

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**TELEVISION ACADEMY FOUNDATION'S FIRST-EVER
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT TRAINING PROGRAM FOR HIGH
SCHOOL STUDENTS LAUNCHES WITH BEST BUY
INVESTMENT**

**Television Academy Board Governor and CMG Productions Executive
Donny Hugo Herran Serves as First Instructor for Program Offering
Students in Los Angeles Communities a Comprehensive Curriculum
for Entry-Level Careers in Television Production**



(L to R) Boyle Heights YMCA chaperone David Haro, student Morgan Crafton, chaperone Kevin O. Campos and student Aaliyah Perez in studio with “America’s Funniest Home Videos” creator and executive producer Vin Di Bona (center) during a field trip for the Production Assistant Training program on Oct. 24, 2026.

Photo courtesy of Television Academy Foundation

(LOS ANGELES – Oct. 27, 2026) — The Television Academy Foundation today announced it received funding from Best Buy toward its Skill-Building and Career Readiness program. This program supports the next generation of talent through its

first Production Assistant Training program for high school students in Los Angeles-area communities. The 10-week program launches at two locations: Best Buy Teen Tech Centers at [Weingart East Los Angeles YMCA](#) in Boyle Heights and [North Stars YMCA Teen Tech Center](#) in North Long Beach, California.

The free, after-school program encompasses a 10-week curriculum beginning this month, providing students with a comprehensive, hands-on introduction to careers in television production with a focus on preparing participants for entry level production assistant (PA) roles and exploring long-term career pathways across the entertainment industry.

Students will learn directly from industry professionals — including PAs, production coordinators, assistant directors, production managers, producers, location managers and production accountants — who will provide insight into day-to-day responsibilities and career advancement. Field trips to both scripted and unscripted television productions will give students an opportunity to experience professional sets firsthand, meet department heads and connect classroom learning to real-world production environments.

Television Academy Board Governor Donny Hugo Herran, a 20-year industry executive, serves as the program's first instructor. Herran is the author of "The Production Guru: Leadership Principles and Philosophies Across Film, Television and Beyond" and founder of Ellevan Creative Consulting, which includes partnerships with CMG Productions in the United Kingdom. He is a former senior vice president of physical production at Paramount. Across his tenure Donny acted as executive in charge of production on several landmark scripted series, including *Yellowstone*, *1923*, *Landman* and *MobLand* as well as major unscripted franchises, such as *The Challenge*, *Love & Hip Hop*, *Martha & Snoop's Dinner Party* and *Siesta Key*.

The Production Assistant Training program concludes with a celebration on the Television Academy's North Hollywood campus where participating students will gather to discuss their newly acquired skills, build professional connections with industry leaders and Television Academy members, and receive a certificate of completion.

Through community partnerships and a network of Best Buy Teen Tech Centers, an initiative of the Best Buy Foundation, young people have the opportunity to explore technology, build critical career skills, and learn from supportive mentors. These Best Buy Teen Tech Centers help prepare young people for careers in LA's creative economy. This funding builds on that work by connecting participants with additional opportunities to gain real-world experience, mentorship and industry connections in the local creative economy and other tech-enabled careers.

"We are thrilled to partner with Best Buy to offer this exceptional program to local underserved communities," said Tina Perry, chair of the Television Academy

Foundation. "This curriculum combines industry education, practical production training, professional mentorship and real-world exposure to help students build the knowledge, confidence and connections needed to begin exploring careers in television and entertainment."

"Every young person deserves the opportunity to build on their strengths and see where their skills can take them," said Olivia Jefferson, vice president of social impact, Best Buy. "We are proud to support the Television Academy Foundation in connecting more young people in Los Angeles with hands-on experience, mentors and industry relationships that can help them turn their skills into lasting economic opportunity."

"Opening doors to production jobs helps shape a more dynamic and representative entertainment industry," said Herran. "I'm proud to lead the inaugural Production Assistant Training program, supported by Best Buy's generous grant, and to prepare aspiring crew members to help them thrive behind the scenes."

About the Television Academy Foundation

The Television Academy Foundation is dedicated to inspiring tomorrow's Emmy winners today by discovering and championing future television leaders. Through its celebrated nationwide programs — including its [Internship Program](#) and [College Television Awards](#) — the Foundation opens doors for emerging talent, empowering them to launch careers in television. The Foundation also produces [The Interviews: An Oral History of Television](#), an extraordinary archive that preserves the stories of the industry's most influential voices. Together, these initiatives inspire creativity, foster inclusion and shape the future of television. For more information on the Foundation, please visit

TelevisionAcademy.com/Foundation.

#

Media Contacts:

Jane Sparango
breakwhitelight (for the Television Academy Foundation)
jane@breakwhitelight.com
310-339-1214

Best Buy Public Relations
Press@BestBuy.com