

2006 STAND UP Rally and Campaign

Reporting On the Stand Up Rally/Campaign

Introduction

This fall, as Austin Voices student organizers hold hearings with elected officials, student advocacy groups on six high school campuses are implementing action projects, and a coalition of youth and education groups are working to help students use their creative expression to make changes in their school district and on campuses.

This three-pronged action plan comprises the Stand Up Campaign for Better Schools, launched at Austin Voices' September 9th Stand Up Rally. Through hip-hop, spoken word and speeches the rally inspired Austin Voices and its collaborative partners to utilize the voices, talents and ideas of Austin area high school and middle school students to make changes in our schools and district today that will have a significant impact on tomorrow.

Three main goals of the Stand Up Campaign

- **Establish a Youth Council** that will work with elected officials to think through educational issues and implement youth-inspired solutions to lower the high school dropout rate and increase access to higher education;
- **Implement principal-student advisory cabinets** within AISD high school campuses in order to provide both principals and students with clear and consistent feedback from each other's perspectives on issues confronting the campus and to develop possible solutions to address them;

Stand Up Campaign goals con't:

- Improve campus climate by enhancing student respect and improving academics through ensuring that there is a **stall door in every bathroom and a book for every student**. In too many high schools, stall doors have been removed from bathrooms reducing student privacy. Furthermore, students are asked to share textbooks due to insufficient campus resources in too many classrooms.



Students from the KIPP: Austin College Prep, Communities in Schools and the Youth Liberation Net-

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Stand Up Rally Planning

Special thanks to our partner organizations and schools

Alamo Drafthouse

A.S. Johnston High School

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

Communities in Schools of Central Texas (Smart Kids)

Gonzalo Garza High School

KIPP: Austin College Prep

Martin Middle School

Non Military Options for Youth

OutYouth

PODER

Ready by 21 Coalition

Reagan High School

United Way Capital Area

United Ways of Texas

Webb Middle School ROTC

Youth Launch

Youth Liberation Network

The Stand Up Rally was a huge success with over 200 students attending from high schools and middle schools across the Austin area. We knew that to make the rally both a success and a positive starting point for our campaign we had to have good planning.

In order to coordinate the rally and to plan for the campaign, Austin Voices recruited a coalition of students from 11 community organizations and high schools. A core group of these students handled the recruitment of participants and performers, conveying the overall message of the rally, and worked to develop campaign goals and logistics.

Over the summer, 15 student performers and speakers were recruited, each able to reach a young audience with positive messages about staying in school, going to college and improving campuses through advocacy and organizing. All of these students created original speeches and/or performance pieces both conveying unique messages and entertaining at the same time.

Almost all of our rally participants were recruited either through direct one-on-one contact in the schools or through partnerships with teachers and organizations. We also asked potential Stand Up Rally participants to fill out a registration form, enabling us to contact them prior to the rally.

In order to hold our work to high standards and to deduce whether achieving our goals will have long-term or short-term effects on reducing the drop out rate, we worked with our core group to set campaign goals that are achievable, agreeable and measurable.

The students organizers knew they had to

find very innovative ways to get our message and our goals across to the audience. To do this we came up with the idea of creating an original line of merchandise that would broadcast our message and campaign goals to both the audience and the community.

One student— Alice Geacone— took up the idea and ran with it. With the help of her team, she created t-shirts, buttons and a planner. Alice and her staff supervisor, Sarah Stone, organized events where students wrote our campaign messages and goals directly on t-shirts and buttons. Through these events and Alice's work, she was able to create hundreds of products for the Stand Up Rally and Campaign. As of October 2006, we have earned over \$700 from this line of merchandise. Austin Voices youth organizers will decide how to best use these funds so that we can continue our work after the original funds for the Stand Up Campaign are gone.



Gator raps that "We can be what we want to be but first we have to turn off the TV." A student from the audience shouts "It's off... it is off." Master of Ceremonies Angelo McHorse looks on from the background.

Stand Up Rally and Planning Metrics

Outputs

- **Over 200 people** attended the Stand Up Rally.
- In all, **over 300 students** received information on the Stand Up Rally, the drop-out crisis and ways to get involved to improve the situation.



Kealing Middle School Student Gabriel Padilla speaks on student/teacher connections and plays a rendition of *Stairway to Heaven*.

