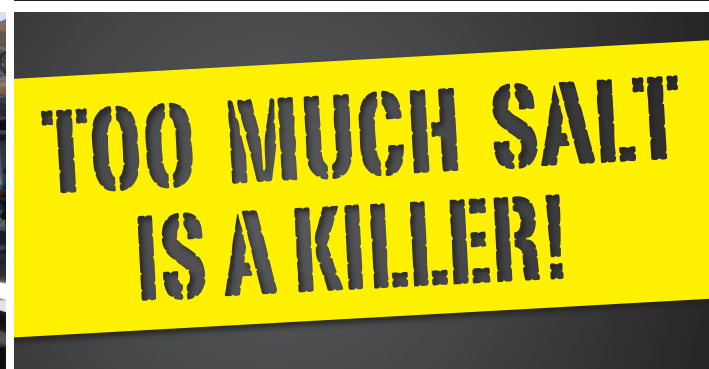
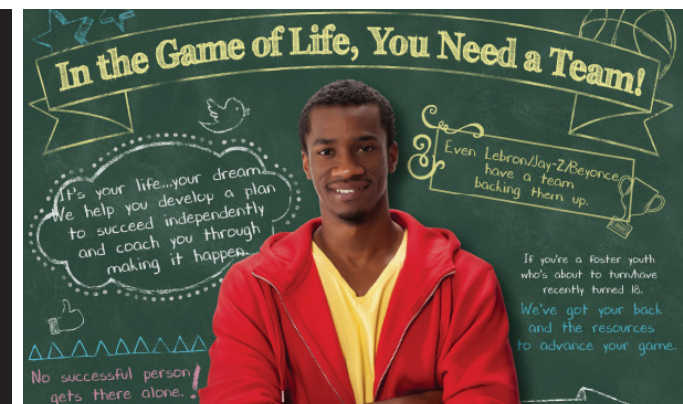
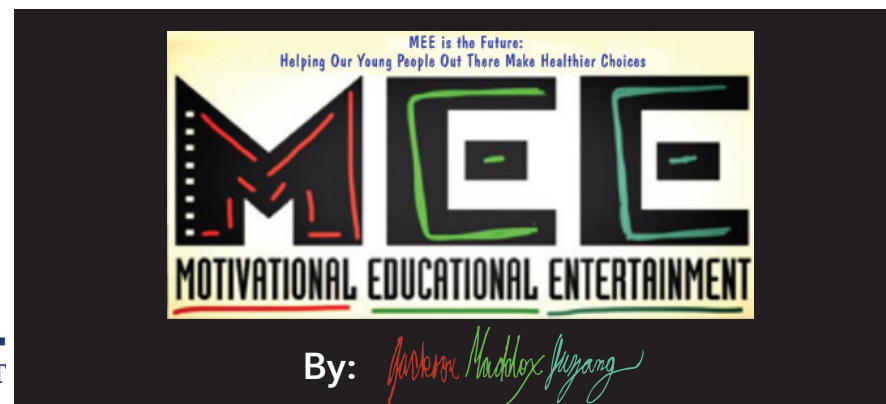




 **EAT. FEEL. DO.  
BETTER.**



# 2014 ANNUAL REPORT







# Table of Contents

<b>Letter from the President</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>MEE in Action</b>	<b>6</b>

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<b>Company Directory</b>	<b>25</b>
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## 2014 Projects

African American Network Against Alzheimer's	8
Emory University, Rollins School of Public Health	8
The California Endowment BMOC Planning Grant	9
GCAPP Community Education Campaign for Better Nutrition	10
Urban Trends: The Parenting Guide	11
Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth	12

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## 2014/2015 Projects

First Place for Youth	14
Sodium Reduction Media Services	15
Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals	16
Tobacco Prevention Media Services	17
National Institutes of Health/Rhode Island Hospital	18
NStar Entertainment	19
GCAPP Second Chance Homes Network	20

## 2015 Projects

U.S. Department of Education/ ASHLIN Management Group	22
The California Endowment and The Open Society Foundation	22
Drexel University, Office of University and Community Partnerships	23
"We Are!" Black History Month Education Campaign	23
GCAPP gPower	24
Urban Trends: Helping Foster Youth Transition to Independent Adulthood	24







## From The President

# *Social Responsibility as a Cornerstone of Our Work*

MEE has a long history of socially-responsible entrepreneurship and business practices, in America and around the globe. In fact, they extend back to the foundation of the firm's creation in 1990 at The Wharton Graduate School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania. MEE believes in – and more importantly, demonstrates – the concept of not only doing well (for itself), but in doing good (for its community and others). For nearly a quarter of a century, through the ups-and-downs of the business world, we have not strayed from our original goals or vision. We look beyond merely maximizing profits and try to strike the appropriate balance with making a positive impact on the world around us. MEE bridges its mission and practice,

“walks the talk” and delivers on social responsibility on five primary levels:

### **MEE's Stated Mission**

MEE's definition of success includes both financial and social returns. MEE will only work with clients or on projects that are not exploiting vulnerable populations economically or socially, or promoting behaviors that result in negative health outcomes. In addition, many of MEE's projects include significant in-kind contributions as a way to “give back” to the communities in which we work.

### **MEE's Hiring and Employment Practices**

MEE has always employed a diverse staff in terms of race/ethnicity, gender, age and sexual orientation. In addition, we provide much-needed part-time employment to residents (both adults and youth) of local communities to conduct ground-level execution of grassroots-outreach projects whenever possible.

### **MEE's Approach to Its Community Work**

In every phase of MEE's framework and business model for delivering its services, we look for ways to engage the targeted community (health consumer) in a respectful manner that leverages its inherent knowledge and strengths. We recognize that the target audience is truly the “expert” on its lifestyles and choices. That is why we actively involve the community in our “by and for” message development approach and in the data coding and analysis process for our qualitative research.

### **Using and Deploying MEE Resources in Order to Support Community Sustainability**

MEE is socially responsible in the way it utilizes and deploys the resources under its stewardship. Our work in at-risk communities leaves them strengthened, more aware and empowered. Once a community becomes engaged and mobilized on a particular issues, they can use the skills MEE leaves behind to become advocates on any issue that is having a negative effect.

