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# EXCEPTIONAL MINDS

For Immediate Release

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## Exceptional Minds Receives Autism Speaks Scholarship for Summer Workshops in Animation and Visual Effects



Exceptional Minds summer workshops for youth with autism will once again feature animated shorts, video games, and visual effects. Tuition assistance is available, thanks to the Baker Summer Camp Scholarship program by Autism Speaks.

Sherman Oaks, California – [Exceptional Minds](#) digital arts academy for youth with autism was recently awarded a Baker Summer Camp Scholarship by Autism Speaks, the world's leading autism science and advocacy organization.

The scholarship, which allows eligible organizations to offer financially disadvantaged children and young adults with autism to attend camps and summer programs, gives Exceptional Minds the opportunity to pay part of the tuition for select participants attending one of its two-week summer workshops.

Exceptional Minds summer workshops start June 16 and run through mid-August for youth living with autism spectrum disorders 12 or older. The workshops, as follows, are broken out into four sessions so students can take more than one

workshop over the summer months.

- **Visual Effects.** Reality and fun collide as students learn the tools and techniques that post-production professionals use to create visual effects for movies and television. They will shoot their own footage, and using Adobe After Effects, put themselves in the action!
- **Flash 2D Gaming.** Students create their own gaming world filled with original characters using Flash CS6 and Actionscript! No prior programming experience required.
- **Flash 2D Animation (Cartoon Time for 12 to 15 year olds).** Students learn Adobe Flash and the basic principles of character animation in order to make their own cartoon clip.
- **Portfolio/Summer Reel.** Students learn the tools needed to create a professional resumé, cover letter and reel. This workshop covers ways to promote online, as well as in one-on-one presentations.
- **After Effects Animation.** Using Adobe After Effects, students learn the latest animated processes used by industry professionals.

“Autism Speaks, through its Baker Summer Camp program, has graciously provided the necessary funds that will give these youth a chance to grow and learn from the pros who have worked in the industry,” said Yudi Bennett, the school’s director of operations.

The school also recently received a grant from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in support of its summer workshops.

Instructed and run by professionals who have worked in animation and post-production for big names such as Nickelodeon, ABC, Warner Bros., and Cartoon Network, Exceptional Minds offers a rigorous, three-year program for students with autism pursuing lifelong careers in visual effects, post-production and other fields in the digital arts. The vocational school is attended during the school year by young adults in their early to mid-20s, but is open during the summer months to younger youth with autism interested in exploring the digital arts for fun or as a possible career path.

“Our summer workshops are meant to be fun, but they’re also good exposure for anyone on the spectrum who is thinking about or wondering what a career would be like in the fields of animation and post-production,” said Exceptional Minds Program Director Ernie Merlán.

Exceptional Minds was founded in 2011 and will graduate its first class in June, all of whom will enter the job market with industry experience, including post-production work for major motion pictures *American Hustle* and *Lawless*.

Exceptional Minds is currently [taking applications](#) for limited openings for its summer workshops, which are held at the school’s new high-tech facility in Sherman Oaks, Calif., co-located with the Exceptional Minds Studio.

**About Exceptional Minds (<http://www.exceptionalmindsstudio.org>):**

Exceptional Minds is a non-profit vocational center and working production studio for young adults on the autism spectrum. It was chartered in 2011 to provide the training necessary for creatively-gifted individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) who may not otherwise be able to make the transition from high school to careers. Exceptional Minds offers technical proficiency and work readiness training that prepares students for careers in graphic arts, animation, web design, visual effects and rotoscoping. Located in Sherman Oaks, California, Exceptional Minds is both an instructional learning facility and a working studio with hands-on student involvement in production projects, many for the film industry.

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