

WQPT Receives American Graduate Champion Award

Written by Lora Adams

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December 10, 2013

MOLINE, IL – WQPT-Quad Cities PBS recently received an American Graduate Champion award from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) for its commitment to education and support of students and their families. In eastern Iowa and western Illinois, WQPT is examining the high school dropout crisis and empowering the local community to work together to implement solutions through the national public media initiative “ [American Graduate](#) : Let’s Make It Happen.”

“WQPT’s American Graduate initiative has been going on for several years starting with our partnership in Achieve Quad Cities,” said WQPT General Manager Mary Pruess. “That work led to an expansion of the local initiative to include workshops, television specials and public service announcements on bullying. This year, Erik Maitland was the local host for the American Graduate special that aired in September 2013.”

Through American Graduate, public broadcasting stations have engaged more than 1,000 partnerships around the country with businesses, schools, faith-based organizations and other nonprofits working together to inspire dialogue and action towards solutions and help more young people stay on the path to a high school diploma. More than 1,700 hours of national and local public media content and events, including “ [American Graduate Day](#) ,” have brought organizations together and inspired local citizens to become American Graduate Champions, donating time and other resources, Pruess added.

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“Public media has achieved this success by raising awareness and building knowledge of the issue, highlighting proven solutions, and fostering community action toward common goals – key strategies identified by education experts as essential for progress,” said John Bridgeland, CEO, Civic Enterprises, and co-author of “Building a Grad Nation” report.

“The true power of public media to improve civic life lies in their unique assets combined with their national reach and community relationships,” added Robert Balfanz, co-director of the Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University School of Education.

WQPT’s project included the production of an hour-long roundtable discussion program; being a part of the program, “The Cities” with Jim Mertens; hosting community conversations on the drop-out crisis and bullying; creating an hour-long special on bullying with Jennifer Caudle, an anti-bullying expert and an assistant professor at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey; creating a website hosting the survey, “Cyber-Savvy Cyber Safe;” and creating CARE QC: Connecting Anti Bullying Resources and Education.

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ABOUT WQPT-QUAD CITIES PBS

WQPT-Quad Cities PBS was founded in 1983 and is a media resource of Western Illinois University located

Moline, Illinois.

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ABOUT AMERICAN GRADUATE

[American Graduate: Let's Make it Happen](#) is helping local communities identify and implement solutions to the high school dropout crisis. American Graduate demonstrates public media's commitment to education and its deep roots in every community it serves. Beyond providing programming that educates, informs and inspires, public radio and television stations — locally owned and operated — are an important resource in helping to address critical issues, such as the dropout rate. In addition to national programming, more than 80 public radio and television stations in over 30 states have launched on-the-ground efforts working with community and at risk youth to keep students on-track to high school graduation. More than 1000 partnerships have been formed locally through American Graduate, and CPB is working with Alma and Colin Powell's America's Promise Alliance and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

ABOUT CPB

The [Corporation for Public Broadcasting](#) (CPB), a private, nonprofit corporation created by Congress in 1967, is the steward of the federal government's investment in public broadcasting. It helps support the operations of more than 1,400 locally-owned and -operated public television and radio stations nationwide, and is the largest single source of funding for research, technology, and program development for public radio, television and related online services.