### **Providing Added Value to the MEE Community Network**

Through the nationwide MEE Community Network, a principled approach centered on giving back to communities, we bring together individuals and organizations that are committed to improving life and health outcomes among the underserved, connecting them so they can share knowledge, resources and solutions. MEE offers Network members free products and services (including TA and workshops).

We look forward to building upon our existing relationships, along with forging new ones with like-minded agencies and organizations interested in getting a pro-social return on their investments.

Ivan J. Juzang

Founder/President  
MEE Productions Inc.







MEE in Action	2014	2014/2015	2015
Advertising/Social Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ African American Network Against Alzheimers</li><li>■ Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ First Place for Youth</li><li>■ GCAPP Second Chance Homes Network</li><li>■ Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals</li><li>■ Sodium Reduction Media Campaign</li><li>■ Tobacco Prevention Media Services</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ U.S. Department of Education/ASHLIN Management Group</li><li>■ Drexel University, Office of University and Community Partnerships</li><li>■ GCAPP gPower</li></ul>
Media/Materials Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Emory University, Rollins School of Public Health</li><li>■ GCAPP Nutrition Campaign</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ NStar Entertainment</li><li>■ National Institutes of Health/Rhode Island Hospital</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ "We Are!" Black History Month Education Campaign</li><li>■ National Institutes of Health/Rhode Island Hospital</li></ul>
Audience Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The California Endowment BMOC Planning Grant</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The California Endowment and The Open Society Foundation Groups</li></ul>
Workshops/Technical Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Native American Community Services (NACS) - "Promoting Physical Activity &amp; Nutrition to Prevent Obesity in Communities of Color" - All - Day Workshop</li><li>■ 2014 Teen Pregnancy Prevention Federal Conference - Keynote Speaker "Bridging the Gaps: Eliminating Disparities in Teen Pregnancy and Sexual Health"</li><li>■ The Children's Hospital at Montefiore - "Community Activation Training 201: Community Mobilization Using Chat &amp; Chews" - Webinars</li><li>■ DC's Department of Human Services' Annual Conference - "Moving Beyond Survival Mode" - Workshop for Institute for Human Service Delivery</li><li>■ National Park Service's Annual Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site Symposium and Film Festival - "MEE's Ending The School House to Jail House Research Project" - Premiere of Documentary and Workshop</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Bronx Community Health Network, inc. (BCHN) - "Engaging Communities To Improve Health Outcomes. The Keys to Community Outreach" - All Day Workshop</li><li>■ Johns Hopkins University's Urban Health Institute - "Healing Together: Community-Level Trauma - It's Causes, Consequences, and Solutions." - Panelist for Social Determinants of Health Symposium</li><li>■ 2015 Wisconsin Youth Services Conferences - "Communications and Outreach to a Digitally-Connected Generation: Countering Lack of Trust and Disrespect Using Trauma-Informed Approaches." - Opening Keynote and Workshop</li><li>■ PA Nutrition Education Network 2015 Annual Conference - "Promoting Physical Activity &amp; Nutrition to Prevent Obesity in Communities of Color" - Workshop</li></ul>
UrbanTrends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Urban Trends Collection: The Parenting Issue</li><li>■ Urban Trends Collection: Inner City Truth 3</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Urban Trends Collection: Helping Foster Youth Transition to Independent Adulthood</li></ul>







# 2014 PROJECTS





## African American Network Against Alzheimer's



### *Raising Awareness of Alzheimer's in the African American Community*

MEE was hired by the African American Network Against Alzheimer's (AANAA) to help raise community awareness and promote the award-winning play *Forget Me Not* in Philadelphia, Boston and Washington, DC. Written by Garrett Davis, the goal of the play is to raise awareness of Alzheimer's disease, especially in the Black community. The play shows just how far-reaching a disease like Alzheimer's can be, affecting not just the immediate family, but also friends and those in the community.

MEE utilized its Community Network (CN) partnerships to conduct a series of community mobilization and outreach activities, along with e-mail blasts to CN members to drive attendance to the play and increase awareness of AANAA. MEE's promotional activities resulted in 230 ticket requests in Washington, DC, 500 requests in Philadelphia and 600 requests in Boston. In 2015, MEE will continue to work with AANAA on a national tour for *Forget Me Not*.

## Emory University, Rollins School Of Public Health



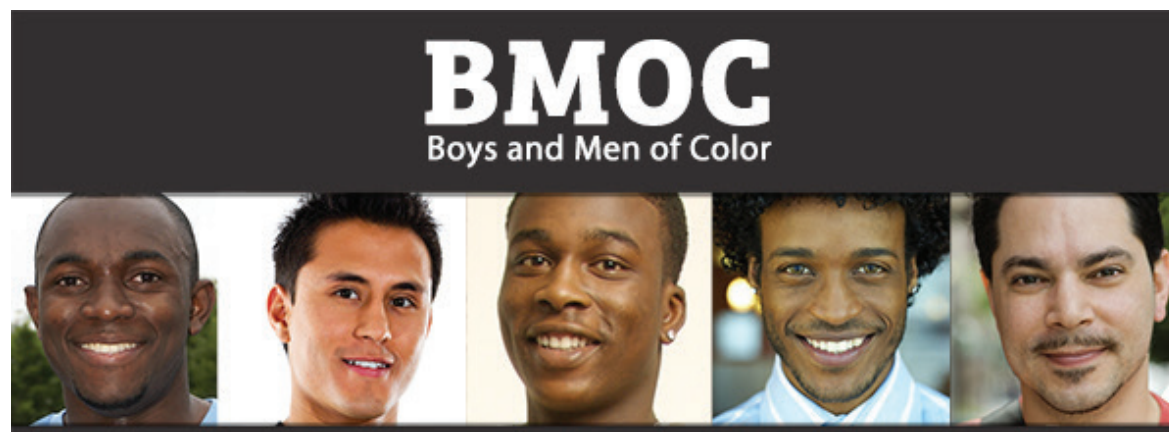
### *Helping Faith-Based Organizations Address HIV Prevention and Testing with Their Congregations*

MEE was hired by Professor Gina M. Wingood, SCD, MPH of Emory University's Behavioral Sciences and Health Education Department to develop a series of videos that will support Emory's implementation of its evidence-based HIV intervention, SISTA (Sisters Informing Sisters about Topics on AIDS). SISTA is aimed at educating and influencing young (ages 18-34), sexually-active, unmarried African-American women about sexual health.

