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Local seniors and high school student seek YouTube fame

New Horizons at Choate residents produce "Call Me Maybe" video

WOBURN, March 24, 2014 – Not to be left out of the hottest lip-sync craze of recent years, Woburn's New Horizons retirement community recently created its first-ever music video. Nineteen residents teamed up with Woburn High School sophomore Doug Huynh to produce their own young-at-heart version of the Carly Rae Jepsen hit "Call Me Maybe."

Spearheading the creative effort were New Horizons' associate executive director, Paul Kirschbaum, and director of community relations, Barbra Graham, a longtime Woburn resident. After trying unsuccessfully to film the video using iPhones, however, Graham called friend Susan Thifault, director of fine arts at Woburn High School, for assistance.

"I immediately thought of Doug," said Thifault. "He's highly responsible. I typically get only one student a year like him – someone I would feel comfortable recommending for a project like this one."

Capitalizing on this learning opportunity, Thifault talked with Huynh about storyboards and scripts, as well as how to act professionally.

"This project reinforced our classroom work, as well as offered an opportunity for Doug to broaden his horizons and see what 'real-world' work is like. We discussed how to relate to a client, including being on time and being responsible."

Huynh dedicated much of his February vacation to the creation of the three-minute video. In addition to a scouting visit to the Warren Avenue assisted and independent living community, followed by two three-hour taping sessions there, he spent several hours editing.

"I was really surprised at how excited the residents were," said Huynh. "They were having fun, and we were all making jokes."

Graham noted, "We were very lucky to have Doug. He did an incredible job."

In addition to class credit, community service hours, and a new portfolio piece, the video earned Huynh a mention on his school's website and a personal visit from Superintendent of Schools Mark Donovan.

Thifault suggested that Huynh gained another important benefit.

“This project resulted in a nice bridging of generations,” said Thifault. “I know Doug walked away with a great appreciation of senior citizens.”

As for the cast members, Graham said, “The residents had a ball! They feel like movie stars, and they would do it again in a heartbeat.”

In the meantime, their first music video is available for viewing online at bit.ly/OEhnEQ.

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PHOTO: The cast of New Horizons’ music video with producer and Woburn High School sophomore Doug Huynh (front right). Fellow student Matt Mitrano (front left) volunteered his time as assistant producer.