

Katrina's 7th

Inspired by the
Langston Hughes poem, "My People"



Proposal for

**DVD & Grassroots
Community-Outreach Initiative**

***Countering the Culture of Racial Negativity,
Harassment & Violence***

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cool Breeze Communications is seeking funding to help distribute 1000 packages of its “Katrina's 7th: Transcending Racial Negativity” DVD/Discussion Guide to support educators, early childhood development professionals, and counselors—in their work to help youth counter the culture of racial negativity.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

"Katrina's 7th: Transcending Racial Negativity" is a new youth-outreach media tool developed by Cool Breeze Communications. It is designed to support the work of educators/counselors trying to help youth counter the culture of bigotry, harassment and hate violence.

This DVD/Discussion Guide package is based on their short, family-oriented film entitled “Katrina’s 7th”—which brings an important and positive message to the African-American community. By exploring how negative racial messages are **gradually internalized** and passed from generation to generation, the film illuminates the profound impact of these messages on a child’s self-image.

A child’s primary identity comes from the parent. It’s only at ages 3, 4 and 5 that kids even begin to think about color... Too often, [we] unknowingly translate negative messages to [our] children.

(Dr. Alvin Poussaint—author, psychiatrist, and educator)

More broadly, the DVD also raises awareness—prompting parents to:

- consider the sobering impact of demeaning/racist language,
- be more responsible with the messages they give their children, and
- recognize how this language can easily lead to harassment, discrimination and hate violence.

We’re committed to getting this program into the capable hands of as many professionals teaching and mentoring youth as possible. We want to:

1. **Package the DVD** with a Resource/Discussion Guide and
2. **Make it available (at no cost)** to educators, early childhood development professionals, counselors, and community organizations—to support their work and efforts to help youth *transcend* racial negativity.

FUNDING NEED

Headlines like the following (from USA Today) are growing far too common:

“Teachers battle budget crunch with their own money”

With school budgets across the country being slashed, and a growing number of educators having to come out-of-pocket for "essential" school supplies, finding the resources to purchase an "unconventional" tool like ours can clearly be a hardship for teachers. So, we want to remove this hardship and make our media tool **freely available** to those educators that deem it helpful and are ready to put it to use. To do this, we need your support.

\$10,035.00 will enable us to prepare up to 1000 copies of the inspirational DVD/Discussion Guide package for free distribution.

The IFP (Independent Filmmaker Project)—our fiscal sponsor—is accepting tax-deductible donations on behalf of this grassroots distribution campaign.

Individuals, businesses, or corporations interested in supporting this campaign can visit our “Katrina’s 7th” project page to make a donation: <http://fiscal.ifp.org/project.cfm/410/Katrinas-7th/>.

BUDGET

Funds will be used to offset the distribution/order fulfillment costs (e.g., discussion guide development, DVD replication, DVD cases/inserts, etc.) as shown below:

Distribution Expense (1000 copies)	Amount
Resource/Discussion Guide Development (Hire Course Developer, 2.5 weeks @ \$45/hr.)	\$4,500.00
DVD Stock / Replication	\$1,550.00
DVD Cases & Shrink Wrapping	\$830.00
DVD Case Inserts	\$150.00
DVD Bubble Mailers	\$380.00
Postage	\$2,625.00
TOTAL	\$10,035.00

Scaling Up

This budget represents our Phase 1 Goal. Depending on success of this campaign, more ambitious, expansive distribution can be achieved. We can scale up our distribution efforts. Refer to “Appendix A: Scaling up...” to see how additional funding enables us to scale up distribution.

ABOUT OUTREACH CAMPAIGN

A Little Background:

A few years ago, my good friend Jim McQuaid—an independent filmmaker—approached me. He'd already written and directed several successful shorts. What's funny is that we'd originally met back in 1990, in our high-tech day jobs, with no knowledge of the other's interest in film. Anyway, he urged me to write a script with a subject and setting that we could actually produce together.

