association of Youth Organization (ASAYO), Matubatuba has informed, organized and mobilized communities throughout South Africa. ASAYO is the only youth based and driven national health organization in South Africa. Matubatuba has served as their National Convener since it was founded in January 1993.

Currently, Matubatuba is employed by the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference (SACBC) as the AIDS Program Co-ordinator. His responsibilities include establishing a network among the AIDS programs in the 30 dioceses of the SACBC which include Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland.

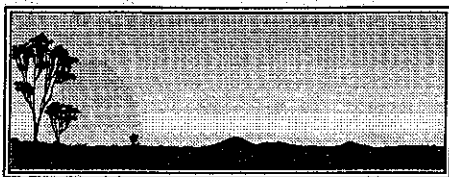
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## MEE Workshops Work

Following a successful Atlanta workshop, MEE is pleased to announce that the next quarterly workshop will be held in L.A. in February/March 1995. Entitled: "Communication Strategies for Positively Influencing Urban Youth," co-hosts include the AIDS Regional Board, the South Central Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program and the Los Angeles Regional Family Planning Council.

This workshop is a must for anyone involved with today's urban youth (educators, public health experts, program directors, human resource trainers, social service providers, counselors, etc.). On the second day, the L.A. workshop will feature a Youth (planned and directed) Forum.

Please call MEE for more details.



## On the Horizon ...

### MEE Seeks Support for Black-on-Black Video Production...

MEE is raising funds and looking at distribution possibilities for our latest production, "*Black-on-Black*." This research-based docu-drama deals with the frustrations and powerlessness caused by the lack of economic and political power within the Black community. What makes "*Black-On-Black*" unique is that it explores these issues from the perspective of urban youth. The script and concept was developed with the integral

involvement of a youth advisory group.

This half hour production builds a bridge between the Black Power Movement of the 60's and the undirected rage of the hip-hop generation of the '90s. It looks to empower youth by encouraging them to take more control of their lives and their communities.

The title is derived from the commonly used term for violence. This production looks to develop black on black solutions.

Production is scheduled for December with an early '95 release date. Call to find out more:

### MEE is Down With OPP!

Operation Peace in Philadelphia (OPP) is a city-wide, public/private, violence prevention initiative lead by the Dr. Chu Chu Saunders of the City's Dept. of Public Health. MEE leads OPP's Media and Arts Action Team (MAAT).

MAAT is charged with the creation, and implementation of a long-term anti-violence campaign that will use both traditional and non-traditional strategies.

The campaign includes TV, radio and poster PSAs. It seeks to bring about a measurable decline in violence by making the Philadelphia community aware that *violence is a preventable health issue*. It will educate and confront communication and cultural barriers regarding violence. It is the first campaign targeting adults as the solution to this problem.

### HIV Awareness Media Campaign...

MEE Productions and the City of

Philadelphia's AIDS Activities Coordinating Office will announce in November the release of a multi-media public service campaign targeting young people of color. Included is what is believed to be the first PSA specifically targeting young gay men of color.

According to recent research, African American and Latino youth currently represent the fastest growing population of reported cases of HIV. It is among the leading causes of death for this young population.

The campaign consists of MEE produced television, radio and transit poster PSAs featuring African-Americans and Latino youth. Education and prevention are the focus of the campaign.

This campaign is based on a foundation of research looking at youth's current perceptions and practices regarding sex and HIV/AIDS. The PSAs look to an environment that relates to the target audiences (in this case adolescents, women, and gay men) on their terms.

### Our Brother... (from Pg. 1)

MEE was introduced to Chrys during the company's initial visit to South Africa. Matubatuba was integral to MEE's efforts to assist UNICEF in formulating a mass communication and mobilization program targeting South African youth. ASAYO and MEE will partner with other governmental and non-governmental organizations in an effort to empower youth.

Chrys will be visiting in the following cities in November. Gives us a call if you would like to host him in one of your events.

*(continued on Next Page)*

Philadelphia - Nov 07 - 11  
 New York City - Nov 12 - 14  
 Washington DC - Nov 16 - 17  
 Atlanta - Nov 18 - 19  
 Chicago/Gary - Nov 20 - 21  
 Albuquerque - Nov 23 - 26

**Youth Violence Prevention (from Page 1)**

the United States is still five times more violent than any other industrialized nation. Violence is a reflection of our entire society, and all of its members must be prepared to work together to forge solutions. Violence prevention is not a program; it is a mindset.

