

ProjectExplorer
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www.projectexplorer.org

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

Founded in 2003 by Jenny M Buccos, ProjectExplorer is a nonprofit organization that produces free online global travel series. Designed for family and classroom use via the Internet, ProjectExplorer provides students with access to peoples and places they may never have seen or knew existed.

ProjectExplorer's online film series, photos, travel blogs, and encyclopedia-style research are provided free-of-charge. ProjectExplorer's programs cover multiple subject areas that foster cross-cultural understanding.

MISSION

To provide a global cultural experience through film and multimedia materials aimed at fostering the next generation of global citizens.

AUDIENCE

ProjectExplorer.org debuted in September 2006 and has since been accessed by nearly 1,000,000 visitors globally.

Top 10 countries of visitors are: US, South Africa, UK, Canada, Jordan, Germany, Australia, Philippines, Botswana, and India.

Used in schools and/or after-school programs in *every* US state.

JORDAN SERIES

Debating late February 2009, the Jordan series serves as gateway for students to explore the Middle East. While American schools may skim the surface of Middle Eastern cultures, politics, and religions, this film series will become a springboard for open dialogue.

Series Highlights

- Princess Basma bint Ali and the Royal Botanic Garden
- The Royal Court compound of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
- Hot Air Ballooning over Wadi Rum
- Petra (One of the New Wonders of the World)
- Widad Kewar, The Kewar Arab Heritage Collection
- Ben Ball, Political Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Amman
- UNRWA Jabal Hussein Refugee Camp
- Roman Army Chariot and Chariot Experience at Jerash
- Rustom Mkhjian, Director of Archaeology at Bethany beyond the Jordan
- The science of the Dead Sea
- Quseir Amra, UNESCO World Heritage Site
- Lama Hourani, jewelry designer
- Shaumari Wildlife Reserve

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SOUTH AFRICA SERIES

ProjectExplorer's 2007/2008 series focuses on issues of global importance by introducing students to the legacy of apartheid, the AIDS epidemic, increased environmental awareness, and initiatives to end extreme poverty. Additionally, this series introduces students to South Africa's rich culture by incorporating film segments on theatre, dance, clothing, language, and music.

Series Highlights

- Nobel Prize Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu
- amfAR
- Dr. John Kani, Founder of the Apartheid Museum
- Greg Marinovich, Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer
- Dave A. Steward, Former UN Ambassador to the United States
- The Market Theatre
- Sun Goddess Clothing
- Siphho "Hotstix" Mabuse, musician
- Vusi Mahlasela, Ambassador for the 46664 Foundation
- Table Mountain
- Moving Into Dance Mophatong
- Robben Island Museum
- Western Cape Cricket Association
- The District Six Museum

SHAKESPEARE SERIES

Having debuted in 2006, this series examines Shakespeare's life and work, and the country and culture in which he thrived: England from 1564-1616. Film themes include changes taking place in religion, art, trade, and exploration.

Series Highlights

- The Royal Shakespeare Company
- Shakespeare's Globe
- The Old Vic
- Classic Stage Company (NYC)
- Simon Hughes, Member of UK Parliament
- The London Underground
- British Airways London Eye
- The Museum of London
- The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust
- The National Archives (UK)

STUDENT-TO-STUDENT SERIES

A hands-on educational program created to train high school students in multimedia production and on-camera journalism. Under the mentorship of Jenny M Buccos and Ilana Fayerman, participating students are taught skills needed to create a short series of news stories and interviews, produced for ProjectExplorer's own young global audience.

The first Student-to-Student program took place in March 2008, at Mpontsheng Secondary School in Katlehong, South Africa.

The program is planned to include 3 new schools in 2009.

CREATIVE ADVISORS

- Mario Batali - Chef, Restaurateur, & TV host
- Kate Burton - Actor (Three Tony Award nominations; one Emmy nomination)
- Michael Cumpsty - Obie-Award winning Actor
- Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. - Chair of African/African-American Studies, Harvard
- Tony Gerber - Director/Executive Producer, 2 Emmy Awards.
- Dulé Hill – Actor
- Beth Levison - Producer & Director. Emmy Award winner
- Siphso Mabuse – Musician & Director for the Southern African Music Rights Organisation
- Lynn Nottage – Playwright, 2007 MacArthur Fellow.
- Brian F. O’Byrne – TONY Award winning Actor
- Paul Rudd – Actor
- Michael Stuhlbarg – Drama Desk Award winning Actor
- Michael Wood - Writer, Television Presenter, and Historian

CORPORATE and FOUNDATION SUPPORT

- The Grand Hyatt Amman - The Official Hotel of Team ProjectExplorer in Jordan
- Absolute Travel (New York)
- Mary Duke Biddle Foundation
- Bombardier Transport
- Dean’s Beans Organic Coffee
- DUGGAL Printing
- Frommer’s Travel Guides
- Fuji Film USA
- Gibson Entertainment
- Green.com
- Hint Mint
- HSBC in the Community (USA) Inc.
- IZZE Sparkling Juice
- Jazz at Lincoln Center
- Jordan Tourism Board (North America)
- Mkuze Falls Private Game Lodge
- Morgan Stanley
- Mövenpick Hotels & Resorts
- Peeled Snacks
- Pfizer, Inc.
- Rodale, Publishing
- Rovos Rail
- The Royal Film Commission (Jordan)
- Southern Sun Grayston (Johannesburg)
- Tekserve
- Time Warner, Inc.
- US Helicopter
- Verizon Foundation
- Zipcar

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

“I salute the aspiration and achievement of this ambitious project.”
Kevin Spacey, Actor & Artistic Director Old Vic Theatre

