

POINT PARK UNIVERSITY

For Immediate Release

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Joint project giving McKeesport youth the skills to tell community stories

PITTSBURGH, PA – A joint project in McKeesport is emboldening young people to tell their own stories in a city where traditional media no longer exists.

The McKeesport Media Oasis Project is a partnership between the Center for Media Innovation at Point Park University and the Youth CAST (Community and Schools Together) Leadership Network, with a grant from the Pittsburgh Foundation.

“This is a one-of-a-kind project here in Allegheny County, and the youth of McKeesport will not only tell their stories but also gain the skills and techniques necessary to report the news in their communities,” said Keino Fitzpatrick, founder of the Youth CAST Leadership Network.

McKeesport students from sixth to 12th grades will receive training throughout the summer from Matt Petras, a journalism tutor at Point Park. Petras will offer lessons in interviewing, how to structure stories, photography and video, and other critical areas.

The students will be out in the community doing interviews for their stories, whether it’s a written piece, a photo essay or a video. Their projects will be highlighted at a special event in the fall.

“For the residents of a so-called media desert, it can be challenging to learn about what’s happening in their community,” Conte said. “This project will allow the community to discover the stories and images from the residents’ perspectives. It will not solve the problem of lacking a local newspaper, but it will give the community a voice again.”

The project’s concept was accepted for presentation Sept. 30 at the annual conference of the Engagement Scholarship Consortium in Minneapolis. Fitzpatrick and Conte will co-present the project’s goals, objectives and anticipated outcomes at the three-day conference.

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Founded in 1960, Point Park University, a [College of Distinction](#), is a dynamic, urban university with a strong liberal arts tradition. Located in Downtown Pittsburgh, Point Park enrolls more than 4,000 full- and part-time students in more than 100 undergraduate and graduate programs offered through the School of Arts and Sciences, Rowland School of Business, School of Communication and Conservatory of Performing Arts. Visit [PointPark.edu](#) to learn more.

[Youth C.A.S.T. Leadership Network](#) is a youth-driven full-service leadership and development model that will establish and expand a range of supports and services. It will focus on creating a high-quality extended social and educational environment to support positive social, emotional learning experiences for youth in 6th through 12th grades.