

Local Teachers Join World Class Photographers

Somerset, KY – Kentucky teachers recently participated in the Dataseam Teacher Track of the 2011 Western Kentucky University Mountain Workshops where they received training from leading professional photojournalists.

Eleven teachers joined more than 70 professional and college student participants, 30 support staff and 24 professional journalism coaches in the workshop produced by Western Kentucky University's School of Photojournalism. The teachers spent most of the five days working with journalists from national media outlets like National Public Radio, Time, The Los Angeles Times and National Geographic Magazine learning to create dynamic photos that tell a story.

"Being invited to attend this workshop was not just an honor but a world-class opportunity for us" said Emily Sherman of Muhlenberg County Schools' West Campus. "We knew it would be one of the most demanding workshops of our careers, but we also knew it would be one of the most rewarding as well, and we weren't disappointed. We were taught the art of storytelling and photography from the best journalists in the nation, who graciously took the time - day and night - to work with us in order for us to pass those lessons on to our students. It was both incredible and humbling."

The opportunity for teachers was created by Dataseam, a unique Kentucky company that provides computers to its partner school districts in coal producing counties. Dataseam not only brought the teachers to the workshop, but also provided nearly 100 computers to support the participants at the conference. Most of the computers will end up in area school districts to support teachers that attended.

"It was very rewarding to see the progress that these teachers made during the week. They have new skills to take into their classrooms." said G. Henry Hunt, Dataseam's COO, "Now they can help our students communicate better with the type of tools and impact available in today's information society."

Many of the teachers were eager to implement what they had learned. They saw a number of ways to improve their yearbook, newspaper and broadcast classes. Others were thinking of ways to enhance English, Art and even Kindergarten classrooms with the digital tools.

"We have been wanting to engage teachers as part of this successful workshop," said James Kenney, Western Kentucky University professor and workshop director. "We look forward to working more closely with teachers across the state in our workshops, summer programs and with professional opportunities."

Started 36 years ago as a project to document one room school houses in Kentucky, the WKU Mountain Workshops now produce a book and website containing photo essay and video stories from one community. Somerset, Kentucky was the site of this year's program. The program attracts professionals from across the country to work with the Western Kentucky University staff and the many attendees. Some of the work can be seen at (<http://www.mountainworkshops.org/>).

A video showing teacher work is available at (<http://www.dataseamstudio.com/article.php?artid=428&deptid=3>).

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