We cannot ignore the overarching issues of racism, poverty and the lack of jobs, when we discuss violence, but we must also not let ourselves be paralyzed by them. We cannot afford to wait. In the 90's, violence has become more intense, and most significantly, more deadly than ever. Though disputes and disagreements are nothing new among young Black males, internalized oppression (i.e., intra-racism) and easy access to guns make it more likely to be ended by gunfire.

As a communications company specializing in issues impacting urban youth, MEE Productions Inc. has done years of research into the causes and effects of violence.

Some communication strategies which need to be considered:

1. Before you deal in any way with youth violence, you must understand its nature and circumstances. We must, for example, explode the stereotype that all youth are into gang violence. In fact, most of their violence is perpetrated against family and friends.
2. We need to create more recovery messages. While most public service campaigns have concentrated on violence prevention messages, recovery has been overlooked.

These efforts are needed to bring back young men and women who have made a recent mistake but want to re-enter the mainstream.

3. Our communities need to become more involved. A caring "village" can provide wider options for our youth, more positive channels into which they can put their energies. If we don't save them now, we are only increasing the probability that they will engage in at risk behavior. We must see supporting our young people as making an investment in our future. We want a return but are we willing to invest in our young people?

4. We need greater empowerment of urban youth, through entrepreneurship programs. By running a business, youth will find that many of the skills that have stood them well in the streets are positive forces in this new arena. Entrepreneurship also provides a unique outlet for their boundless creativity and helps them better resist peer pressure and its sometimes negative effects.

With the renewed interest in "warriors" like Malcolm X and the Black Panthers, young African Americans are in some ways returning to the consciousness of the 1960's. This is their time to move forward. Though their innate resiliency has enabled them to survive the effects of poverty, racism and economic oppression, this buoyancy does not last forever. We must act now and walk our talk if we want young people to believe what we say. *(This is an abbreviated version of MEE's article written for the Harvard Educational Review.)*

**New Products ...**

In December, MEE will release a series of research-based TV PSAs developed for HIV awareness and Violence Prevention media campaigns. The video includes 8

versions of 4 different PSAs at 10, 30 and 60 seconds. (Price - \$25)

"A Matter of Degrees" -- an educational video (Price - \$95)

**The MEE Report:** "Reaching the Hip-Hop Generation." (Price - \$25)

**Video Documentary:** "Reaching the Hip-Hop Generation." (Price - \$60)

**Final Symposium Report:** "Reaching the Hip-Hop Generation." (Price - \$35)

**MEE Report Update.** (Price - \$25)

**THE MEE PAK = \$105 (MEE Report & Update, Symposium Report and Video Documentary)**

**MEE STAFF...**

- Ivan J. Juzang - President
- Thierry Fortune - Sr. V.P. & Editor
- Maxie Jackson - V.P., Prod. Dev. Derwood "Snake Plitzkin" Selby - Creative Director
- Cecil Brown - Chief Oper. Officer
- Meriam Harris - Office Manager

We are pleased to add two new members to the MEE Management Team. Cecil brings an eye for detail and a good sense of humor. While Maxie returns to MEE following the completion of his Masters in Telecommunications from Michigan State University.

**We want to hear from you!** We'd like your feedback on what we are doing. Call or write to us at:

Call: 215.748.2595 or Fax: 215.748.3223

INSIDE...



NEWSLETTER

**MEE VIDEO WINS EMMY!!**

*MEE receives Regional Emmy Award for video based on The MEE Report. "A Matter of Degrees" sends recovery message to youth "at-risk" of dropping out of school.*

**A BROTHER FROM ANOTHER COUNTRY...**

*...MEE hosts South African AIDS Youth Activist for East Coast Tour during November.*

**Workshops WORK**

*After successful quarterly workshops in Philadelphia and Atlanta, MEE will co-host a workshop in Los Angeles.*

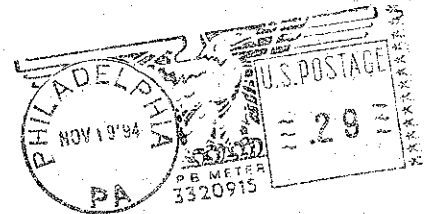
**YOUTH VIOLENCE ARTICLE... the MEE Perspective**

**ON THE HORIZON AT MEE**

- AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE -- New Media Products
- MEE SEEKS SUPPORT FOR "Black-On-Black" VIDEO

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*"Developing socially responsible,  
research-based communication  
strategies targeting urban youth."*