

Ford Foundation.

To those in power, ACT is saying - clearly and loudly - that new guidelines for children's programming must be adopted in which different kinds of programs are designed to meet the developmental needs of children at different age levels. Further, ACT is advocating that: there shall be no sponsorship and no commercials on children's programs; no performers shall be permitted to use or mention products, services or stores by brand name during children's program; every station shall provide daily programming for children; and there shall be no less than 14 hours of such programming per week, as part of its public service requirement.

These guidelines acknowledge that what children watch is a JOINT responsibility of both parents and broadcasters. Broadcasters retain total freedom to make their own decisions about the content of children's programs. Manufacturers of toys, cereals and candy would be permitted to advertise on programs directed to parents. The assumption behind ACT's guidelines is that children just do not have the experience or judgment to contend with commercials and they should not be used to pressure their parents into buying.

ACT is concerned with the implementation of these guidelines on local and national levels. By first raising the consciousness of parents, teachers and kids, and then by following through with legal action to change the regulating structures, ACT is

making quite an impact.

In order to help others who share their concerns, ACT has prepared a number of first-rate publications. Their Nutrition Kit, aimed at kids and adults, points out some alternatives to sweets. A Resource List is also available which includes general information on cable, television, and children and television. These publications, and others, provide resources and an initial step for others who want to join the action.

On a different level, ACT has petitioned the Federal Communications Commission, the Federal Trade Commission and CBS. They have picketed WHDH in Boston to restore the "Captain Kangaroo Show." They have sponsored and participated in numerous conferences and symposiums. ACT has commissioned some of the most important studies on children and television to date. These studies show the entire gamut of children's television concerns, and they are providing the academic support for ACT to continue its work. (Others are supporting ACT on a purely common-sense level. The Parade Magazine 1972 study released the fact that more people are concerned about what their kids watch and more concerned about how to change it than was thought possible.)

ACT is providing a means for those who are interested in changing the entire structure of children's programming to do so and is well on its way to making television for children the public service arena most of us want.

Invitation to a Video Forum

ANNE PAGE

Videotapes made by kids for kids are not being shared. Much valuable interchange is being lost because such tapes have the possibility of stimulating dialogue/discussion between groups in various parts of the country. I have recently been involved with this kind of video-pal exchange between high school video classes. The results have been so rewarding that it has occurred to me that the principle of sharing tapes could be expanded. I'm willing to make this happen.

From my perspective, the value of this activity lies in the area of awareness and knowledge which can be gained from the experience of sharing feelings, topics of concern and ideas within a group of people from all over the country. (Why not the world?) The processes involved when each group creates their own messages are equally important. The act of sharing of a group forum becomes a real experience towards extending individual efforts into a

collective consciousness. It is also an act, of course, in expanding and exploring new communications possibilities.

An Example

A class of Philadelphia high school kids makes a tape on "Housing in Your City/Town." (Or even more specific topics such as "Tenants Equal Rights, What is Being Done in Your Area?") Concurrently, classes in Chicago, Illinois; Flagstaff, Arizona; Bartlesville, Oklahoma; Boston, Massachusetts; Palm Beach, Florida and Little Rock, Arkansas or wherever, also prepare tapes of their housing environments. Then the fun begins when these are sent to each participating group. Beside the advantage of receiving information on a particular topic from different areas and viewpoints, this video forum concept can stimulate kids to create new networks of video exchange. A fall out of the process will be discussions about "What is mass communication?"

and "How can individuals create an alternative information and message system which is responsive to their needs?" Because there are no models for this idea, the kids who become involved will be creating a new communication network relationship.

You Are Cordially Invited. . . .

In order to begin the Video Forum needs:

- A. Interested kids/classes/groups/individuals.
- B. A central coordinating spot.
- C. Common topics, interests, concerns, to be expressed on video.
- D. Cooperation.

I will volunteer to item B. If you're interested, items A and D will take care of themselves. Here is a procedure for taking care of item C and, in general, getting things organized.

1. Send a letter to Video Forum as soon as possible including: name, school or group; address and telephone number; grade or ages of kids and indication of date your program begins and ends; topics of interest - be as specific as you can. List in order of preference if it matters.

2. I will group participants according to similar topics and ages/grades. (Express whether you want a limited age/grade range. it might be fun to leave it open and experience some cross-age teaching.)

3. You will receive a final list of participants in your topic/group. A mailing list for your video tape will also be included.

4. An arbitrary preparation time of one month

seems reasonable. So if you finish making your tape before that time just start it going according to the tape's mailing list.

5. To insure that the process be a real flow of information/communication and to also insure that each participant receives tape before the end of the semester, you should quickly send each tape you get along to the next name on the list. Let's say two days or so in each school. (I will also list for each participant the order they shall receive the tapes and from whom. So if there is a long delay that person/school can be contacted.)

6. Now assuming everyone is tuned-in!, there should be some nice dialogue, reactions and discoveries going in all sorts of directions. For our own evaluation and learning, I would like some response from each participating school, including the following information: Likes and dislikes of the process; suggestions for improvements; projects which resulted from this forum; reactions to specific tapes. If you can, please send along any visual printed material and additional tapes that were shared. This also includes response tapes if you wish to share them with me or the forum. All originals will be returned.

Send all correspondence to:

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