MEE created two train-the-trainer videos in support of a faith-based program, called *P4 for Women*. It promotes incorporating proven HIV interventions into everyday sexual health practices. *P4 for Women* has been adapted for use in the mega-churches of Atlanta. Emory researchers are assessing and analyzing SISTA's effect on women's HIV-associated sexual risk behaviors, with the eventual goal of enhancing "religious social capital" in the Black church.

MEE spearheaded the production process (planning, pre-production, production and post-production services) for the documentary-style training videos that were shot on-site in Atlanta over several days. MEE worked closely with Dr. Wingood and her team at Emory to develop the video treatments, scripts, story boards and interview questions, and to finalize edits and enhancements to the training videos. The videos will help potential program facilitators understand how to implement the core elements of the intervention. More than 50 churches in Atlanta will receive the MEE-produced training videos.

## The California Endowment BMOC Planning Grant



### *Engaging and Supporting Boys and Men of Color*

MEE remains committed to helping boys and men of color (BMOC) make informed daily decisions that will help them break through life's roadblocks, large and small. In 2014, we continued to explore how a branded, online/offline digital platform can be that resource. A planning grant from The California Endowment allowed MEE to develop the framework for a brand-driven, private-sector approach to help BMOC succeed by developing their "opportunity-finding" skills and giving them ongoing, daily access to resources, information and networks that can be the tools for "winning" in life. The planned digital platform will help young men of color make better "real-time" decisions, by connecting them to a diverse range of community (offline) touch-points and services mobilized to support them. The planning phase explored whether the concept was viable and could generate interest among its target audience. The grant also focused on developing a sustainability strategy to allow the platform to grow and expand even beyond The Endowment's initial funding.

MEE's development team received overwhelmingly positive response to the branding strategy. Individuals who are experts in the BMOC field of work verified that there is no one else doing this type of project. Multiple endorsements of the concept of the digital platform and its underlying strategies were encouraging and motivating toward validating our proposed branded approach, which will take place in 2015.

To develop this innovative and powerful communication tool, we have assembled a dynamic management team, led by MEE, which brings more than two decades of insights on how to reach and influence urban young audiences. Since the goal is to create an online destination with a global footprint, the team also includes branding expert Darryl Cobbin, founder of Brand Positioning Doctors. Cobbin has held senior branding and marketing positions in corporate America, building brands for Coca-Cola, Boost Mobile and Fox Pictures. He is designing the brand architecture, which outlines our product's meaningful difference from its competitors, defines its key features and enumerates both its functional and emotional benefits for the end users. MEE is also consulting with Dr. Chukwudi Onwuachi-Saunders, MPH, who will provide her expertise around public health issues, epidemiology, and large-scale community wellness efforts.

## GCAPP Community Education Campaign for Better Nutrition



### Community Education Campaign for Better Nutrition

In 2013-2014, MEE partnered with Jane Fonda's Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Power and Potential (GCAPP) to plan and launch a grassroots Community Education Campaign to improve nutrition and prevent obesity among at-risk 'tweens and their families. In 3Q of 2014, MEE implemented the *Eat Better, Do Better* Campaign for GCAPP in Atlanta using a mix of traditional and non-traditional media channels, including a series of radio ads, transit placement, and print materials, including a poster, a flyer (with a user-friendly shopping list) and a postcard. The objectives of the campaign, which targeted Atlanta-area parents and pre-teens, were to: (1) effectively introduce, brand and increase awareness of GCAPP as a key player in the obesity-prevention arena; (2) educate parents about do-able steps they can take to improve nutrition in their homes; and (3) help parents and other caregivers to empower their pre-teens to make informed choices about their eating habits and nutrition.

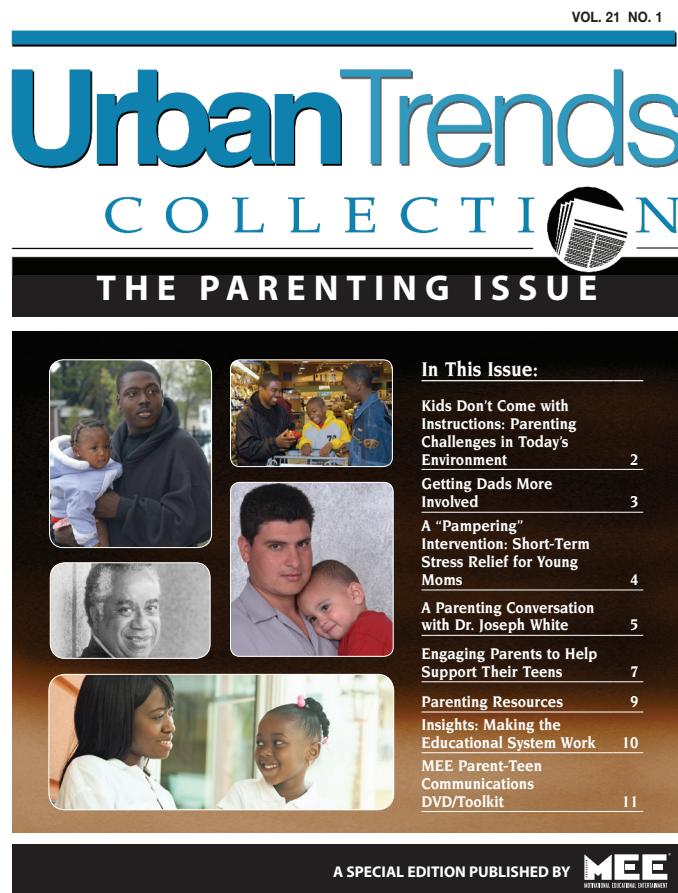
MEE's commitment to adding trauma-informed, culturally-relevant approaches to tackling America's obesity problem led it to gain permission from GCAPP to spread the campaign's messages beyond Georgia. MEE's research showed that lack of access to affordable healthy foods and other environmental issues often make parents feel they have limited choices. That's why MEE focused its campaign on starting where parents can exert control, by making more informed choices about what they put in their shopping carts.

