Missy Glavey-Labedz

EEX 5051

Media Journal – Overall Reflection

Overall, the media does not do a good job at portraying positive images of people with disabilities. In fact, they really don’t portray them much at all. Though, there are some instances where individuals with disabilities are featured as strong, independent and inspirational people, the focus generally remains on the disability. When people with disabilities are in ads, movies, books and television, it is usually in a negative context in the sense that it revolves around their personal struggles. In most cases, the media items I encountered, not all of which are included in my media journal, gave an image of sadness, frustration and helplessness rather than one of admiration and respect. I think the sense of pity and benevolence that I and many others feel is unfair but comes directly from the images we see in media. I don’t think most people with disabilities want people feeling sorry for them, so why are they so frequently portrayed that way?

We, in society and the media as a whole, need to make a better effort to see people with disabilities as the unique individuals that they are separate from their disability. People with disabilities make up a large portion of our society. They are valuable human beings who should be positively represented more in the media. They want respect and admiration – not pity. It is natural for people to be nervous or fear something that they have no knowledge or experience with, but how can we ever become more comfortable, knowledgeable and accepting of people with disabilities if we are sheltered from being exposed to them?