



*Voice of the Mother Lode*

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Enterprise photo by Krissi Kroh

Jesikah maria ross helps Ayriell Frye, 17, West Point, with her project.

## Youths create documentaries

### Blue Mountain project profiles the community

By Krissi Kroh

Every community has a story to tell, and a group of students in West Point is making sure their hometowns are not left out.

In a partnership with the University of California at Davis, students at the Blue Mountain Coalition for Youth and Family Center have been learning about the past, present and future of the Blue Mountain communities of West Point, Rail Road Flat, May 27, 2008

Glencoe and Wilseyville. On Saturday, they will present their stories to the public.

A presentation of short video projects by Blue Mountain youth involved in "Up from the UnderStory" will be presented from 5 to 8 p.m. Saturday in the West Point Elementary School Multipurpose Room, 54 Bald Mountain Road, West Point.

Up from the UnderStory is a "multimedia project involving local youth and community leaders in documenting stories of community renewal in the Blue Mountain area," according to a press release.

Jesikah maria ross, who does not capitalize her name, is the

coordinator of Up from the UnderStory. Now a UC Davis employee, ross learned about the Blue Mountain community through her independent media work for Save the Sierra. People told her about community revitalization efforts in the area, which piqued her interest in documenting it. The idea was presented to the UC Davis Humanities Institute and Center for the Study of Regional Change, and Up from the UnderStory was born.

In October 2007, the project received \$10,000 from the California Council of Humanities. UC Davis students and faculty began planning work in November 2007; the project was

launched in February.

The project brings together Blue Mountain youth, community members and UC Davis staffers "to all explore what people are doing to make the Blue Mountain area a better place to live, work and play," ross said.

Nine students, ranging in age from 13 to 20, were selected by a screening committee to receive a \$1,000 scholarship and the opportunity to work on this project. Ayriell Frye, Catie Watkins, Danielle Creekmore, Joey Creekmore, Tina Miller, Angie Owensby, Chris Burley, Grant Norman and Aviel Bowsheer each teamed up with community

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## Blue

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leaders to learn about what they are doing to enhance the vitality of the remote area.

From theater to Boy Scouts, parks and recreation to community planning, each student explored one facet of the community with their partner. In addition to interviewing and getting to know their partners, the students were each given a digital camera and a laptop "to learn how to use media as a tool for exploring this place," ross said.

They took photos to illustrate their stories and filmed their partners telling their story. The group met with ross once a week at the youth center to work on putting all the pieces of their project together, including maintaining a Web site and blog at [upfromtheunderstory.blogspot.com](http://upfromtheunderstory.blogspot.com). The students learned how to combine video, audio recordings and still images to create a streamlined presentation.

When choosing what sort of pictures to take, said Tina, she tried to capture images of "what we want to see in the community," and pictures that will show people "what the community is really like."

Tina worked with Holly Mines, Rail Road Flat, for her portion of the project. Mines, a former Calaveras County planning commissioner, helped Tina learn about the importance of community planning in a rural community.

"I think the concept is really great," Mines said. "It's a really good intersection of youth and adults ... and it's a great way to teach kids about technology and communication."

Catie, 17, West Point, partnered with Maryanne Gravitt to learn about the Revive & Releaf program, which works to highlight and promote artists and gardens in the West Point area.

"A lot of people think it's trashy like this," said Catie, as



Enterprise photo by Krissi Kroh

The Up from the UnderStory team, from left, Aviel Bowsheer, Danielle Creekmore, Tina Miller, Catie Watkins, Grant Norman, Ayriell Frye, Jesikah maria ross and Joey Creekmore. Chris Burley and Angie Owensby are not pictured.

she pointed to a picture she took of litter on the ground, "and I think it's important that people take pride in their community and not trash it."

Other community leaders involved in the project include John Pelletti, Ernie LaCarra-Babor, Pat McGreevy, Steve Wilensky, Joyce Rummerfield, Cyndee Pryor, Fred Velasquez and Carol Oz.

In addition to the West Point presentation, the students and their families will be bused to UC Davis June 4 to present the UnderStory project to students and faculty.

Up from the UnderStory is a pilot project for UC Davis, ross said, and after the presentations are over the team will "put our heads together and see what we want to do next."

Besides teaching young people about their communities, and increasing their knowledge of media and technology, ross said, the project "really demonstrates how young people, who wouldn't otherwise be in the same room, can come together."

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## Logging

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the cumulative impacts of its forestry practices, as state regulations specify, and that the company had done enough in its timber harvest plans to meet the letter of the law. Rather than ruling on whether clear-cutting was harmful to wildlife, or whether herbicide spraying caused environmental damage, the court narrowly focused on technicalities regarding the adequacy of the state's regulatory process and its assessment of SPI's cumulative impacts on forests and wildlife.

Two local conservation groups challenged the California Department of Forestry in 2001 over three

agreeing with the environmental groups, but SPI appealed the decision. On March 5, the case was heard by the California Supreme Court in San Francisco.

Attorneys for SPI and CDF assured the justices that clear-cut logging was benign for the environment and that SPI sprays herbicides on a single acre only once in 80 years. After the court hearing, members of the local environmental groups who attended were dismayed that "such incorrect information" became the basis for SPI's claims.

"The court decision today appears to allow SPI to continue its clear-cutting practices and widespread herbicide use in the current manner that the state has been allowing," the

practice of clear-cutting to a close and replace it with the type of selective harvesting that has been practiced in California for generations. We don't have to choose between healthy, sustainable timber practices and a healthy environment and economy — they complement one another."

Mark J. Pawlicki, director of government affairs for SPI, said, "It's a total victory for SPI, and a stinging rebuke to anti-logging activists. That makes it 9 for 9," referring to nine cases brought before the Supreme Court and won by the timber company against environmentalist challenges. All the decisions were unanimous, Pawlicki added. "What the court said was that the procedures we used in implementing these timber harvest plans were sound."