



For Immediate Release

Sept. 23, 2008

Contact: LaToya Sutton
Communications Specialist
Office: 919-516-4119
Fax: 919-516-4360
E-mail: lmsutton@st-aug.edu

Egypt tour yields unexpected discoveries for Saint Augustine's College group

The wonder of the ancient pyramids in Giza and the beauty of the Nile River are what most tourists expect to see when they visit Egypt. But 18 Saint Augustine's College students and faculty members learned a lot more than they expected to during their Egyptian study tour in the spring.

Highlights from that 10-day tour have been chronicled in a documentary titled, "An Unexpected Egypt." The Division of Liberal Arts and Education and the Theatre and Film Program will host a special screening of the documentary Thursday, Sept. 25, at 2:45 p.m. in the Seby Jones Auditorium on the Saint Augustine's College campus. Alumni Ramal Johnson and Breyon Mims, who graduated from the Theatre and Film program this past spring, shot the footage for documentary.

The 36-minute documentary was edited down from 30 hours of video footage and hundreds of still photos. The editing process took about three months to complete. Ellen Shepherd, an artist-in-residence with the College's Theatre and Film Program, did the bulk of the editing, and came up with the documentary's title.

"As I was editing the piece, I noticed there were so many discoveries we made that were unexpected to us – whether about the people or the artifacts," Shepherd said.

Most surprising to the group was the poverty they saw in Egypt.

"For a country that has such richness and history, we really expected the townspeople not to live in such impoverished conditions," said Dr. Yvonne Coston, dean of the Division of Liberal Arts and Education and principal investigator for the project.

The documentary gives a brief glimpse of how poverty affects daily life for many of the people who live in Egypt. Houses are left unfinished to avoid taxes, everyone has something to sell, and even the children walk right up to strangers to ask for money. However, the film also shows how friendly and welcoming the townspeople were.

The Egyptian study tour was funded by a grant from the Andrew Mellon Foundation. The \$250,000 three-year grant supports the Saint Augustine's College Tutorial and Educational Advising/Mentoring (TEAM) Project.

Through the TEAM project, each student who went on the study tour was paired with a faculty member from his or her discipline. Together, the faculty/student pairs worked on projects in their subject area based on what they learned in Egypt.

"What a great opportunity for faculty and students to experience education outside the classroom," Coston said. "I hope they will go away understanding Saint Augustine's College supports educational experiences outside the classroom."

The documentary will be used as a learning tool campus-wide. Shepherd also plans to air the film on the Cooperating Raleigh Colleges TV channel and enter it in film festivals.

www.st-aug.edu

** Saint Augustine's College* 1315 Oakwood Avenue* Raleigh, NC 27610-2298**