- Austin Voices worked with a **coalition of 11 community organizations, high schools and middle schools** to plan for the rally, develop campaign goals, recruit participants and coordinate logistics.
- **Five elected officials and key staff members from elected officials' offices**, attended the rally. The officials included one State Representative, two Austin City Council members, one municipal court judge, and one AISD Board of Trustees member. All of the officials took a pledge on stage to Stand Up for young people by working with the Stand Up Campaign to implement solutions that help young people stay in school. (See attachment for list of elected officials).



Austin Voices Community Organizer Santos (L) and Executive Director Amy Averett (R) take a moment to smile at the Stand Up Rally.

- Three professional filmmakers and students from the Youth Liberation Network recorded the Stand Up Rally free of charge. We are working to edit this footage so we can produce copies of the speeches and performances from the rally. We also have six CD's with pictures from the rally to share with the community.

Individual/Family Outcomes

- The core group of student organizers, performers and speakers at the Stand Up Rally further developed their public presentation, issue advocacy, and organizing skills tremendously while preparing and executing the rally. From creating a line or merchandise, to learning how to be a Master of Ceremonies for a large event to creating original spoken word and hip-hop pieces that speak to the issues confronting students in schools, the skills the youth acquired are invaluable and unique.
- All five elected officials and the spokesperson for Rep. Rodriguez's office stated that the event was a very positive experience for each of them and they all voiced strong interest in hearing about the concerns of young people on policy issues directly from youth.
- The youth who attended the rally are fired up and eager to assist and add input to the Stand Up Campaign. Many of the students attend one of our partner schools or are a part of one of our partner organizations, allowing for more fluid communication and collaboration between Austin Voices and rally participants.

Form of Measurement

- Austin Voices is conducting post-rally interviews with student organizers and a sample group of rally participants. We will place the information into a "lessons learned" or "how-to" document meant for guiding future student rally planners.
- Student organizers have met with elected officials who attended the rally and as a result have been offered the chance to meet with the state Travis County delegation in a hearing to discuss our concerns and campaign goals during the first week of December.

STAND Up Rally Performers and Speakers

Tommy Clark & Jesse

C-Now (Daniel Garza)

Kadedra Delille

Gator (Chris Floyd)

Jenna Keale

Angelo McHorse

Luis Orozco

Gabriel Padilla

Jay Rojas

Charlie Rose

Showstoppers Of

A.S. Johnston High School

Michael Whitworth

Lauren Zackes

Next Steps for the Stand Up Campaign

- **Presentation on Rally and Campaign for National Youth Leaders Retreat with the Forum for Youth Investment in Washington, DC (September 22nd 2006)**
- **Student Organizers Focus Group (October 2006)**
- **Austin Voices Hires Creative Expressions Consultant to work with Stand Up Campaign and High School Redesign (October 13th)**
- **Participant Evaluation from Stand Up Rally (October 2006)**
- **Advocacy for campaign goal implementation (October-December 2006)**
- **Hearing with Travis County Delegation on Campaign Goals (December 2006)**
- **AISD Board of Trustees' review of plans (April-June 2006)**

**Austin
Voices**
for
EDUCATION
and YOUTH

3710 Cedar Street, Suite 229, Box 21
Austin, TX 78705

Phone: (512) 450-1880

Fax: (512) 451-3110

E-mail: info@austinvoices.org

www.austinvoices.org

Our Mission

Austin Voices for Education and Youth mobilizes the community to strengthen schools and expand opportunities for Austin's youth. We work alongside community members, young people, parents, and educators to improve our schools and neighborhoods.

Our Vision

One day all schools and neighborhoods in Austin will be great places for young people to learn, lead, connect, work, and thrive.

Staff

Amy Averett	Executive Director	Alfredo Santos	Community Organizer
Tim Eubanks	Lead Community Organizer	Emma-Lee Caprio	Director of Operations
Sarah Stone	Special Projects Coordinator	Ashley Arce	Assistant Community Organizer

Youth Mobilizers and Consultants

Alice Geaccone– Youth Merchandise

Mia Hayward- Volunteer and Logistics Coordinator

Angelo McHorse– Community Based Organizing (Rally's Master of Ceremonies)

Paula Rideau– Creative Expressions

Tim Rowe- Research and Community Based Organizing