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EXCEPTIONAL MINDS

For Immediate Release

Jack Huston and John Boyega Accept HFPA Grant for Exceptional Minds

Hollywood banquet rolls out the red carpet for Exceptional Minds, a non-profit that prepares young adults with autism for visual effects jobs.



Actors Jack Huston and John Boyega accepted a grant on behalf of Exceptional Minds at the HFPA annual grants banquet on August 13. Photo courtesy of Getty Images, Kevin Winter.

Sherman Oaks, California – August 14, 2015 – Actors Jack Huston and John Boyega accepted a grant on behalf of Exceptional Minds during the Hollywood Foreign Press Association’s (HFPA) annual Grants Banquet held at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel in Beverly Hills, California, last night.

The HFPA, which annually hands out the Golden Globe awards, presented more than \$2 million in donations to non-profit entertainment-related organizations such as Exceptional Minds, the industry’s cutting-edge school for young adults with autism pursuing careers in visual effects and related fields.

“It is personally gratifying to be part of an industry that shows such acceptance and support for these unique individuals, many of whom are being recognized for their talents for the first time in their lives,” said Yudi Bennett, co-founder and Director of Operations for Exceptional Minds, located in Sherman Oaks, Calif.

The \$15,000 HFPA grant will fund new computer technology for Exceptional Minds’ working studio that is providing jobs and experience for the school’s graduates. Exceptional Minds Studio has a close working relationship with the visual effects industry and is well-known for its visual effects and title work on movies such as “Ant-Man,” “Avengers: Age of Ultron,” “Dawn of the Planet of the Apes,” and “American Hustle.”

Currently, the majority of the nation’s 3.5 million people with autism are unemployed or underemployed, according to government statistics. More than 500,000 U.S. children impacted by autism will enter adulthood during this decade, with one in 68 children to follow.

Over the years, the HFPA Grants Banquet has evolved into almost a mini-Globes with its own red carpet arrivals and a roster of high profile stars showing up to accept not statuettes but sizable checks from the HFPA on behalf of a wide range of organizations. The HFPA has committed more than \$23.9 million in grants, handed out over 1,000 scholarships and restored more than 90 films. Among this year's notables were Lady Gaga, Jake Gyllenhaal, Andrew Garfield, Halle Berry, Jon Hamm, Dakota Johnson, Elizabeth Banks and Jane Fonda.

Exceptional Minds is the only vocational school and working studio to prepare and successfully place young men and women with autism in careers in the fields of animation and visual effects.

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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