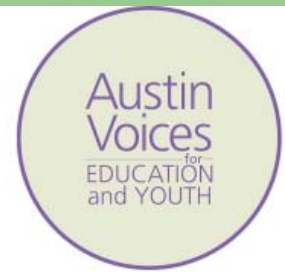


Austin Voices NEWSLETTER



Volume # 3 Num 12

A Publication of Austin Voices for Education and Youth

December, 2007

Reagan High School Stand Up Club



Tim Eubanks Leads Reagan High School Stand Up Club



ABOVE: From left to right, Tim Eubanks, Arturo Garcia, Morgan McDonald and Erick Lara.

BELOW: From left to right, Tim Eubanks, Vanesa Bissereth, Erick Lara, Arturo Garcia, Michael Dunn, Julian Chambers, Quinton Jackson and Jeremiah Wooley.



PRODUCTION

EDITOR
Amy Averett

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Alfredo Santos c/s

CONTRIBUTING
WRITERS
Amy Averett
Tim Eubanks
Daniel Garza
Sarah Stone
Pat Galvin
Ariel Kay
Shirene Garcia

**PUBLISHER'S
STATEMENT**

Austin Voices is published monthly by Austin Voices for Education and Youth. The editorial and business address is 3710 Cedar Street Suite 229 Box 21 Austin, Texas 78705. The telephone number is (512) 450-1880. The fax number is (512) 451-3110. The use, reproduction or distribution of this publication is strongly encouraged. Letters to the editor are always welcome.

On the cover

From left to right: Tim Eubanks, Jeremiah Wooley and Michael Dunn

**Message from the
Executive Director**

Amy Averett

In the past two weeks I've attended two events focused on "college readiness". One was the release of a report from Skillpoint Alliance and the Ray Marshall Center at UT that reported information about where the 2006 Central Texas high school graduates are now—working, attending college, or neither. The other event was the Texas High School Project conference, where a panel of state leaders talked about statewide efforts to prepare more students for college. The Skillpoint/Marshall Center researchers reported that one of the big factors determining whether students went on to college or not was how long they had seen themselves as "college material." Students were more likely to be in college if they had seen themselves as college-bound "as long as they could remember."

As many of you know, my son Walter started kindergarten in AISD this fall. He is in a bilingual classroom in a Title I school, with a wonderful teacher and group of friends. As I sat listening to these reports about "college readiness", I thought about that group of five year olds, and wondered how many of them would graduate and go on to higher education. I calculated that this year's kindergartners will be the Class of 2020. What would happen for them if our community came together with a "2020 Vision" of every current kindergarten student going on to college? If we committed to leverage all of our resources to make sure that each these young students saw themselves as "college material" and stayed on track so that they could graduate high school and attend college?

For my part, I am hoping that the parents in my son's class can start coming together for potluck dinners to talk about our hopes for our children's future. Maybe we can take the kids to sit in the Mary Moody Theatre at St. Edwards University, or go bowling at the UT Student Union, so that the kids and parents can see what it is like to walk on to a college campus. Eventually, maybe every family in the class could start college savings accounts for their child. Regardless of how we do it, I think it could be a mighty powerful thing to decide that we are going to see our group of five year olds all the way to college graduation, and that we are going to help each other out along the way.

I encourage you to think of the young people in your own life and what you can do to pave the way for them. As we head into college application season this spring, maybe that means going with them to a Financial Aid Saturday to fill out their financial aid forms. Maybe it is checking their transcript to make sure that they are on track, taking the classes they need to graduate from high school and enter college. Whatever you decide to do, your actions will speak volumes about your belief in their potential and your aspirations for their future.



“Adolescence ushers in new forms of creativity that involve the imagination of possibility and the projection of oneself into a world that can be changed. The adolescent literally becomes a theorist in search of experiments that test the boundaries of self-understanding, relationships, and social conventions.”

by Sarah Stone

One of the great concepts these authors address is looking at the links between creativity and risk-taking. They encourage us to think of risk-taking as a meaning-making activity that is also a developmental imperative.