So, as I searched for ideas, one of my favorite poems (by African-American poet Langston Hughes) came to mind:

MY PEOPLE by Langston Hughes

The night is beautiful,
So the **faces** of my people.

The stars are beautiful,
So the **eyes** of my people.

Beautiful, also is the sun.
Beautiful, also,
are the **souls** of my people

And a few weeks later, I'd completed the script.

The film is a personal reaction to the hope and strength of this poem as well as reflections on some of the racial negativity observed in various aspects of African-American life.

Encouraging Success:

The short film on which this project is based debuted at the San Diego Black Film Festival where it was warmly received. Karen Huff-Willis (Festival Director) commented that it "was a highly ranked film and earned "critical acclaim" at the festival's jury roundtable discussions." "Katrina's 7th" went on to make a splash at other competitions and festivals where it resonated with audiences--sparking engaging dialogue:

- Finalist & Official Selection—*SoCal Independent Film Festival*
- Winner—*Cinema City International Film Festival*
- Winner—*SkyFest Film & Script Festival*

The Aha! Moment:

From the very beginning, my team and I had a sense that our film would be an ideal media tool to promote meaningful discussions about moving beyond racial negativity. However, what convinced us was the growing interest expressed by educators and other community leaders (at film festivals and community screenings) in using the project to help facilitate these discussions—as they work with youth.

This was when it became clear that our film could—and **should**—be part of a broader community-outreach.

Now, we're ready to launch!

WHAT IMPACT CAN YOU MAKE?

Disrupt the Cycle:

Unfortunately, the use of demeaning and derogatory language (e.g., degrading words, slurs, put-downs) is pervasive. The impact of this language is powerful and destructive.

It seems like every week there's news of someone—celebrities and ordinary folk alike—spewing slurs based on race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, economic status, or immigration status.

Prejudice, harassment, and violence don't just pop up in a vacuum and can be traced back to demeaning language. According to Stephen Wessler (director of the Center for the Study and Prevention of Hate Violence, at University of Southern Maine), there is a pattern of escalation from demeaning language “to more focused harassment, to threats and, finally, to violence.”

We must *disrupt* this pattern.

Naturally, attitudes and behaviors are harder to change once they're "fixed" in adult minds. So, any hope for meaningful social change requires earlier intervention . . . with our children. Our hope rests with them.

Light a Candle:

I agree with Stephen Wessler when he says, “No magic solution exists. There is no one project that will eliminate hate and prejudice or end violence.” Our media tool alone certainly won't. What we **can** do however is try to change the culture by helping educators, parents and community members interrupt the language . . . one youth at a time.

It is better to light one candle than curse the darkness.
(Chinese Proverb)

Our DVD/Discussion Guide project is but a single candle. If this campaign succeeds, we'll end up with 1000 candles. And even more if we enjoy success beyond that!

If we inspire others to light **their own** candles, there's hope of chasing away the darkness.

MORE ABOUT THE FILM

Issues Explored:

“Katrina’s 7th” is a funny, thought-provoking, and inspirational short drama that tackles the issue of racial alienation **WITHIN** the African-American community. It explores a young woman’s struggle to reconcile conflicting messages of black pride and black mockery within the African-American community.

Katrina's 7th

She's a young, professional, dynamic blend of urban and corporate cultures—not to mention a “Sista with Attitude!”



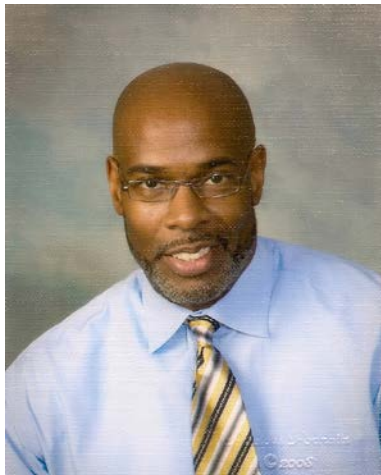
Inspired by the
Langston Hughes poem, "My People"

A COOL BREEZE COMMUNICATIONS production.
TAMARA MAYFIELD, FELITA LAWRENCE, JAN HARTSELL, MEGHAN SHANK. Music by
BLAZING MUSIC+SOUND. Director of Photography SHAWN LEWALLEN. Producers
ERIC JOHNSON & ROGER LEE EDWARDS. Written & Directed by ROGER LEE EDWARDS.