“ProjectExplorer is the only mechanism that will prepare our young people for the task of being the leaders of tomorrow.”
Dr. John Kani Founder/Chair of the Apartheid Museum

“You have highlighted my career of teaching...”
Peter Motaung, Deputy Headmaster at Mpontsbeng Secondary School, South Africa

“ProjectExplorer is amazing!”
Kelley K., a 16-year old student from Knoxville, Tennessee

“[ProjectExplorer] will enable my students to see and experience the world in a way they may never get to otherwise.”
E. Chan, Brent International School, Philippines

“we have never seen an organization so committed to educating youth..”
Jeff Janisheski, Associate Artistic Director of Classic Stage Company, New York City

“I wholeheartedly endorse the work of Project Explorer.”
Simon Hughes, United Kingdom Member of Parliament

“ProjectExplorer does amazing work to literally and figuratively leap oceans.”
Will Harper, Special Projects Developer for MaAfrika Tikkun

“under the able leadership of Jenny Buccos, [ProjectExplorer is] creating valuable links and opportunities for young people throughout the world...”
Sylvia Magogo Glasser, Founder and Artistic Director Moving into Dance Mophatong

“Look out parents, ProjectExplorer is a great excuse for kids to spend time on the Internet!”
Stephanie Cowan, Student Teacher, University of Northern Colorado

Jenny M Buccos
Director, Producer & Founder
ProjectExplorer

Born in Washington, DC, Ms. Buccos spent her childhood in the small town of Fonda in upstate New York. Arriving in New York City in 1999 she began working with a Credit Suisse First Boston as marketing project manager on two web-based startup projects. It is here she gained experience with global media production as part of web-based marketing campaigns where she managed projects in Hong Kong, Tokyo, and New York. Coming from a small, rural background this experience opened her eyes to the diverse cultures and histories of the world, to which she had no previous access.

In 2001, she left the corporate world. In searching for a more fulfilling position, she was inspired by Michael Palin's series of travel adventures and the power of travel as a medium for strengthening education. In 2003, she co-founded ProjectExplorer as a way to educate youth about the world's cultures, histories, and people.

After 18 months of fundraising, business development, and research – including educator, student and parent input – she produced and directed ProjectExplorer's first educational program entitled "Shakespeare's England". The first time Director/Producer's unique vision of learning and student-focused mini-documentaries attracted the support of world-renowned organizations such as The Old Vic Theatre, The National Archives, The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, and Film London.

With the success of "Shakespeare's England" in 2006 she directed and produced "South Africa", part I in Spring 2007 and part II in 2008, in a country and continent to which she had never been. Working with the likes of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Dr. John Kani, the Apartheid Museum, the FW de Klerk Foundation, Robben Island, the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, and Siphon "Hotstix" Mabuse, she created a rich, unique film and multimedia program to engage and inform school-aged children about South Africa's diverse cultural history while educating about difficult subjects like AIDS and the legacy of apartheid.

In 2008, she co-created the Student-to-Student program, a hands-on educational program created to train high school students in multimedia production and on-camera journalism. She is a professional mentor for students participating in the program.

In June 2008, she was featured in *O, The Oprah Magazine* for her work in South Africa.

From September to November 2008, she was on location in Jordan filming her third series entitled "Cultural Crossroads", which will debut in Winter 2009.

In addition to leading ProjectExplorer, she is a contributing writer for AWEARNESS: The Kenneth Cole blog focusing on issues in Southern Africa, the environment, and education. Ms. Buccos also serves on the Board of Directors of Artists Striving To End Poverty (ASTEP). With programs in India and South Africa, ASTEP uses the arts to empower young people in need, connecting artists with global youths to create meaningful change.

Ilana Fayerman
Presenter & Producer
ProjectExplorer

Born on Long Island, but raised in sunny Florida, Ilana started her performance training in Musical Theatre. Always active in the central Florida theatrical community, Ilana regularly performed at Universal Studios and in the Orlando International Fringe Festival.

Upon graduating from the University of Central Florida with a BFA in Musical Theatre Performance, she set out for Vancouver, B.C. to try her hand at film and television. After appearing in small roles on Showtime, FOX, and Oxygen, Ilana began to consider a performance career that spotlighted truths about the world, rather than fictional stories and characters. However, having never traveled off of the continent, she figured some anthropological and geographical training was in order.

Arriving in New York City in 2003, she began working toward her master's degree at Columbia University, and received her MA in Socio-Cultural Anthropology with her area of minor study in documentary cinematography. Some of her favorite themes to explore are global rituals of medicine, healing, music and religion; as well as humanitarian challenges around the world.

She has studied under some of the industry leaders in documentary television, including Emmy-award winning cinematographer Larry Engel, and the Discovery network's Head of New Talent Development, Todd Miller.

As a presenter with ProjectExplorer she has interviewed Pulitzer Prize winning photographer, Greg Marinovich; former UN Ambassador, Dave A. Steward; Vice President of Research at amfAR, Dr. Regina Johnston; co-Founder of the Apartheid Museum, Dr. John Kani, and 46664 Foundation Ambassador Vusi Mahlasela.

In March 2008, she interviewed Nobel Peace Prize recipient Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Also in 2008, she co-created the Student-to-Student program, a hands-on educational program created to train high school students in multimedia production and on-camera journalism. She is a professional mentor for students participating in the program.

In October 2008, she presented and co-produced ProjectExplorer's Jordan series, which includes her interview with Her Royal Highness Princess bint Ali. Series debuts in Winter 2009.

Being a hungry Italian and living by the "try anything once" mentality, Ilana also loves to sample indigenous foods; though, she draws the line at spiders! To date, she has snacked on the likes of salt & vinegar crickets, shared mansaf with a Bedouin family in Wadi Rum, and tasted tomato sauce-drenched Mopani worms.