We have to take risks so that we can discover new talents, ourselves, and what is possible in our world. We had these ideas in mind as we developed our second film event in our Positive Youth Development Film Series which was just held on Saturday, December 8th.

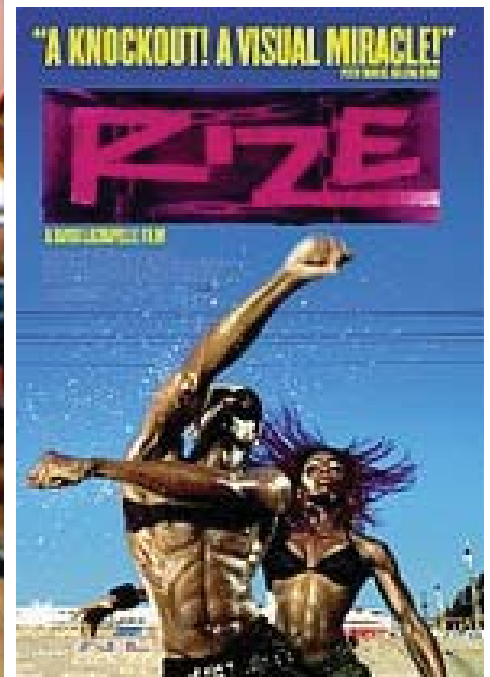
About 100 people gathered to watch the documentary, “Rize” which illuminates an entire community by focusing on an art form (dance) as a movement. The film offers an intimate, completely fresh portrayal of youth in South Central as they reveal their spirit and creativity. These young people

- Dr. Michael Nakkula and Eric Toshalis from their book, “Understanding Youth: Adolescent Development for Educators.” (p.48)

have created art in the process of developing their skills and talents.

We chose this film because we are interested in looking at how risk-taking and creativity can be linked in our community. In order to start a conversation about this concept, we asked the **Reagan High School Drumline and Theatre Action Project’s Changing Lives Youth Theatre Company** to perform. Their performances were amazing and incredibly inspirational. Truly the young people who performed on Saturday were taking a risk by performing in front of a large group of people and showing their practiced skills and talents. This group of young people shined with creativity and possibility that is developing and boundless.

Witnessing such talent makes



me ask the question, How can we create opportunities for young people in **Austin** to be engaged in activities that push their limits, develop their talents, and encourage them to find out what is possible in their lives? What programs can you think of that are already doing this? Who in the community fosters these types of relationships with young people? If you have any ideas, send me an email at sstone@austinvoices.org. I would love to hear from you.



Producer's Synopsis

"Rize" reveals a ground breaking dance phenomenon that's exploding on the streets of South Central, Los Angeles. Taking advantage of unprecedented access, this documentary film brings to first light a revolutionary form of artistic expression borne from oppression. The aggressive and visually stunning dance modernizes moves indigenous to African tribal rituals and features mind-blowing, athletic movement sped up to impossible speeds. "Rize" tracks the fascinating evolution of the dance: we meet Tommy Johnson (Tommy the Clown), who first created the style as a response to the 1992 Rodney King riots and named it "Clowning", as well as the kids who developed the movement into what they now call Krumping. The kids use dance as an alternative to gangs and hustling: they form their own troupes and paint their faces like warriors, meeting to outperform rival gangs of dancers or just to hone their skills. For the dancers, Krumping becomes a way of life - and, because it's authentic expression (in complete opposition to the bling-bling hip-hop culture), the dance becomes a vital part of who they are.

Giving Is Good for Non-Profits and (For You)

by Pat Galvin

Non-profit organizations are sustained by the goodwill of individual contributors, the fundraising community and the philanthropy of foundations. Despite the presence of foundations and the practice of fundraising; statistics bear out that private contributions remain the single largest source of income for many non-profits.

It is ideal then to cultivate charitable giving early in life to make a demonstrable impact on developing the philanthropic spirit. With this in mind; the holiday season has a great potential to introduce budding young philanthropists to the community of giving. A good beginning resource includes the book *The Kids Guide to Giving*, by then 14 year old author, Freddie Zeiler and Ward Schumaker.

TEACH children early to share with others and they will learn how to build a sense of community

and to develop an individual ethic of responsibility to support good things.

