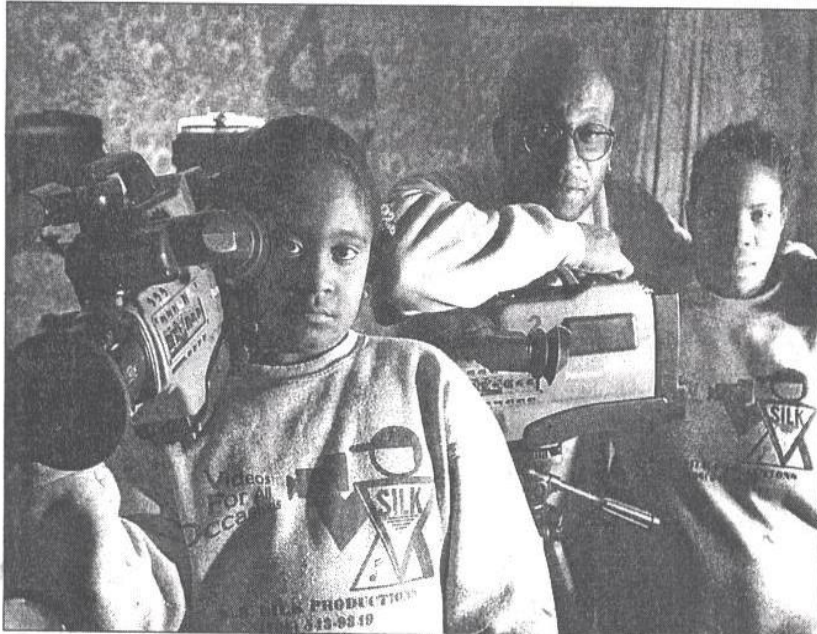


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Travis Long/Staff

From left, Ebonique Bosby, 9, Michael Bosby, and Kinkyta Hill are the media education team for the Express H.O.M.E. Program.

Family bringing H.O.M.E. educational support program

By Sarah Lee
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Athens resident Jacqueline Bosby is a new-fangled renaissance woman — one who believes in herself, is dedicated to the community, who'll try anything once and who doesn't understand the concept of failure.

And all this with little to no budget.

Hailing from Maywood, Ill., Bosby moved to Athens in July 2000 and immediately set to task developing the Express H.O.M.E (Helping Others Magnify Education) Program, a 501(c)(3), non-profit organization that Bosby says is designed to "develop and implement quality educational programs for the community or a specific group by working with the entire community."

In layman's terms, that

means Bosby and her family, which doubles as her staff — husband, Michael Bosby; daughters Knikyta Hill, 22, Ja Taryia Hill, 19, Ebonique Bosby, 9; and son Michael Bosby Jr., 17 — spend time and out-of-pocket expenses to implement civic-minded programs such as 2001's Black Youth Heritage Expo and the Halloween Safety Workshop, of which there were 977 and 469 local participants, respectively.

While the organization is constantly fighting to gain monetary support from the community, according to Jacqueline Bosby, the group has had no problem gaining support from community leaders such as the Athens-Clarke Office of Public Information, the Clarke County School District and area enforcement agencies.

The 2002 proposed budget

for the program tops out at just over \$200,000, a fact that distresses Bosby and her family/staff because finding private benefactors in a new town is no easy task.

"If you want to get grants from the government you have to apply at the right time; when they have a fund for exactly what you're doing," said Bosby. "Besides, I think that the local community should donate the money because they are the ones using the programs."

To date, Bosby has seen little money come to Express H.O.M.E.'s office, a suite of two rooms on Gaines School Road donated to her by local businessman Joe Ardolina.

She has, however, seen generosity of spirit when it comes to venues for the organization's programs.

See H.O.M.E. on A7

H.O.M.E. from A3

Bosby said she presents programs "wherever I can get donated space," and has held several at area parks and schools.

On the horizon for Express H.O.M.E. is a Prom Night Safety Program and an Education Fair, both scheduled for spring.

And then there are the educational videos geared toward discussion of some of the grittier realities facing today's youth that Bosby and media producer husband Michael continue to make with the help of the local school board, police force and area kids.

The videos — 10 are finished now — are a product of the Bosby's production company, Joynt Production Network, and run on Athens Channel 17 from 6-8 p.m. Tuesdays.

"We try to make (the videos) as realistic as we can," said Bosby while reviewing one such video in the "Street Talk" library about the issues surrounding teen-agers and guns. "So that kids will know that other kids are going through what they are going through."

Realism does indeed reign, as the gun control video shows local kids acting their parts in the hallways and parking lots of Cedar Shoals High School, and local police officers providing an educational epilogue in the school's classrooms.

Michael Bosby, who films the videos and acts as his wife's sounding board, noted

that there are two demographic groups he would like the Express H.O.M.E. Program to focus on: senior citizens and teen-agers.

"Hopefully, we'll all be seniors one day, and I think it's important that we help older people live their lives to the fullest," he said. "And if you're going to be a successful senior, then you have to be a successful teen. A lot of these kids ... they want to skip college and ... go on to make a lot of money (like their sports heroes). But I tell them you have to be able to count your money when you make it."

On the issue of money, the Bosbys are frustrated yet good natured in their quest for local monetary support by way of donations or private grants.

"Everybody uses our programs, but when it comes time to ask for money or donations, there never seems to be any," Jacqueline Bosby said with a laugh, proving she will not let budget restrictions chill her desire to help.

Perhaps that's because her most important role as renaissance woman is to her young child, Ebonique, who acknowledges that what her parents do for a living is noble and "helps people."

Ebonique noted that she aspires to someday be mayor, a position for which she's already outlined a platform.

When asked what she means to do first as mayor, Ebonique glances at her mother and calmly responds, "I'll help people out by giving them money if they need it."