New materials were developed that built and expanded on what we learned in Atlanta, and the new campaign-in-a-box, *Eat/Feel/Do Better* was promoted nationally beginning in late 2014. The "big picture" realization was that parents do not have to completely change what they buy in order to achieve better health results for their children. Therefore, *Eat/Feel/Do Better* targets three categories of grocery store purchases that, when substituted for healthier options, have positive (and achievable) impacts on nutrition: 1) breakfast cereals; 2) out-of-school snacks; and 3) sugary drinks. The campaign's "Least/Some/Most" guide lets parents know which foods their children should be eating less often, without necessarily eliminating them completely. Instead of discounting where families are starting on the journey to healthier eating, the campaign reframes the behavior change by focusing on do-able micro steps and strategic substitutions to build confidence that parents can make changes that make a real difference in the health and academic performance of their children. MEE is exploring making the campaign materials available to health agencies and non-profit groups across the country via the CDC's Community Health Media Center.

**For more information, go to [www.meeproductions.com/ebdb](http://www.meeproductions.com/ebdb)**



## Urban Trends - The Parenting Issue



### *A New Tool for Providers to Help Parents Become Their Child's First And Best Teacher*

Over the past 20 years, MEE has worked on a number of projects addressing the tough issues that today's children and youth face every day – poverty, street violence, peer pressure, feeling disconnected from school, the lure of early intimate relationships and drug abuse (as a way to cope with stress and trauma), parent absences and social isolation. We have seen the negative consequences in urban communities when youth have a vacuum in the space where loving and wise guidance from a caring adult would make a difference.

With that in mind, we developed a special parenting edition of our UrbanTrends newsletter for CBOs and providers that serve them. In this issue, we addressed a diverse range of research-informed, culturally-conscious topics related to the daunting tasks that parents (and in many cases grandparents) face every day.

In this special parenting edition, we:

- Explored the "ages and stages" of child development;
- Reviewed strategies to engage and involve parents, especially fathers, to help support teens;
- Shared insights from one of the top minds in Black psychology;
- Offered tips on how parents can actively support the academic success of their children;
- Provided a closer look at MEE's parent-training tools to help support mental wellness dialogue; and
- Unveiled several of MEE's online resources aimed at providing a culturally-relevant perspective on effective parenting.

Informed parents can instill their youth with opportunity-finding and other skills that will help them thrive as they navigate through life. Our goal is to help service providers empower parents with the knowledge, training and support they need to improve and enrich their communication skills and to enable healthy parenting.

### UrbanTrends Parenting Facebook Ad Campaign (2014)

In 2013, we launched a paid advertising campaign targeting parents on the popular social media site Facebook to help promote the special parenting edition of UrbanTrends. The campaign featured a series of rotating ad titles and taglines designed to attract and further engage parents, along with the CBOs and providers that serve them. These individuals were encouraged to "like" the campaign ads, which ran for one month, in order to gain access to new tools and resources for parents and other caregivers through MEE's Parent Leadership in Action Network (PLAN) Facebook page.

The campaign outcome was extremely successful, resulting in over 2,500 new "likes" from parents and other fans of the page.

Collectively, MEE's PLAN model, micro-site and Facebook page incorporate evidence-based community mobilization practices around the issues that affect parents. Together, they provide parents, grandparents, service providers and other caregivers with the knowledge, training and support they need.

## Virginia Foundation For Healthy Youth



### *Increasing Access to Grants for Small Non-Profits in Virginia*

MEE was hired by the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth (VFHY) to conduct a series of community-mobilization and promotional activities to promote its Y Street Grants Program to non-profit organizations in Northern Virginia. Grantees receive funding to implement the Y Street Youth Initiative through their organizations and tackle the issues of tobacco and obesity prevention, while also helping to create youth advocates.

MEE's efforts targeted institutions and organizations in and around Richmond, Petersburg, Hopewell, Colonial Heights, Henrico, Glen Allen and Mechanicsville. The goal was to encourage and motivate local organizations to submit Y Street grant applications. MEE also leveraged its relationships with members of its Community Network (CN) statewide to promote availability of the grants.

MEE invited eligible organizations to either attend a Chat & Chew information session or webinar where they were introduced to VFHY and the funding opportunity, as well as taken step-by-step through the application process. MEE identified and engaged 65 organizations that were both qualified and expressed interest in applying for the Y Street Grant.






# 2014/2015 **PROJECTS**



## First Place for Youth




**The Team That Can Make Success Happen**




**Education & Job Specialist**

- Career, job and education counseling



**Housing Specialist**

- Independent living
- Stability and safety



**Youth Advocate**

- Coaching and life skills
- Supportive counseling

If you're a foster youth who's about to or has recently turned 18, check out First Place for Youth. Get Support, Not Judgement. Your Future. Your Choice.

**Talk to Your Social Worker & Contact First Place for Youth at:**  
510.272.0979 • [firstplaceforyouth.org](http://firstplaceforyouth.org)

**In the Game of Life, You**

It's your life—your dream. We help you develop a plan to succeed independently and coach you through making it happen.

We've got your back and the resources to advance your game.

**MAKE SUCCESS HAPPEN**

**I AM A DREAMER & A DOER**

If you're ready for your life to get to the next level, don't let anything or anybody stand in your way. Go ahead—dream it, do it.

At 18 and in the foster care system, you've got decisions to make. Leave the system. Take the AB12 money. Go for SILP or THP-Plus? Overwhelming, huh? But if you're a dreamer and a doer, take the time to really think through ALL your choices.