SHOW children that giving is the real purpose behind the season by signing up with your child for a volunteer assignment with a local organization or church.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE...prepare donated cookies, make holiday cards, serve up meals or collect donations with your child.

KEEP IT REAL...don't try to explain lofty concepts to a young child but do direct them to draw a fun picture or make a card for another child in need. As they grow they will 'get it'.

REAP THE BENEFITS...helping others really does benefit each person by expanding their personal view of the world. "When you learn, teach. When you get, give."—*Maya Angelou*



*"When you learn, teach.
When you get, give."*

Maya Angelou

Austin Voices Thank Our Generous Supporters - We Couldn't Do It Without You!

**Contributors for the Period
Covering Aug. 2007 – Dec. 2007**

Major Contributors

- Public Education Foundation

Individual Contributors

\$5,000 and above

- Anonymous

\$1,000 - \$4,999

- Eric Heineman
- Matt de Ferranti

\$500 - \$999

- David & Margot de Ferranti
- Paul Ballard
- Dr. Charles “Buddy” and Mary Owen
- Marc Miller

\$200 - \$499

- Kristen Wicke
- Susan Ansoage
- Alissa Ziemianski
- Paul Cruz
- Robert Franco
- Lifeworks

\$200 - \$499

- Housing Authority of the City of Austin Voices
- Austin Independent School District
- WorkSource
- American YouthWorks
- Communities in Schools of Central Texas, Inc.
- Lisa Hinley
- Lori Freedman
- Karen Reyna

\$100 - \$199

- Anonymous
- Carolyn Bates
- Christina Sinatra
- Hon. Donna Howard
- Hon. Eduardo Rodriguez
- Robert Rutishauser
- Susan Dawson
- Hon. Judge John Vazquez
- Jeff Darby
- Seth Winick
- Johnna Edwards
- Theresa Eilers
- Robert Rutishauser
- Jane O'Brien

Up to \$99

- Barbara Burnham

Up to \$99

- Dale Rudin
- Dominique Reat
- Hon. Elliot Naishtat
- Jack Gray
- L. Ashley McClain
- Melba Vasquez
- Susan Romero
- Lynn White
- Jeanne Goka
- Blanca Zamora-Garcia
- Jonas Chartock
- Stephanie Shoemaker
- Laura Montoya
- Marianne Dwight
- Amy Averett
- Emily Norman
- Kathleen Reynolds
- Sarah Stone
- Susan Steinhauer
- Valinda Bolton
- Katherine Saviskas

In-Kind Contributors

- La Voz de Austin
- Garza Independence High School
- McGinnis, Lochridge & Kilgore, LLP

“The belief that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative.”

John Dewey

LBJ/LASA Students Reflect on Student Relationships

Stand Up Club students were asked the following questions - With regard to friends, would you say your “circle of friends” includes others who are of different races and cultures?

Alberto Alvarez

Throughout my childhood I have noticed that my main friends are mostly Hispanic. In high school, the friends that I truly feel that are in my circle of friends are all Latins. Even though they are Latins, that does not mean that my circle other circle of close friends aren't other races. The way I look at friendship is that friendship is color blind, that is why I have friends that are all races, Mexican white, black, and Asian. What I think accounts for my circle of fiends being Latin might be because I love my Mexican background and culture and I like to be around people who feel the same way. Since we have the same background, it makes it easier for us to relate to each other and communicate, in Spanish or English.

Lauren Gutierrez

In my circle of friends there is mostly Hispanics and Mexicans. Although these are my very close friends, I do have other friends from all sorts of races such as Asians African Americans and Caucasians. I do like hanging out with people that are not in my circle of friends, but they are not as close to me. I can't talk to them the same way as my close circle of friends.

