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April 2008

YAN Newsletter

Education - Empowerment

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What's up Amy,

Hey you guys a lots been going on with the Youth Action Network including the School Board Candidate Forum, the Teen Success Summit, and wrapping up the School Inequities Project. Take a look!....

Use the navigation bar on the left to choose what article looks interesting to you or scroll through and enjoy!

Teen Success Summit Re-cap

by Tommy Watson



The Teen Success Summit was the weekend of April 12th and had much more popularity than expected. Austin Voices for Education and Youth was in charge of the student workshops for the AISD event. Close to 800 people, most of them young people (600) packed Travis High School, attending workshops, listening to speakers, and eating food provided by Poke Joes. Some famous local Austinites were in attendance, heading the

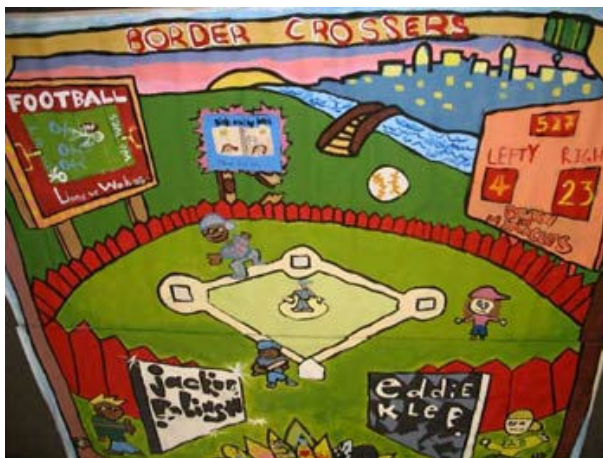
workshops, including Federico for Mural and Graffiti Art, and Saul Paul for Hip-Hop/Spoken Word. In total there were six workshops planned, but due to the volume of people that number was brought up to eight with one planned on the spot, and Video Tech. being split in two.

Daniel Garza, a local rapper who goes by C-Now, was a main facilitator in the Graffiti and Mural workshop, and posed some interesting questions about what makes students drop out and what can be done to keep them in school. When asked if anyone had a friend or knew someone that had dropped out, almost everyone raised his or her hand. Students brought up the fact that a lot of teachers tend to disregard some students, and focus on those they feel will succeed, leaving the others disheartened and stuck in what seems to be a continuing cycle. When faced with fixing the problems that cause students to drop out the answers don't come easy since the problems seem to come from all over. The necessity of money, school being boring, not being prepared for college (for TAKS), and no encouragement from teachers were some of the reasons brought up. The School board had a meeting on Monday morning to talk about the Teen Success Summit, but with the summit being on Saturday, and no one working on Sunday, it wasn't possible to supply them with a detailed report. Instead a preliminary one was submitted, with

data still being reviewed and compiled, a complete review of the summit should be sent out soon.

Check out the School Inequities Project

by Amanda Aguirre



The School Inequities Project is a student research project which examined a variety of performance indicators in the Austin Independent School District's 12 high schools.

The Project was initiated by Youth Mobilizers from Garza High School, Angelo McHorse and Alice Geacone. The idea for this project came about when these students were shocked by the inequities between schools in more affluent neighborhoods in

comparison to those in less affluent neighborhoods. The driving question in this study was, if AISD gives equitable funding to schools, why does it seem that resource allocations are not the same across the district?

Two interns from the University of Texas at Austin, Amanda Aguirre, a Sociology major, and Laura Avila, an Anthropology major, came on board with Austin Voices for Education & Youth at the beginning of the Spring 2008 semester to tackle this question. The Project Manager of the School Inequities Project is Youth Consultant, Ariel Kay. Ariel, who has recently been accepted into Bryn Mawr College, will be majoring in Anthropology.

Other students who participated in this study were: The Youth Advisory Council, Stand Up Clubs, Youth Action for Educational Change class at Garza High School, and students from the four high schools that were the focus of the research.

[View the presentation](#)

Holla Schola-ship

by Brooke Fowler



Need money for college? Taken the SAT or ACT and didn't do so hot? Have you or your family been through hardships? Do you have a particular major in mind?

Most likely your answer is yes to one of these questions and that means you probably qualify for one or more scholarships or financial aid. "What are these

scholarships and financial aid?" you might ask yourself. You must remember most scholarships and financial aid have certain criteria to be met. Scholarships can be based on merit, need, sociology, institutional, or general. You can start by searching through hundreds of thousands of scholarships on the internet. If you're overwhelmed by all the scholarships and financial aid floating around out there, don't be. Below are just a few websites where you can obtain money to go towards your higher education:

www.fastweb.com
 www.scholarships.com
 www.collegeboard.com
 www.brokescholar.com
 www.cappex.com
 www.washingtonpost.com/scholarships
 www.studentscholarshipsearch.com

These are just a few, but locally you can check the AISD website at:

<http://www.austinisd.org/academics/scholarship/index.phtml>

Local scholarships are the way to go since the eligible competition is a lot slimmer. You can ask your school counselors, college and career centers, non-profit organizations, and community foundations about scholarships.

