

'Diversity Heroes' fly from New York City to Rochester

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An Alfred University educational program that uses comic books and advertising to teach diversity is on a roll. On April 19, the program was featured as part of the NYC Comic Book Convention and on Tuesday, April 29, the initiative will be presented as part of Rochester Institute of Technology's Expressions of Diversity Conference. Drawn to Diversity, the student-created program strives to teach history, inspire artists, cultivate dialogue, and fight ignorance. At the NYC Comic Con, the group presented a workshop to teachers and librarians while also staffing an arts & craft table for children. In addition, the students were able to network with industry professionals from BBDO, an advertising agency; DC Comics; Marvel Comics; Nickelodeon; Mattel; Cartoon Network; and Black Entertainment Television. "There are definitely partnerships brewing that will lead to greater success and broader reach for our future," said Dan Napolitano, director of Student Activities at Alfred University and adviser of the Drawn to Diversity Program. "We have been invited to make presentations to DC Comics and BBDO in the near future. Our ultimate goal is to find support so that we can visit additional schools, community centers, nursing homes, and anywhere else that would benefit from our promotion of equality." RIT's Expressions of Diversity event presents Drawn to Diversity at 7 p.m. on April 29 in the Student Activities Union's Fireside Lounge. The program will draw parallels between history, equality, and art. The Alfred students will also be displaying their newest initiative, equality posters designed for supermarket aisles, which have been submitted to Wegmans Food Markets for in-store consideration. The program is free, appropriate for all ages, and open to the public. The complete schedule can be found at <http://www.diversity.rit.edu>. Drawn to Diversity began in 2006 as an annual exploration of diversity and equality in a chosen medium. The program's first year culminated with a comic book stage show and included support from Marvel Comics and MTVu. Next, in 2007, the program focused on comic strips, and so far 2008 has included researching diverse images in advertising campaigns. The focus of the next two years has been decided; 2009 will explore animation and 2010 will feature the history of diversity in toys. Each year, the new focus is added to the previous topics to create a stronger presentation which uses fun, media, and art to discuss diversity. Questions regarding the program can be directed to Napolitano at D2D@alfred.edu or 607.871.2175.