

## Stimulus Funds Create Summer Jobs at Youth Radio

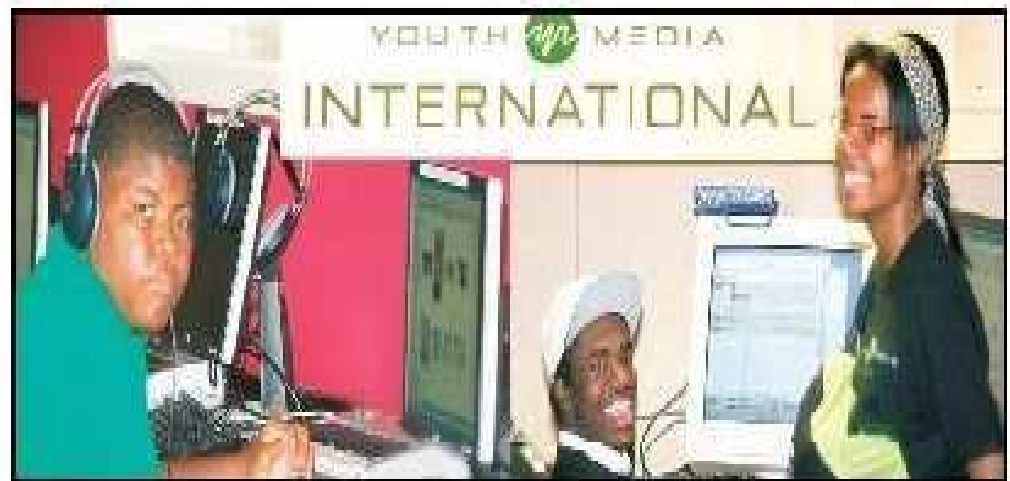
Jabari Jones, a sophomore at Met West High School in Oakland, has found a summer job, one that not only provides a paycheck but that is introducing him to a new world of radio production, podcasts, sound boards and media journalism. "It's kinda new to me, he said, but he is enthusiastic about it. "I'm trying out new things being open minded."

Jabari is one of about 20 Oakland high school students who are participating in the Summer Media Institute at Youth Radio, designed to teach them state-of-art media techniques, as well as provide work readiness training, leadership development and academic support to help them become more successful in their studies.

The institute receives federal stimulus funding, provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and dispersed through the Oakland Workforce Investment Board (WIB.)

The goal of this year's summer jobs program is only to provide work to an unprecedented number of Oakland youth – nearly 1,100, ages 14 to 24 – but also to expand the number of local nonprofit agencies that become involved in workforce development with young people.

A total of 13 agencies, in-



From left to right: Jahshus Davis, 9th grader at Fremont High; Jabari Jones, sophomore at Met West High; and Jameen Kelley, freshman at SF City College. Photo by Gene Hazzard.

cluding Youth Radio at 1701 Broadway in Oakland, were selected to be part of the summer program by the WIB, which is composed of local business, labor, education and community leaders. The Oakland Private Industry Council oversees the program on behalf of the WIB.

"We're very excited to see the stimulus dollars in action, enabling Oakland's youth to obtain 21st Century job skills especially during these daunting economic times" said Jaemda Abcarian, Youth Radio's Executive Director.

The eight-week program combines academics, media production training, and community service for low-income teens. Participants produce and disseminate Oakland-focused media content including weekly radio broadcasts, blogs, and podcasts.

"The Summer Media Insti-

tute reaches a severely under-employed and often ignored segment of Oakland, its youth, and the opportunity to gain the necessary technical proficiency and pre-employment skills to obtain gainful employment," said Erik Sakamoto, Youth Radio's Director of Youth Programs. "Through the Summer Media Institute youth are being encouraged to pursue higher education and careers in the media, communications and technology arenas."

Youth Radio's approach is so successful because it is based on peer-to-peer teaching models, said Julius Toledo, the organization's Education and Career Manager. The methodology is youth-to-youth teaching – students becoming interns and interns in turn training students. "We also provide one-on-one academic advising every week," Toledo said. "The

advisers are college graduates who've gone through the program (as participants)."

In addition, Youth Radio provides workshops and one-on-one support dealing with the social and personal issues of participants, such as financial literacy, health and nutrition, poetry and dating violence. "We try to deal with all the things that impact young people coming into the program," Toledo said.

Founded in 1992, Youth Radio offers a free comprehensive youth development program at its 20,000 square foot state-of-the-art media technology center. In addition to seven classrooms and fully equipped production studios, the center includes an arts performance space and a Mind, Body, Health Center.