Chelsea Ledbetter

Here at the Liberal Arts and Science Academy High School the separation has led to some major changes between the different ethnic groups, mainly the African Americans and the White Americans. I would like to say that it has really affected my student relationships and my relationships with my friends due to the fact that 90% of the people that I have close relationships with are family members and people that I have known since elementary school. And they were all African American students. During the past year, not only the amount of people in my circle of friends changed, but so that their ethnicity. From all African American and Hispanic, now there are White Americans with whom I inter act. What a huge difference

Martin Apolinar

I really don't have a friends circle or what you call a click. I remember how it felt and I hate treating other people the same way people treated me. I consider myself a much more open person than I used to be. I use to be more quiet and now it's like I'm more open to meeting people. I simple love meeting people and to me I don't really care about how the other person looks or what their skin

color is or if they are smart or not. To me, everyone is someone who can help you whether it's to help you pass the time or to pass a class. The thing is that the more people that you know the more people you'll be able to turn to in your time of need. And that's why I don't like clicks who exclude other people. Whenever those people are alone they regret having given someone a chance to be included. Whenever I exclude someone from my so called group, I feel so bad that it's hard for me to reject them like that so that's why I never do it cause I wouldn't be able to help myself afterwards.

Nidia Orozco

Yes, my circle of fiends does include other races and cultures from mine. I'm a Mexican teenager and like me there are a lot of my friends which their parents came here to the US to have a better life. My friends come from different parts of the world. I have a guy friend and he is from Brazil and his culture is really different from mine. But we are friends due to the reason that we are really different. I also have a friend who is African American, White, Chinese and their cultures are really different from mine. They may say something I have never heard before and this is part of why it is

Estudiantes de LBJ/LASA

Reflejan Sobre Las Relaciones Entre Ellos Mismos

good to have all kinds of different friends. I think that if people had many different kinds of friends there would be any more racism.

Becky Gonzales

Throughout all our lives we are always surrounded by friends. However, there are two different things: "Our Friends" and "Our Circle of Friends." Friends are considered the people we talk to. On the contrary, our "circle of friends" are the people we hang around with, confide in and spend happy moments with. In almost all situations, most of what is seen is people of the same race hanging with each other. It's rare to see people of different races hanging around during their free time. Most people I know just hang around with the same race of people, including me. I think this is a really common because people of the same race understand you more. Since ya'll are from the same race you can express yourself in your own language without having to explain what it means it means or without being obligated to speak a language you are not comfortable in. You can also express your self more they have the same culture and customs. They won't look at you weird because their culture is the same. Everybody has a "circle of friends" with people of their same race. This basically happens because

people of other cultures don't understand your customs, way of living, and might laugh at you. I guess this all has to do with who we feel comfortable being around.

Marvellous Ihekweumere

Growing up a child in Nigeria (West Africa) I was exposed to knowing a lot of little kids who were from all around the world. The school that I went to at the time was living world academy, a well-reserved academy and people from all over the world attended my school. I remember at that time one of my best friends with a boy name Michael from Switzerland. Just as I had friends from different races growing up, I was also influenced by my mother who had friends who ranged from being African, Indian, White, Spanish, etc. Indeed, that is where I learned the majority of the things I do today. Nowadays, I have a circle of friends that includes African Americans, Americans, Whites, Hispanics, Venezuelans and French people. To me, it is best to have all the different cultures of friends surrounding me, because it helps me learn about new things about myself and also about my own unique culture. I think that it's important for the generation today to step out of their comfort zones and make friends regardless of their interracial friendships, then people would be able to alleviate the burden of racism and hate.

When people accept each other for their differences and culture then it makes it harder for others to be prejudiced. In conclusion, I am happy with the diverse circle of friends that I have today and hope that other teenagers realize that deep down inside everybody has their likes and dislikes regardless of what they look like on the outside.

La ' Keisha Davis

I have been lucky enough to have a multicultural circle of friends. I have African American friends, Caucasian friends, Hispanic friends, Asian friends and Arabian friends. I believe that I have many different friends from various ethnic backgrounds because I wasn't just clustered around a single ethnic group. My parents made me change schools many times when I was younger and this caused me to meet new people. For example, when I attended Robert E. Lee Elementary School, I first encountered Persian children. I failed to treat them differently because they were the same to me, they were kids who liked to play. Also, I would say that I have a unique circle of friends because I enjoy learning new ideas from other cultures. For example, my best friends in middle school was Hispanic Through her family, I learned the exotic tastes of Mexican food and I loved it.

