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EXCEPTIONAL MINDS

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Exceptional Minds Students Among the Post-Production Crew for *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes*

Vocational school for young adults with autism has a close working relationship with the movie industry, now adding Dawn of the Planet of the Apes to its list of movie credits that include American Hustle and Lawless.



Exceptional Minds students and staff pose with *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes* Director Matt Reeves during Wednesday's screening of the movie. Six of the school's graduating students were part of the film's post-production crew.

Sherman Oaks, Calif. — Seated among the cast and crew for Wednesday's screening of *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes* at the Zanuck Theater, Los Angeles, were six distinguished crew members from Exceptional Minds digital arts academy for young adults with autism, who were part of the post-production crew for the 20th Century Fox movie opening in theatres this Friday.

Exceptional Minds is a nonprofit vocational school for young men and women with [autism](#) who are preparing for careers in movie post-production and other digital arts fields. Graduating students Patrick Brady, Christopher Chapman, Arielle Guthrie, Lloyd Hackl, Eli Katz and Kevin Titcher were hired on contract for post-production work on several shots used in the making of *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes*.

Known for its close working relationship with the visual effects industry, Exceptional Minds and its students have contracted out visual effects and other post-production skills for five other productions in the past three years, including recent Oscar-nominated film *American Hustle* and the 2012 motion picture *Lawless*.

"Upon meeting the students, and seeing all their inspired work and devotion to their craft, I knew they

would be a great fit for (post-production) for *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes*,” said Ryan Stafford, the film’s visual effects producer with 20th Century Fox. The Exceptional Minds team completed the work “on time and of the highest standard of quality,” he added.

For the 3D format feature, Exceptional Minds students completed 43 shots of tracking marker removal that involved paint, roto, tracking and cleanup work - all in stereo.

“We owe our success to the support and encouragement of those in the industry like 20th Century Fox, who see the value in what our students can produce,” said Susan Zwerman, the job developer with Exceptional Minds and an accomplished visual effects producer with Crystal Rain Media Entertainment.

Exceptional Minds is a 501C nonprofit vocational school started in September 2011 by professionals in the movie industry to help young adults with autism transition from high school into meaningful careers in the digital arts. The school is unique in that it prepares students with autism for careers through professional accreditation and real work experience in the movie industry, including technical training for Adobe (ACA) certification, job readiness skills and a professional reel/portfolio that graduates can use to seek employment in the fields of animation, computer graphics and visual affects.

In June, the six students who worked on the film were part of the first graduating class of Exceptional Minds. All are pursuing careers in post-production or other visual arts fields, and several are gaining additional experience on contract with the Exceptional Minds Studio (EMS) co-located with the school. EMS operates independently of the vocational school to provide high quality stereo conversion (rotoscoping), visual effects, computer graphics, title work, and animation in demand by the industry.

According to a recent study prepared for the U.S. Department of Education, one in three young adults with autism have no job experience or college or technical training after high school graduation.

In *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes*, a growing nation of genetically evolved apes led by Caesar is threatened by a band of human survivors of the devastating virus unleashed a decade earlier. They reach a fragile peace, but it proves short-lived, as both sides are brought to the brink of a war that will determine who will emerge as Earth’s dominant species.

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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