**Talk to Your Social Worker & Contact First Place for Youth for More Information at:**  
510.272.0979  
[www.firstplaceforyouth.org](http://www.firstplaceforyouth.org)

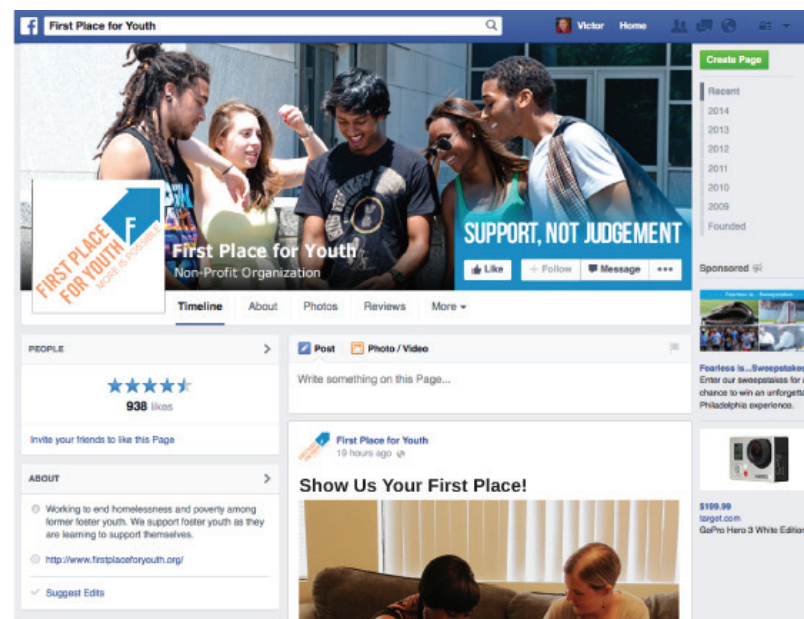
Facebook, Twitter, Instagram icons

### *Campaign to Promote Services for Transition-Age Foster Youth*

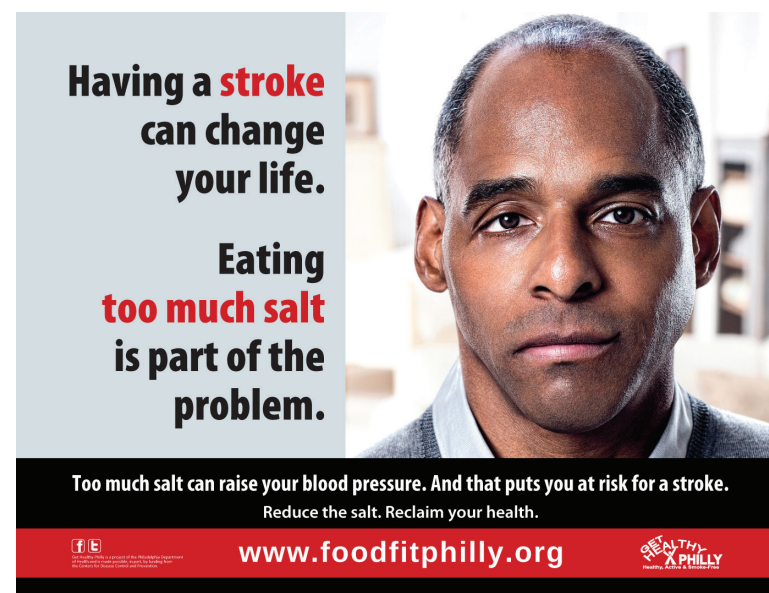
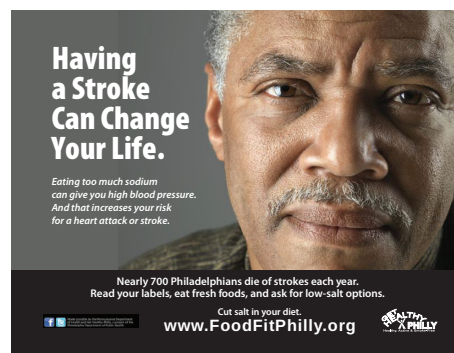
MEE was contracted by First Place for Youth (FPFY), a leading foster care transition support agency, to develop a communications plan to promote its programs and services. FPFY serves California youth ages 18 to 24 who are preparing to or have recently aged out of foster care, providing housing, education and employment support.

MEE's developmental foundation for the Communication Plan included audience focus groups with foster youth in the Oakland and Los Angeles areas, a site visit to FPFY programs, Chat & Chews with human-services professionals and other community stakeholders, a key informant interview with an Alameda County foster care administrator and the input of a Youth Advisory Team made of up former foster youth. Based on information from these sources, along with MEE's other research with similar audiences, the Plan calls primarily for a direct-to-consumer focus that leverages the social media-driven networks of today's millennials.

MEE's Creative Team produced digital media (for YouTube videos) and developed Instagram, Facebook and Pandora ads and content that can be used to increase awareness of how FPFY can make the transition to independent adulthood easier for foster youth. A secondary audience for the proposed campaign consists of social workers and probation officers, important gatekeepers and referral sources when foster youth are making plans about their futures beyond age 18.



## Philadelphia Department of Public Health



### Sodium Reduction Media Campaign

In 2014, The Philadelphia Department of Public Health selected MEE to develop and implement its Sodium Reduction Media Education Initiative. The media campaign targets adult African Americans aged 40-60 years old, representing approximately 180,000 Philadelphia residents, 54% of whom have reported hypertension. The purpose of the initiative is to raise awareness about the link between high salt consumption and related disease(s), including high blood pressure and stroke. It also encourages residents, with a specific focus on African American adults, to reduce sodium intake.

The media campaign was designed in fiscal year 1 from December 2013 to March 2014 followed by a 12-month implementation phase scheduled to end in June 2015.

MEE's Creative Team developed a series of print, and outdoor radio ads based on culturally-relevant message concepts. The focus was to make a stark connection between high sodium intake and conditions like heart disease, high blood pressure or stroke.

Media placement include local print publications, transit advertising (primarily city-wide bus sides) and radio advertising on the top five stations for Philadelphia adults. Negotiated added value include free ads and spots, banner ads and interviews.





## Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals



### SIDS Risk Reduction & Safe Sleep Social Marketing Campaign

For the past four years, MEE has worked with the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) to implement a statewide, multimedia and community outreach campaign to promote safe sleeping environments for infants. The goal of the campaign is to lower the risk of SIDS and infant deaths resulting from unsafe sleep practices, with a special emphasis on targeting lower-income African-American women, ages 18-29.

MEE developed an array of campaign materials including postcards, resource flyers, radio ads, billboards and a Website that features an interactive, online tutorial designed to help parents and caregivers understand how to provide a safe sleep space for their infant. In addition to disseminating over 285,000 print materials to campaign partners across the state, MEE conducted a series of community mobilization activities designed to garner campaign support from service providers.

Community canvassing efforts have targeted day care centers, hair salons and other community-based organizations and retailers that cater to African-American women and families in specific zip codes. MEE has also conducted several professional development workshops and webinars on effective communications, audience research and community mobilization for more than 100 service providers from DHH and its partnering organizations.

## Philadelphia Department of Public Health



Like SmokeFree Philly  
www.SmokeFreePhilly.com



Helping smokers quit and protecting children from tobacco use.



Like SmokeFree Philly  
www.SmokeFreePhilly.com



Helping smokers quit and protecting children from tobacco use.

### Tobacco Prevention Media Services

MEE is in the third year of a contract with the Philadelphia Department of Public Health for its tobacco use prevention efforts. The work is a part of Get Healthy Philly, a groundbreaking initiative to prevent obesity and smoking via policy, systems and environmental changes. The media campaign promotes quitting among Philadelphia smokers ages 30-50 within low-income populations. Of the ten largest U.S. cities, Philadelphia has the highest prevalence of adult smoking (25%), as well as high levels of youth smoking. Among the six largest U.S. cities, Philadelphia has the highest rate of death from lung cancer.

In the Spring and Summer of 2014, MEE continued the second-hand smoke campaign launched in January. This campaign, with transit and TV advertising, emphasized quitting smoking to reduce effects on others, particularly children. MEE continued to provide planning, ad modification, media buying (print and TV) and account management services. In September 2014, MEE launched a "Tips Series" of television ads that used graphic reminders of the hazard of smoking. These television ads ran on 12 Comcast cable stations: VH1, BET, Comcast Sports, FX, True TV, Cartoon Network, Discovery, History, TV Land (TVL), SyFy, Entertainment and Lifetime. This effort also targets adult smokers (ages 25-44) who have young children. The "Tips Series" will continue into 2015, with additional development and modification.





## National Institutes of Health



### Parent-Teen Communications Project

2014 was the final year for MEE's SBIR (Small Business Innovation Research) grant with the National Institute of Health (NIH) to create a "Family-based HIV Prevention: An Interactive DVD." The final product, *Working It Out Together: Successful Parent-Teen Communication*, is an online, digital self-education experience for parents and caregivers.

*Working It Out Together* is an evidence-based, "workshop-in-a-box," translated into a digital tool to be used by adults (parents, caregivers, providers) and teens. This family-based product gives African-American parents the tools needed to be sure that their youth can make better decisions across a priority of issues. Caregivers learn how to better communicate, share and reinforce their morals and values. The foundation of the learning experience is teaching both parents and teens, through separate platforms, how to be more assertive, and therefore, more effective communicators.

During 2013-2014, the primary objective of the project was to complete the product-evaluation stage, which included (1) the final production of the two DVDs and workbooks for parent- and teen-specific lessons; and (2) an evaluation that compared *Working It Out Together* to a general family-health DVD and workbook through a randomized trial with 170 parent-adolescent dyads in Philadelphia and Providence, RI. Our project partners at Brown University's Rhode Island Hospital compiled the research data and found a significant effect with teens in the intervention who reported more parental knowledge and oversight of their whereabouts when not at home.

This project was made possible by a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). Grant number: 2R44MH082103-02A1.

MEE also enhanced the final product (DVD and workbook) using the feedback from the dyads in the research, which included enhancing the workbook and reorganizing the teen video to clarify instructions for each section. As well, the product was revised so that it can be viewed online using the product website, as well as purchased as a DVD/workbook product. 2015 marketing steps for *Working It Out Together* include product website development, print and video advertising for social media use. MEE plans to develop a mobile app version of the product in 2016, once additional funding is identified.

*Working It Out Together* sets the stage for effective dialogue between adults and their teens to discuss anything. Topics addressed in *Working It Out Together* include assertive communications, safe sex and healthy relationships, HIV, self-assessment/personal strategies, peer pressure, substance abuse and conflict resolution. Parenting tools include stages of youth development, as well as monitoring tools to address young people's potentially risky behaviors. Parents will be able to lead their teens to make healthier decisions and generate better outcomes.