Youth Council Gears up for an Eventful Spring '08!

The **Ready By 21 Coalition's Austin Area Youth Council** has set the stage for an action packed spring of 2008! The council's three action teams- Youth and Adult Relations, Classroom and Academic Issues, and College and Job Readiness- represent the three areas that are of most concern to youth in the Austin area. Each of these teams is working on a different project related to their area.

In one of the most recent developments, the **Honorable Judge Vasquez** approached the Youth Council to ask its endorsement on a Youth Court here in **Austin**. The council's Youth and Adult Relations Team is currently working with **Judge Vasquez** to establish how they can be involved and how the Youth Court can best serve the community.

In January, the Youth Council will host a Youth/Authority Partnership Training. This is an opportunity for young people, elected officials, school administrators, and other **Austin** area authorities to come together and create a working relationship. The training is a precursor to the council's main purpose: to meet regularly with elected officials or their aides starting next spring in order to voice the thoughts and concerns of their peers

by **Shirene Garcia**

on issues that affect young people.

One major initiative for the Youth Council is to host a School Board Candidates Forum in the spring. The forum will provide an opportunity for the community and the Youth Council to ask questions and gather information on the different candidates. We are very excited about this opportunity for council members to use their newly honed leadership skills to engage directly with school board candidates.

High school students on the Youth Council have also expressed concern about student councils. Through their discussions, they have learned that student councils function in vastly different ways in different schools. Some schools lack a council altogether, others focus on prom as their only project, while a few have guidance and organize projects to better the conditions at their schools. One of their ideas is to connect with student councils and give them a mission to do with bettering their schools. All in all, this fall was a very fruitful term. The council is now more organized and prepared to begin the spring with a solid base for their future ventures. With so many dynamic and passionate youth,

I've no doubt we will see great things from them in the near future!

Youth Council Announcements:

The Youth Council is currently accepting applications! If you know of a young person, age 14-20, who would be interested in joining, please spread the word! Applications are available at the Austin Voices office through **Tim Eubanks**, telephone 512-450-1880 or email teubanks@austinvoices.org. The Youth Council particularly needs representatives from **Travis** and **Johnston High School**, but also has open seats available.

The Youth Council is currently limited in its funding and is seeking donations. Your donation would encourage youth in their pursuit of social justice and a more democratic society. Please make checks payable to *Austin Voices for Education and Youth*, with *Youth Council* in the memo line.

If your organization is interested in working with the Youth Council, please send some background information on your proposal to Tim Eubanks at Austin Voices. The council will contact you after it reviews your request.

“An education isn't how much you have committed to memory, or even how much you know. It's being able to differentiate between what you know and what you don't.” - Anatole France

Become a Member of Austin Voices for Education and Youth

In addition to staying up-to-date on the latest issues facing our schools, our members receive a variety of great benefits. It's our way of saying "thank you" for your generous support.

Member (\$50)

Join as a Member and receive:

- Members-only electronic action alerts with opportunities to speak up for quality schools
- Our monthly newsletter
- Three student-designed Youth Action Network buttons

Supporter (\$100)

Join as a Supporter and receive:

- Personal invitations to all of our public events
- Austin Voices or Youth Action Network t-shirt
- Monthly newsletter and action alerts

Advocate (\$250)

Join as an Advocate and receive:

- An invitation to the annual Youth Speak Out event to hear students report their accomplishments
- Student-designed 2007 calendar/ planner
- Austin Voices or Youth Action Network t-shirt
- Monthly newsletter and action alerts

Champion (\$500)

Join as a Champion and receive:

- Student-produced video documentary on high school redesign
- Invitations to all public and Youth Speak Out events
- Student-designed buttons, t-shirt, and calendar/ planner
- Monthly newsletter and action alerts

MEMBERSHIP CARD

Help us show Austin and the rest of the state that young people can really make a difference when given the opportunity.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____

TELEPHONE: _____ AMOUNT ENCLOSED: _____

Send your check to **Austin Voices for Education and Youth**
3710 Cedar Street Suite 229 Box 21 Austin, Texas 78705