Synopsis:

For years, Katrina dismissed as nonsense any notion that expressions of racial negativity could actually have harmful consequences. Well, . . . that was until one startling cell phone call suddenly brings her face-to-face with one of those "consequences." A disturbing moment of clarity leads her to reconsider and ultimately inspires her to *transcend* the negativity.

ABOUT PROJECT TEAM



Roger Edwards, Jr.
(Writer / Co-Producer)

Formally educated as an electrical engineer, Roger has worked as an engineer and technical writer for several Fortune 500 telecommunications companies. In his spare time, Roger engaged in a variety of creative writing efforts, including a children's science education book ("Max Science and the Glowing Firefly"), teleplays for a children's educational TV series ("SPARKS," WRAL-TV), and award-winning screenplays.

Roger's message-driven stories reflect his affinity for projects that address social issues. This prompted him to enroll in the Hollywood Film Institute's Film Producing Program and to later enroll in the University of Southern California's MBA program to pursue a Business of Entertainment concentration (School of Cinema-Television). Now, he's channeling even more of his energy towards creating projects that can help inspire, inform and transform lives.



Jim McQuaid
(Cinematographer, Editor,
Co-Producer)

With a Social science degree and an MFA in Photography, Jim taught photography at Denison University, Western Michigan University and at UMass/Boston. Since 1999, his cooperative, Turnip Video, has completed several short films. All share a high regard for the important moments of connection and insight in ordinary everyday life.



Eric Johnson
(Executive Producer /
Composer)

As executive producer at Trailblazer Studios/ Blazing Music+Sound, Johnson leads an award-winning and multi-faceted team that provides complete services for cable TV network series programming, commercials, integrated content, as well as music and sound production.

With more than two decades of industry experience, Johnson has worked on a wide range of projects including audio post-production for TLC's hit series "Jon & Kate Plus 8;" commercials for GM, Sony, Travelocity, Audi and LitterMaid; film and television documentaries; and he has worked on shows for Animal Planet, Discovery, FLN and other networks.



Elli Klein
(Managerial Assistant)

Elli brings a broad range of experiences to this project team. Prior to joining the Katrina's 7th team, she spent a considerable amount of time inside the Washington "Beltway" where she led teams, managed large projects and served as a Logistical Assistant & "Troubleshooter" for state and national political officials. Elli also has an extensive background in strategic & project planning, event planning, and administrative support.

But wait, there's more! She has also been involved in various facets of film and theatre production. Her film credits include the role of Aunt Ellie Lewis in "Raven Rock" (C/G Productions) as well as roles as an extra in films like "Secret Life of Bees," "East Bound & Down" (HBO), and the TV series "One Tree Hill."

It's this kind of multi-faceted experience—along with her ability to multi-task in fast-paced environments—that makes her a valuable asset to our team.

APPENDIX A: SCALING UP...

\$10,035 to distribute 1000 units represents our Phase 1 goal. The table below shows how additional funding would enable us to scale up to distribute additional units

Amount	Funds Allow Us To...
\$10,035.00	fulfill current 1000 units .
\$15,570.00	fulfill current 1000 units AND... prepares us to fulfill orders for an additional 1000 units (estimated).
\$21,105.00	fulfill current 1000 units AND... prepares us to fulfill orders for an additional 2000 units (estimated).

CONTACT INFORMATION

Roger Edwards
(Writer / Producer)

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THANK YOU SO MUCH for your support!!

~ Roger