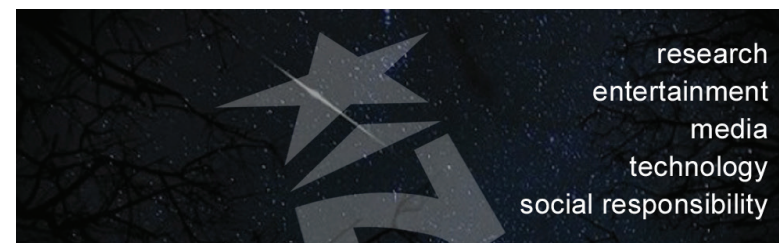


**Work It Out Together**  
SUCCESSFUL PARENT-TEEN COMMUNICATION



## 2014–2015 PROJECTS

### NStar Entertainment



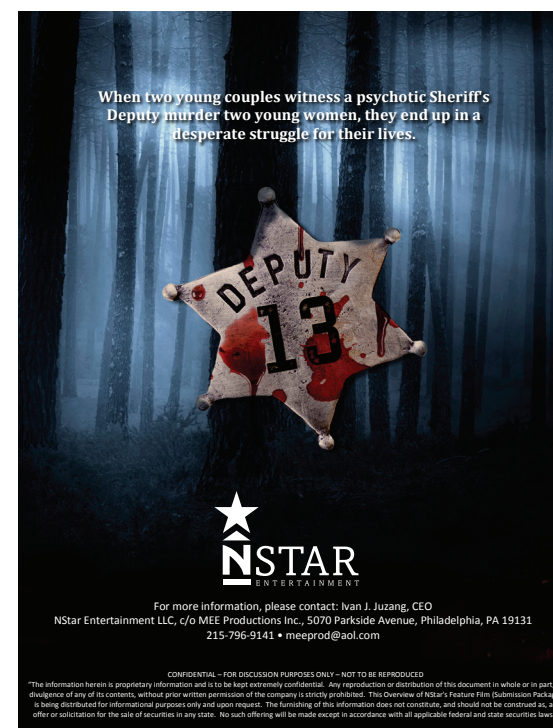
[www.mee productions.com/nstar/](http://www.mee productions.com/nstar/)

#### *Applying a Unique Business Model for Urban Films*

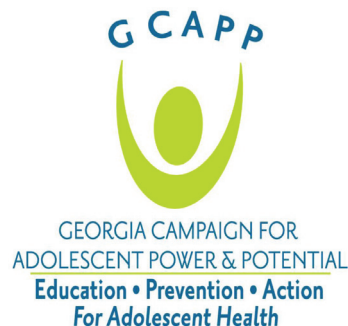
NStar Entertainment continued to pursue deals in 2014 that would allow its innovative production, marketing and distribution model to be proven in the urban marketplace. The romantic comedy originally slated to launch the company's urban offerings has been replaced by a street-smart (urban) horror movie whose script was deemed strong and appealing in audience testing. NStar expects to begin shooting for *Deputy 13* (working title) in the summer of 2015, with theatrical release slated toward the end of the year.

An early film treatment/rough script of *Deputy 13* was tested in late 2014 with older teens and young adults of color in Philadelphia and Los Angeles who are movie fans and expected to be the "sweet spot" among potential audiences. The testing process identified strengths of the concept, potential areas of improvement, and areas needing "clarification or punch;" feedback from those focus groups informed the writer-director's (Darin Scott) creative process, allowing him to enhance the script for testing in order to determine if NStar will green-light the film. The resulting full script was then tested with young people in Atlanta; rating scores averaging 9 out of 10 verified that the changes meet audience expectations.

This multi-layered, creative, and audience-driven development approach takes the "guesswork" out of making films that appeal to urban audiences. It will also be used on the rest of NStar's opening slate: *32-21-42*, budgeted at \$2 million, with a confirmed distribution deal via Relativity Media; and *Holdin' Court*, a \$5 million action movie.



## GCAPP Second Chance Homes Network



### *Campaign Promoting the GCAPP SCH Network*

Leveraging and expanding on the lessons learned from qualitative research with California foster youth, MEE is developing a campaign to promote Second Chance Homes (SCH) administered by GCAPP, the Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Power and Potential. SCH provides a nurturing, group-home setting for pregnant and parenting teens that don't have a safe or supportive home environment in which to raise their babies. GCAPP provides trauma-informed evaluation support, training and technical assistance to the organizations that run the homes on a day-to-day basis.

Based on planning with GCAPP and SCH senior staff, an expert interview and a listening session with residents at an Atlanta-area home, MEE developed a Communications Plan that will target multiple audiences during its 2015 implementation.

As a primary focus, MEE will support engaging influential social-service professionals who could make referrals to SCH among the young women with whom they come in contact. This is a shift from MEE's customary direct-to-consumer social marketing approach. In assessing the environmental context, MEE found that these professionals serve as gatekeepers whose decisions determine the fates of young women in their caseloads. MEE will also invite and motivate adults in the broader community who have access, credibility and influence in the lives of these young women to advocate for SCH as a viable placement.

Finally, MEE will raise awareness among social networks of teen girls and young women, using social media tools that were developed as part of the creative process.



# 2015 PROJECTS





## U.S. Department of Education/ ASHLIN Management Group



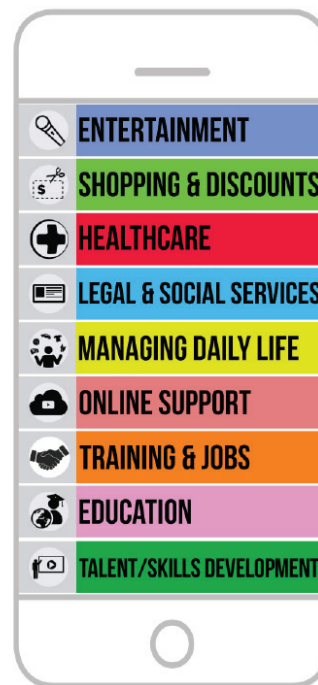
### *CTE Research Dissemination Project*

In 2015, MEE will be working with ASHLIN Management and their research team to provide marketing communications and media production services for a research/information dissemination project for The U.S. Department of Education. MEE will package and distribute information that addresses and counters the stigma associated with Career and Technical Education (CTE) Information Dissemination programs.

Lack of accurate information about CTE programs is a major reason for why this stigma exists. Deep-rooted biases stem from the generalization that CTE is a “less-than track” for students who are not academically oriented and therefore not bound for a four-year college degree. People with this mindset assume that CTE programs are a sequence of easy courses that do not prepare students for the demands of postsecondary education but instead lead students to low-paying jobs with no growth potential.

Our students need a more rigorous, better tailored education to acquire the skills they need to compete, to follow a clear pathway into the middle class and to continue to prosper. CTE has evolved from its vocational training roots to become a career ready and hands-on learning experience that benefits youth who are or are not interested in college. It is of particular interest to American employers who need a workforce that is skilled, adaptable, creative, and equipped for success in the global marketplace.

