



William Bell

Merilyn C. Holmes.

TV Host Spreads Total Sunshine

BY William Bell

You cannot rain on Merilyn C. Holmes' parade because she is "Total Sunshine" the host of the Metro area's bi-weekly syndicated show of the same name.

With the mandate to promote smiles across the D.C. Area, Holmes teaches, "A person who smiles 25 times as

opposed to a person who smiles once is better off.... we want to keep them smiling because some seen miserable."

A social work major at UDC, Holmes came up with the idea for her show in 1998. Getting her start on DCTV's HCM Production Talent showcase, she eventually broke away

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to produce and host "Total Sunshine."

"I got a camera from my mom for Christmas to start... I used to sit at my computer some nights and try editing," Holmes said of the early days on the show. However, since its debut in January of 2001, vivacious 27-year-old has become and aficionado.

Holmes' show is a venue to voice her concerns about society. "Total Sunshine." Tackle such issues as voter registration, pro-life and health issues, a switch from its initial themes of entertainment and fashion. The show's themes transformed as the host grew, but Holmes said she has kept the humor she used to captivate viewers. "I am a little crazy on the show," she laughed.

Taking the show one step further, "Total Sunshine" became a non-profit in 2003. "We want to help people 2 to

200". The organization promotes outreach programs across the community, including the Grandparent Program. The program attempts to bridge the gap between youths and the elderly by giving teens a chance to earn community service hours for school by helping the elderly. Holmes tells them, "Don't let anyone tell you, 'you can't make it.'" In addition to her show and outreach, Holmes works as an EMT, a job which has given her "a heart for the community."

As she plans for the future, Holmes is dreaming big. She has set her sights on taking the show nationwide and spending more time on her non-profit. "I plan on taking food over to Somalia one day," Holmes said smiling. "It will soon be 'Total Sunshine Worldwide'." For listing of show times and stations log on to www.totalsunshine.org