School Board Candidate Forum a Success

by Matt Brodnax



On Tuesday, March 25th, I attended the Youth Led School Board Candidate Forum, which took place from 6 to 8 PM in the Garza Independence High School cafeteria. The purpose of the event was to provide youth voice in the May 8th election of AISD's school board. Not only were the questions to the candidates provided by current AISD high school students, it was also moderated by a student, Luis Orozco, a senior at Lanier High School.

Throughout the evening, many important questions were asked by students and answered by school board candidates and trustees. Johnston high school was a hot topic; two questions focused on the possible closure of the campus. One student asked about where students would go in the event of Johnston closing, and another student asked how the school board was planning to prevent these students from simply dropping out, instead of transferring. As many students pointed out, sending Johnston students to other schools with similar problems (i.e. Reagan, LBJ) would not improve the situation for these students. Another student asked about the amount of involvement students at Reagan High School would have in the selection of a new principal.

These discussions were both interesting and enlightening-the school board

trustees and candidates were obviously very interested in what students had to say and made it clear that they would be willing to participate in similar events in the future

Student Voice in Selecting New Principals

Kristian Avendaño



At the end of this school year Austin, Reagan and Garza High Schools will all be looking at new principals.

Below is the district's Principal selection process.

"To ensure we have the best leaders in our schools, a rigorous process for selecting principals is needed. To ensure we recruit the best possible candidates as school principals, an improved principal selection process has been developed, the major elements of this process include:"

- modern recruitment practices rather than basing selection decisions largely on the results of interviews
- principal representation on selection panels
- tailoring of selection criteria to reflect the differing needs and characteristics of schools
- proactively encouraging applicants with the required profile to apply for principal positions
- encouraging more contact between candidates and the employing school

Information from <http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/blueprint/fs3/selection.htm>

My thoughts on the selection process is that there are no ways to get student input, nor are there ways to see how the principal works with students. There would be nothing better than kids (-the student community-) working together as a team, deciding which person is going to be the principal of their school.

Garza High Schools' student community is about to face the retirement of principal, Victoria Baldwin, this year. Ms Baldwin has created a climate of respect between the students and adults on campus. In fact, according to the AISD student climate survey, Garza is the only high school in AISD where the majority of students feel respected on campus. On many campuses, students avoid the principal because they see the principal as being mean.

However, at Garza High School, students like to speak with Ms. Baldwin. Everyone loves her. As a student at Garza High, I would love our principal, Victoria Baldwin, to stay longer; maybe another ten more years or even more. However I just realize how hard it is to be a great principal. It requires more than being nice. It takes a long road of hard work to be prepared as a good leader of a school. *A good principal needs to be a leader of a school in order to succeed.*

I make my point again, that the students would be a very important factor in

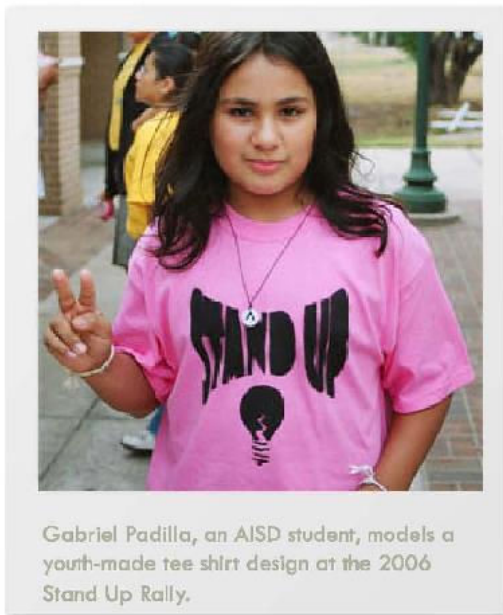
the selection of their principal. Every school is different; they vary in problems and needs, and who else better than the students that face these problems and needs everyday to help decide. In order to select the right person to be the new principal, these people need to fill some requirements. They should be familiarized with the school. They need to understand the problems of the school and they need to know the needs of the school community.

Job Opportunity

Are you creative? Come apply!

Austin Voices merchandise

[browse our gallery](#)



Youth Merchandising Apprentice (P/T, \$8.00 per hour; approx. 6 hours per week for 16 weeks)

Austin Voices for Education and Youth's Youth Action Network (YAN) is a network of different school-based groups and community organizations, as well as individual youth, who

are coming together to support youth organizing and youth action in Austin.

The Merchandising Apprentice is responsible for assisting with creating and updating the merchandise inventory and continuing to work with other youth to create merchandise, such as t-shirts and buttons with messages/images that promote youth action. The apprentice will also be responsible for assisting in the creation of an annual academic planner that is created by youth and for youth. The apprentice will also develop plans for marketing, distributing (free), and selling merchandise in order to promote and fund other YAN projects. The apprentice will, at times, be expected to transport merchandise and/or materials to create Austin Voices merchandise. Due to this job requirement, an independent mode of transportation is preferred.

If you are fun and creative we invite you to please consider applying for this exciting job opportunity. Please submit resumes and completed application to Rene Ruiz at 512.451.3110 (fax) or rruiz@austinvoices.org (email) by close of business on Thurs., May 15th. No phone calls please.

To view job description and application click here.

Take care,

Youth Action Network
Austin Voices for Education and Youth

email: akay@austinvoices.org
web: <http://www.austinvoices.org>

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