## The California Endowment and The Open Society Foundation BMOC Focus Groups



### *BMOC Audience Research— Focus Groups (Phase 2)*

After a successful planning phase, in 2015 MEE began conducting audience research with potential consumers of a forthcoming digital platform: Latino and African-American boys and men of color (BMOC) in urban communities across the country. These groups are co-sponsored with MEE by The California Endowment and The Open Society Institute. The aim of this step is to validate using a branded approach and to refine the features, services, pricing and promotions of the digital platform.

The research will determine how a branded, online/offline “optimal choice” platform can become a trusted resource to help BMOC make informed daily decisions that will help them break through roadblocks.

Four groups will be conducted in California, while five other groups will be conducted in Detroit, MI; Atlanta, GA; New Orleans, LA; Baltimore, MD; and New York, NY. This approach will allow MEE to reach a sample size that is representative of the national population of Black males, a key market for the platform.

At the end of this process, MEE will deliver a high-quality (publishable) research report and a broadcast-quality documentary. These deliverables will continue to move forward the conversation at a national level about how to improve the life, social and health outcomes for boys and men of color.





## Drexel University, Office of University and Community Partnerships



### *Promoting Early Childhood Education in Philadelphia's Promise Zone*

MEE has been hired by Drexel University to develop the branding and community engagement strategies to support an outreach and awareness campaign for the West Philadelphia Early Childhood Education Initiative (WPECE). The WPECE is a Drexel-led collaboration of social service and education agencies and community stakeholders working to create higher quality early childhood education options, for students and families in the 19104 zip code of West Philadelphia. The area has been designated as a Promise Zone by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The Initiative aims to build awareness around the importance of early childhood education; strengthen the capacity of childcare centers, Head Starts and Pre-Ks; support Pre-K and K-3 instruction with a strong emphasis on literacy; and more effectively link early childhood education centers to local kindergartens to ensure a seamless transition, so that children and parents are better prepared for school.

MEE's primary responsibility will be to create a brand that supports the Initiative's goals and objectives, based on a strong understanding of the target audience. MEE will develop all campaign messaging, branding and materials, including a campaign logo, campaign themes and slogans and outreach materials. MEE will also develop a comprehensive communications plan that Drexel and its community partners will implement.

## "WE ARE!" BLACK HISTORY MONTH EDUCATION CAMPAIGN



We Are  
Black  
History



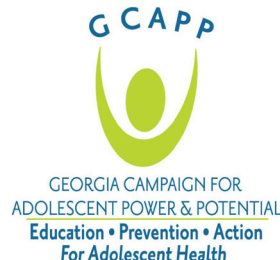
### *Black History Month Celebration on Social Media*

MEE celebrated Black History Month with its "We Are!" educational series. MEE's Facebook and Twitter followers were engaged throughout the month through interesting videos highlighting the accomplishments of great Black inventors. MEE's video feature on great Black inventors was inspired by t-shirts originally designed by the late Mary Juzang, mother of MEE's president Ivan Juzang.

MEE's "We Are!" series also featured clips from our documentary, "First People, Our People: Ancient Egypt Revealed," a collaboration with the late Dr. Asa G. Hilliard, III. The film featured excerpts of illuminating lectures by the late Dr. Hilliard, who separates historical fact from fiction about Ancient Kemet and ancient African civilizations. Dr. Hilliard felt that the passing down of African descended values and culture from generation to generation was critically important. The "We Are!" series is MEE's way of contributing to that dialogue.



## Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Power and Potential



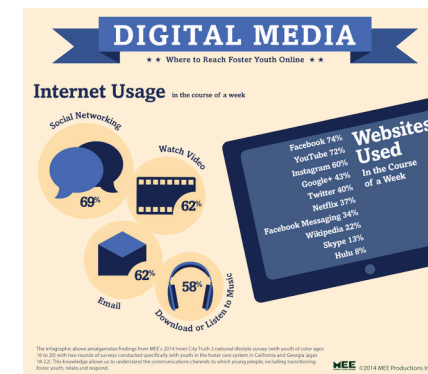
### Promoting gPower App to Reduce Teen Pregnancies

MEE is using its proven community-engagement models to help the Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Power & Potential (GCAPP) promote its free mobile phone app, gPower, in the Augusta, GA community, which has one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in the state. The app is designed to give teens a convenient source of information on sexual health, including locations of free or low-cost clinic services. The community-engagement work supports Richmond County's "We Are Change" initiative, whose goal is to reduce teen pregnancy in Richmond County by at least 10% by the end of 2015.

MEE's CATs (Community Action Teams) model will leverage a corps of trained youth to share the word about how the app can be used to explore options for birth control and STD prevention, and to anonymously rate their experiences at local clinics. CATs members will also leverage their social media networks to promote gPower, along with conducting MEE's traditional community outreach in high-traffic areas frequented by youth.

MEE's PLAN Model (Parent Leadership in Action Network) will be used to engage parents and encourage them to explore the app and its local resources, as well as to take on discussing the tough issues of sexual health with their children. MEE will create the outreach messages, print materials and social media for both teen and adult "messengers" and will implement its proven, 12-step training curriculum to prepare them for persuasive dialogue with their peers.

## UrbanTrends: Helping Foster Youth Transition to Independent Adulthood



### UrbanTrends: Helping Foster Youth Transition to Independent Adulthood

MEE has conducted a substantial amount of focus group research with youth of color. We have also developed and implemented education, awareness and mobilization campaigns for thousands of urban youth and low-income young adults who have experienced sustained trauma, both inside and outside of the child welfare systems designed to protect them. In this issue of *UrbanTrends*, we share some lessons learned and some possible ways forward in changing the life outcomes for young men and women exiting our nation's foster care system.

Young adults from foster care backgrounds have told MEE about the institutional trauma they experience -- multiple placements, lack of stability in schools and living arrangements and high turnover in their assigned social workers. Yet, every year, hundreds of thousands of foster youth of color in America turn 18 and may "age out" or must make a decision about their next steps in the foster care system.

Transitioning foster youth need information and guidance in order to make smart choices about what programs and services can make their transition into independent adulthood as smooth as possible. Without intervention and support services, along with ongoing adult involvement and guidance, children who age out of this system face uncertain futures.

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### **Alicia L. Jackson**

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