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Eliza Bryant Village promotes itself on YouTube

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Karen Farkas
Plain Dealer Reporter

Among videos of bicycle polo and mating scorpions on YouTube, the youth-oriented site famous for recorded stunts and strange acts, is one promoting a 110-year-old Cleveland nursing home.

It's not misplaced - officials at Eliza Bryant Village believe the site provides an opportunity to show viewers of all ages the positive aspects of the facility.

"People are using media more and more to get information across," said Executive Director Harvey Shankman, who regularly browses YouTube and got advice from his four sons. He said the handful of videos on YouTube on nursing homes were by people with negative experiences.

"People could learn about the historical significance and understand Eliza Bryant's commitment to the community and Cleveland," he said.

The 7½-minute video features music, comments from former U.S. Rep. Louis Stokes and history of the former Cleveland Home of Aged Colored People, founded by the daughter of a freed slave.

It is the only video promoting a nursing home on the site. And, perhaps it is no surprise that its 1,750 views are dwarfed by others, such as the 549,094 views of LeBron James' "High School Musical 3" skit on "Saturday Night Live."

But since it was posted Aug. 8, people have responded from across the country, Shankman said. William Minnix, president of the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging, told his nursing home members about the video and its value on YouTube.

"I think it was quite innovative, especially for our field," said Sarah Mashburn, spokeswoman for the organization. "YouTube is obviously a popular and new means of getting the story out."

The video was filmed this summer by Second Story Productions in Cleveland as part of a marketing campaign, said Rick Kemm, director of development at Eliza Bryant.

They hope to use it to recruit board members, new residents and donations, Shankman said.

Tags, words which direct people to a video, include Eliza Bryant, nursing homes, seniors, slavery, Cleveland and African-American.

While pleased with YouTube, Kemm and Shankman are pitching the video of the nation's oldest operating African-American nonprofit nursing home to others.

"I'm trying to get it in the hands of Oprah Winfrey," Kemm said.

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