



## News Release

For Immediate Release  
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# **Knight Foundation and MTV Partner on Global Grant Program for Young Digital Journalism Pioneers**

*\$500,000 "Young Creators Award" to Fund Digital Journalism Projects that Strengthen Community Ties*

*Boys & Girls Clubs of America to Help Promote Opportunity in 4,000 U.S. Communities*

MIAMI and NEW YORK – The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and MTV announced today the Knight News Challenge "Young Creators Award," a new digital journalism grant program for young people age 25 and under anywhere in the world. The contest will award up to \$500,000 to young creators with compelling ideas for using digitally delivered news and information to enhance physical communities – improving the lives of people where they live, work and vote. The new award is a component of the Knight News Challenge, an annual competition awarding \$5 million for innovative ideas using digital experiments to transform community news.

MTV will soon begin promoting the award throughout its international network – spanning more than 160 countries and nearly 500 million households – with promo spots that have been created in nine different languages, including English, Spanish, Chinese, French, Russian and more. The Boys & Girls Clubs of America, with more than 4,000 Clubs in the United States and abroad, has also signed on to promote the opportunity to the more than 4.8 million young people it serves.

"Young people are more likely to see the world without limits. We're looking for fresh ideas. Young people are less likely to be intimidated, by convention or custom, from asking questions like 'why not do it in a different way?'" said Alberto Ibarguen, president and CEO of Knight Foundation. "The Young Creators Award encourages and rewards innovative ideas and individuals."

"MTV is proud to leverage our global reach and the boundless creativity of our audience as a way to help strengthen communities around the world," said Ian Rowe, vice president of Public Affairs and Strategic Partnerships, MTV. "No group is more technically savvy or inventive than today's youth, and we can't wait to see their brilliant ideas on how technology and journalism can bring more people together in the real world."

"Boys & Girls Clubs of America is thrilled to promote the Young Creators Award with MTV and Knight Foundation," said Judith J. Pickens, senior vice president, Program & Youth Development Services, Boys & Girls Clubs of America. "This initiative seamlessly fits our commitment to increase digital literacy and civic engagement among Club members who are active citizens of their community, their nation and the world."

The Young Creators Award is open to young community-minded innovators worldwide with big ideas such as: anything that informs and inspires community using bits and bytes; new ways to deliver news on emerging platforms, such as cell phone documentaries; new types of operating software for news collectors; and journalism games. All entries require three elements: 1) use of a digital media; 2) delivery of news or information on a shared basis to 3) a geographically defined community. Although there is a category for commercial applications, most entries are "open-source" and must share the software and knowledge created. The number of grants awarded will be based on the size of the

ideas; no idea is too large or too small.

The first year of the Knight News Challenge concluded with grants to 25 individuals and private and public entities. Some first-year winning projects included:

- New software that links databases, allowing citizens to learn (and act on) civic information about their neighborhood or block.
- Cell phone distribution of video news reports from mobile young journalists on the 2008 presidential election.
- Online games to inform and engage players about key issues confronting New York City.
- An online environment which lets citizens “play” through a complex, evolving news story through interaction with the newsmakers.
- Digital newscasts for Philadelphia’s immigrant community distributed through a new citywide wireless platform.

This year, for the first time, the contest's web site – [www.newschallenge.org](http://www.newschallenge.org) – will also allow entrants to invite public comment, to help improve their entries. A special Web site has also been created for the Young Creators category at [think.mtv.com](http://think.mtv.com) and at [www.youngcreatorsaward.com](http://www.youngcreatorsaward.com). The web site will accept applications through Oct. 15, 2007. Winners are expected to be announced by the spring of 2008.

*The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation invests in journalism excellence worldwide and in the vitality of the U.S. communities. Since 1950 the foundation has granted more than \$300 million to advance quality journalism and freedom of expression. It focuses on projects with the potential to create transformational change. For more, visit [www.knightfoundation.org](http://www.knightfoundation.org).*

*Boys & Girls Clubs of America ([www.bgca.org](http://www.bgca.org)) comprises a national network of more than 4,000 neighborhood-based facilities annually serving some 4.8 million young people, in all 50 states and on U.S. military bases worldwide. Known as “The Positive Place for Kids,” the Clubs provide guidance-oriented character development programs on a daily basis for children 6-18 years old, conducted by a full-time professional staff. Key Boys & Girls Club programs emphasize leadership development, education and career exploration, financial literacy, health and life skills, the arts, sports, fitness and recreation, and family outreach. National headquarters are located in Atlanta.*

*thinkMTV is the umbrella for MTV’s on-air, off-air and online “pro-social” campaigns that engage, educate and encourage young people to take action on some of the biggest challenges facing their generation. This includes the Break the Addiction campaign on global warming, the Choose or Lose campaign on the presidential election, ongoing efforts with the Kaiser Family Foundation on sexual health and HIV/AIDS, and a partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to help more high school students graduate prepared for college, career and life. MTV is the recipient of a Knight News Challenge grant for a program that will empower one young person in all 50 states and the District of Columbia to cover the 2008 elections as MTV and Knight multimedia youth journalists. Audio, video, photo and written reports will be spread via mobile devices and online, with the most popular showcased across MTV's platforms.*

Contact:

Marc Fest, Director of Communications, Knight Foundation:  
(305) 908-2677, Cell: (305) 604-9500, [fest@knightfdn.org](mailto:fest@knightfdn.org)  
Jason Rzepka, Director of Communications, thinkMTV:  
(212) 654-7198, [Jason.Rzepka@mtvstaff.com](mailto:Jason.Rzepka@mtvstaff.com)