

Exploring and defining Civic Engagement within, around and abroad the Southwestern campus.

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STAND! WITH SHAITI

Making the World Make Eye Contact Students “Stand With Haiti” in organizational collaboration

By Maureen Johnson, Alexis Kropf, Fernie Reyes

“Make the world make eye contact.” This is what epidemiologist and physician Bill Foege said when asked what students should do to enact lasting change in the local and global arenas. That phrase sums the mentality of students who are involved with Stand with Haiti (SWH). Rather than being classified as a new service organization, SWH is an umbrella directive that strives to create a grassroots

coalition among existing organizations in the Southwestern and Georgetown communities.

This model for collaborative action was established at SWH’s first meeting when Southwestern students Maureen Johnson, Alexis Kropf, Cameron Navarro and Fernie Reyes met to discuss a campus-wide effort to raise money and awareness for relief efforts in Haiti. Soon after, in an

open forum setting, representatives from several Southwestern service organizations, the Office of Civic Engagement and the Georgetown community met to discuss the direction of SWH. It was decided that the purpose of SWH would be to utilize and unite existing resources towards a common goal in response to the earthquake in Haiti.

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High School says YES to Environmental Activism

By Kimberly Griffin

Saturday, October 24, 2009 was a long and exciting day for the 170 students and chaperones that attended Southwestern's third annual Youth Environmental Summit (Y.E.S.). The Summit is a day-long event designed for high school aged students to further their knowledge of environmental issues and their interest in environmental activism. Since the first Summit in March 2008, the number of attendees has grown from about 40 to nearly 170.

Many of the high school groups traveled long and far to be at the Summit, coming from as far away as Fredericksburg, Houston, and Shertz. Several students had to wake up as early as 7:00am that Saturday morning, displaying strong commitment to environmental sustainability, even at such a young age.

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Kimberly Griffin

changes. The presentations addressed a variety of contemporary environmental issues from different disciplines that included Physics, Ecology, History, Public Health, and Anthropology.

Students also attended training sessions that were designed to give them the necessary skills to organize effectively for a more sustainable world. The trainings were led completely by members of SEAK (Students for Environmental Activism and Knowledge) who had participated in the Sierra Student Coalition's weeklong Summer Program, SPROG.

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High school students gather for a group picture at the end of SU's third annual Youth Environmental Summit.



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SWH has extended its goals to include a long-term response addressing pre-existing issues that made the earthquake in Haiti especially tragic.

At the meeting several fundraising ideas were discussed, as well as the issue of where and to what organization to donate money for Haiti. SWH members felt that fundraising efforts should involve careful and conscientious thought about the recipient of the donations. They chose to donate to an organization that had a long-term, sustained, community-based approach to solving local issues.

Health organizations were considered appropriate recipients because of the acute and chronic needs of Haitian people following the earthquake. Partners in Health (PIH) was chosen because it has effectively functioned in rural Haiti for over 20 years as an health organization that directs its efforts towards long-term goals based on the medical and cultural needs of Haitians at the local level. Additionally, PIH partners with other local Haitian organizations to consider the social and economic needs of its health community. This emphasis, which is a community-based, inclusive and collaborative grassroots approach, mirrors that of SWH's initiative and provides an effective model for awareness leading to action.

SWH's coalition model of leadership has allowed other



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In photo: members of Stand With Haiti collect donations and spread awareness

organizations to use their resources to direct fundraising and awareness efforts. Fundraising projects have included information tables, the Pan-Asian Intercultural Dinner, and Stand with Haiti T-shirt sales. Awareness efforts have accompanied all fundraising events. Specific projects have included a Haitian Poetry Night, where students read poetry and discussed current developments in relief efforts; a Round Table conversation where historical, social and political issues surrounding the current situation were discussed and led by anthropologist Melissa Johnson; and a scene in a Theatre for Social Justice play emphasized the context of giving money to Haiti and the need for conscientious action. The next planned event is a Haitian Culture Fair in which all campus organizations have been invited to creatively participate and

contribute by hosting an informational booth that focuses on Haitian history and culture related to their organization's focus, or by competing in a Haitian food cook off.

Because the need for sustained giving and awareness has not diminished, SWH intends to continue its collaborative fundraising and awareness campaigns. PIH launched a 3-year-plan to create long-term solutions for Haiti, perhaps providing a directive for Stand with Haiti's future cross-organizational projects on campus.

If interested in getting involved with Stand with Haiti, contact Maureen Johnson, johnson6@southwestern.edu

When we talk about black maybe, we talk about situation of people of color and because you are that color you endure obstacles and opposition, and not all the time from other nationalities...The struggle of just being you. The struggle of just being us.

Common, rap artist



unCommon art

Large Act Common has a large social impact

By Harrison Glaser

Last semester, senior Katie Cam, Assistant Director of Student Activities, Lisa Dela Cruz, and I decided to bring the rapper Common to Southwestern for the school's annual big music concert, or "Large Act." We made this decision for a variety of reasons. For one, Common's name frequently came up during our surveys that we administered at the end of last year. Also, for the sake of diversity, we wanted to bring a performer that was not part of the rock genre, since we had two rock acts the past two years. In addition, we wanted an artist that was recognizable, and because of his exposure not only in the

music industry, but in films as well, Common seemed to fit this description. However, one of the prominent reasons we chose Common was the work he does outside of his music. Common is one of a growing number of celebrities that uses his fame and influence to make social changes for the better. His philosophy and efforts in activism seemed to fit in not only with the Student Peace Alliance National Conference, which was taking place at Southwestern at the same time, but also with the student body in general and our similar efforts to make changes for the better. *Continued on page 5*

H.S. says Yes to Environmental Activism

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These sessions focused on fostering specific skill sets such as Event Planning, Working with the Media, Group Analysis, and Starting a Group. An important part of the success of the trainings was that they were led by other students, so the high school students could relate more easily to the facilitators.

