

# Ferebee-Hope Kidumentaries Premier

Live It Learn It, National Geographic Expand Their Collaboration

BY VIRGINIA AVNIEL SPATZ



Teacher Brenda Hallums and Ferebee-Hope student filmmakers at National Geographic headquarters

**Y**oung filmmakers at Ferebee-Hope Elementary School released 15 short documentaries on Dec. 10. Students in Ms. Hallums' sixth-grade class wrote, directed and filmed Kidumentaries, premiering at National Geographic's Grosvenor Auditorium.

Films took viewers into student homes and described experiences from the local SplashPark to Viet Nam. Autobiographies illustrated the power of reading, dance, music, cheer leading and sports, faith and family. Concern for the environment and maintaining positive living spaces were also strong themes. Biographies highlighted the inspiration of sisters, cousins, aunts and a grandfather. Several films mentioned young people's responsibility to inspire and support others.

## Kidumentaries

Kidumentaries is a collaboration of the nonprofit Live It Learn It (LILI) and National Geographic Channel (NGC). Now in its fifth year, LILI partners with 18 DC Public Schools to provide experiential learning in fourth through sixth grades. Three trips per year – chosen by teachers in consultation with LILI staff -- are “scaffolded” by pre- and post-trip lessons and assessments to help students and teachers make the most of the experiences.

National Geographic promotes “geo-literacy -- the ability to reason about the world to make personal, professional, and civic decisions.” NGC serves this mission through world-renowned video productions.

Ms. Hallums' classes have worked with LILI for four years. Her current sixth grade is the second class to par-

ticipate in the new Kidumentaries project.

LILI conceived the idea, helped design lesson plans and assisted with teaching. NGC helped craft the film-making curriculum, and staff members taught camera and storyboarding techniques.

The six-week pilot program was launched last year at River Terrace Elementary in Ward 7. Fifth-grade filmmakers

created how-tos or autobiographies (see May 2009 EOR). This year's three-month program focuses on biography. The second sixth-grade class at Ferebee-Hope will participate in the spring.

## 'Many Cooks'

The longer program allowed LILI to provide more support and gave students more time to develop ownership of their projects, says executive director Matthew Wheelock. In addition, more NGC staff members spent more time with students: Drew Jones, Katarina Price and others joined Madeleine Carter, Mark Green and Timothy Joyce, who participated last year.

Price found that biography proved a “great vehicle for kids to bring all their skills together...to use creativity and teamwork,” while Jones was impressed by the students' eagerness to learn and by the school's welcome. “It was great to be able to have an impact.”

Veteran teacher Brenda Hallums, in turn, notes that NGC's presence for a few weeks will have a far-reaching influence.

“Any time students are excited, learning sticks,” Hallums explains.

Film is a collaborative enterprise, LILI's Erika Harper said at the premier. And Kidumentaries provided an example where “too many cooks did not spoil the soup.”

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For more information, visit [www.LiveItLearnIt.org](http://www.LiveItLearnIt.org), call 202-546-6223, or contact Ferebee-Hope: 3999 8th St., SE., 202-645-3100. ★