SEAK members also gave presentations on several different projects that SEAK has done recently, and the high school students were very interested in how they could adapt those ideas to their schools and school districts.

Students were especially interested in removing Styrofoam from their cafeterias and were inspired by SEAK's recent success story of replacing the Styrofoam in the Commons with a more sustainable alternative. The resources that SEAK developed and used are now available on the website so that high school students can adapt them for their own schools. To see these resources as well as more information about the content of the 2009 Youth Environmental Summit, visit <http://www.southwestern.edu/offices/civicingagement/summit.php>.

The 2009 Summit was funded by the Office of Civic Engagement and a generous Southwestern S.E.E.D. (Student Environmental Engagement and Development) Grant. SEED grants support student-led projects that address environmental issues

on campus or in the greater community. Projects can address environmental education and/or activism, and students of all disciplines are invited to apply. For more information about SEED grants, visit <http://www.southwestern.edu/departments/environmental/seed.php>.

unCommon art

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Since his 1992 debut album *Can I Borrow a Dollar?*, Common has been one of the leaders of the conscious rap movement. Alongside other artists such as Mos Def, A Tribe Called Quest and Talib Kweli, Common pushed a new kind of rap music into the foreground, one that dealt not with violence and profanity, but with the struggle for peace and racial equality. Common became more famous throughout the years, yet never strayed from his positive messages and lyrics of love and equality. For instance, in his song "U Black, Maybe," off of his 2007 album *Finding Forever*, raps about the troubles African Americans face simply for being black. In the song he explains,

When we talk about black maybe, we talk about situation of people of color and because you are that color you endure obstacles and opposition, and not all the time from other nationalities. Sometimes it come from your own kind, or maybe even your own mind. You get judged. You get laughed at. You get looked at wrong. You get sighted for not being strong. The

struggle of just being you. The struggle of just being us.

In addition to his songs, Common has made a positive impact through his activism. A few years ago, Common created his own non-profit organization called the Common Ground Foundation, which works with kids in poorer urban neighborhoods, educates them, and pushes them to be confident and ambitious in their life goals. As Common explains, "I wanted to help. Most of all help people to help themselves." In addition to the Common Ground Foundation, Common also participated in the "Knowing is Beautiful" campaign which supports HIV/AIDS awareness and publicly encouraged HIV/AIDS testing on his 2005 album *Be*. Common was also a vegan and supporter of PETA and pledged to never use anti-gay lyrics in his music.

Once we learned of everything that Common has accomplished, the decision to bring him to campus was easy. Common truly exemplifies the socially conscious celebrity and never stops to use his fame to bring about positive change. I feel very fortunate that we had the opportunity to have him perform at our school.

The Society of Young Women Leaders

By Sarah Gould

As a young woman devoted to pursuing gender equality and promoting female leadership within communities, I designed an organization for women with similar passions. The Society of Young Women Leaders is a leadership and mentoring organization for high school and college women and works to increase participation and success of young women within their careers and communities. I was inspired to initiate the Society of Young Women Leaders because I saw an absence on my college campus of any organization that cultivates the talent of young women to prepare them for success in their futures. I believe it is necessary for young women to be equally prepared to be equally present in the work force. Instead of protesting workplace inequalities or the unfairness of the pay gap, I designed a program that addresses the root of these problems. The Society of Young Women Leaders (SYWL) strives to assist high school women with pursuing college careers and provides

The SYWL provides opportunities for students to “own” their learning—to act upon their knowledge and create new epistemologies and deeper understandings of who they are.

Sarah Gould

college women with opportunities to enhance their college educations with experiences that fuse classroom knowledge with civic issues. Pillars of the SYWL program focus on community service and awareness, political activism and engagement, career exploration, and leadership development.

Throughout the year, the Society of Young Women Leaders hosts numerous accomplished women as guests speakers at chapter meetings, attends professional and etiquette training sessions, and designs awareness campaigns for social and political problems affecting women in the working world. *Continued on page 7*

An Environmental Opportunity

Texas Nature Project is a non-profit organization dedicated to environmental education for undergraduate college students. They offer daylong workshops that are designed to develop the skills and knowledge essential to sustainable leadership and engaged citizenship. Their classroom is the beautiful natural hill country of the 100-acre Northpoint Ranch, Texas's largest outdoor environmental laboratory. For more information, including a schedule of events, visit <http://texasnatureproject.org/>.



Leading Young Women

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This year, the SYWL hosted a female entrepreneur and a financial advisor to help members explore different careers for women. Members of the Society also participated in a business etiquette workshop and a professional development seminar in an effort to prepare for their future careers.

In April, the Society will feature a guest speaker from the Ann Richards School for Young Women Leaders who will discuss women's issues in education. In the spring semester, the SYWL is working to raise money for a local woman who is suffering from breast cancer. We are planning a city-wide dodge ball tournament to both raise money and awareness for breast cancer.

The Society of Young Women Leaders, in partnership with Georgetown Partners in Education's Project Mentor Program, centers on the mentoring program for college and high school women. High school members are paired with college members in a "duo" – a partnership that will last the duration of membership. High school women receive the opportunity to explore the possibilities of their future through fellowship with a college woman who is pursuing similar academic and career goals. College women maintain a close connection with the "up and coming" generation and enjoy the opportunities to share experiences, lessons, advice, and thoughts. The SYWL provides opportunities for

students to "own" their learning—to act upon their knowledge and create new epistemologies and deeper understandings of who they are, what they value, and what they want to make happen in the world.

THEHYDRA is brought to you by the:



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