

Mockingbird Times



Building a world class foster care system while serving our neighborhood youth

March 2004

Foster Care and Homeless Youth Speak out Across the Nation

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Advocacy Day a Success

J. EBOH



ON FEBRUARY 9TH I dragged myself out of bed at 7:30 in the morning. For me that is the equivalent of waking up at the crack of dawn. In a half-dead state, I walked down to the nearest bus stop and got on a bus headed in the direction of the University District Youth Center in Seattle. I wasn't the only kid doing this. Over 100 youth across the Puget Sound area in Washington State, on their own free time, were loading themselves into vans with their peers from group homes, shelters and local youth centers. We were all heading down to Olympia (Washington state capitol) to participate in Youth Advocacy Day.

Youth Advocacy Day (formerly known as Homeless Youth Lobby Day) is an annual event whose purpose is to bring youth and youth advocates from across the state together to collectively advocate for young people with legislators in Olympia. The focus of Youth Advocacy Day is improving the lives of our community's most vulnerable youth, which include young people involved in various systems including: homeless, foster care and juvenile justice.

The topic of focus this year was the sealing of juvenile records. Youth advocates from across the state are proposing a change to the current law. The proposed bill (House Bill 3078 and Senate Bill 6609) will cut the time in half that someone will have to wait in order to have their records sealed. Participants met and shared their stories with Senators Thibadeau, Franklin and Hargrove and Representatives Dickerson, Pettigrew and Speaker of the House Frank Chopp. One young woman, who lives in a Seattle transitional housing program, shared her story with Representative Chopp. She spoke of how she had a past run-in with the law but managed to break her old habits and started making choices that had more positive results. She stated that "people change, the law should too."



Senator Rosa Franklin, Mockingbird Times reporter Princess Hollins, Tonya Greenfield, service providers and youth. Photo by Mockingbird staff.

How To Be An Advocate

- Get involved. You can visit your local government's web site and read about things that are happening right at this very moment in your state capitol. If you find a bill that you want to support, you can be an advocate by educating your community about the facts.
- Write an email or a letter to whomever it may concern, such as a legislator or your governor.
- Visit your state capitol and request a meeting with a local legislator. You don't have to be old enough to vote to speak with your legislators.

What is Advocacy?

SHAY DENEY



Advocate *n*- One who argues for a cause; a supporter or defender.

-American Heritage Dictionary

The right to advocate is a privilege given to everyone who lives in America. If that is so, then why do most people not even know what it means?

Most people think of advocacy as a difficult and overwhelming thing to get involved with. True, there are people who do it for a living: meeting with legislators all the time and constantly fighting for important issues. What most people don't know, however, is that advocacy can be as easy as sending an email or letter to your local state legislators, educating your friends, teachers, and parents about an issue that is important to you, or even creating an after school advocacy club where you can practice fighting for your cause.

If you have a cause that you believe in, I strongly urge you to study up on your issue to see what you can do to help change it. It all really depends on what you are advocating for. There are millions of different ways to advocate.

Recently, I had the chance to interview an advocate named Nancy Amidei, Director of a program called the Civic Engagement Project.

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JOHN SEITA

When I was an eight-year-old boy I was removed from my mother's home and unwillingly started on an odyssey that would not end until I was well into adulthood.

After the court took us away from our mother, I never saw my sister Maria again. Jimmy and I were sent by the court to live in the Receiving Home—this big gray, smelly, ramshackle building in inner city Cleveland [that] housed kids nobody wanted. The first night away from our equally filthy apartment, I was angry and terrified and unsure of what was going to happen next. Kneeling beside the rusty, metal-framed bed with the urine-stained mattress, I prayed to ease my pain. My cries for help resounded like wails into an empty universe.

My memories of my first foster home are faint and few; I only stayed there a week. I then ran away. It was the first of many times that I would run from a foster home—it was after all a foster home, and I did not belong there. It turned out that I belonged nowhere. Here is an ex-

"Most high school graduates go away to college with a sense of excitement and a yearning for independence. Of course, while they make plans to fully enjoy the freedom that college life will afford them, they completely take for granted the security system that is backing them up."

cerpt from a social work report written on me all those many years ago:

John's father has openly rejected John in the past and states that he wants nothing to do with him. John is aware of this and is having a tremendous amount of trouble handling this knowledge. Added to this is the knowledge by John of knowing that his father accepts his brother. John seems not to reject James because he is living with his father, but seems quite affectionate toward him and is always anxious and concerned about how he is doing.

After a few weeks, the court allowed Jimmy to leave the Receiving Home to live with Dad. I still had hopes to return home, if not with my mother, at least with my father. Imagine my joy when I was told, "Your dad is here to see you." I nearly sprinted down to the lobby with a grin, seeking his embrace. We walked to his car. I sat proudly beside my dad on the front seat.

He was my hero who had come to rescue me from my captors. He drove an old rusty Mercury, but to

Alumni Corner

Letter From the Editor

In my experience, employment and education are two vehicles that help marginalized communities improve their current and future lives. Along those lines, I encourage you to review the following opportunities for scholarships available to the young people we serve.

FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FAFSA): Youth in foster care and homeless youth are eligible to file their FAFSA as an independent student ("orphan/ward of the court"), and can receive up to \$4050 per year in Federal Pell Grant aid and between \$1500 - \$4000 per year in Washington State Need Grant aid to attend an eligible Washington college. You may also qualify for private or institutional scholarships and grants. www.fafsa.ed.gov *Deadline: Apply asap after January 1st during the year prior to enrollment.*

CHAFEE - EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHER (ETV) can provide up to \$5000 per year for post-secondary education expenses in addition to other independent living money, for youth who age out of foster care and are between the ages of 18 and 23. Contact the Independent Living Program Manager for Washington State, Marlon Buchanon at 360-902-7976 or buma300@dshs.wa.gov for eligibility requirements.

TREEHOUSE COACHING-TO-COLLEGE PROGRAM is for residents of King County who were in out-of-home care (in King County) at any time since the age of 16 and are currently under the age of 25. Provides assistance with career and educational planning through an Educational Coach and up to \$4000 per year in scholarship assistance. Call: 206-767-7000 or visit www.treehouseforkids.org/programs/coaching/eligibility.htm

ORPHAN FOUNDATION OF AMERICA (OFA)/CASEY FAMILY SCHOLARS provides scholarships of up to \$10,000 per year to former foster youth under the age of 25, who spent at least the 12 months prior to their 18th birthday in foster care and were not subsequently adopted. Scholarships are awarded for post-secondary education, including vocational/technical training, and are renewable each

year based on satisfactory progress and financial need. See www.orphan.org and click on the application link. *Deadline: April 1st 2004 for the 2004-2005 academic year.*

(OFA) HILDEGARD LASH MERIT SCHOLARSHIP provides up to \$5000 to sophomores, juniors, or seniors attending four-year colleges. To apply, complete the OFA/Casey Family Scholars application and write a letter that states interest in being considered for a Hildegard Lash Merit Scholarship. For more information or to apply call: 1-800-950-4673 or www.orphan.org/programs/hildegard.html *Deadline: April 1st 2004 for the 2004-2005 academic year.*

NATIONAL FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATION SCHOLARSHIP: Offers scholarships for foster youth who wish to further their education beyond high school, including college studies, vocational and job training, and correspondence courses, including the GED. For more information or to apply call: 1-800-557-5238 or visit www.nfpainc.org/index.cfm *Deadline: March 31st 2004 for the 2004-2005 academic year.*

ACHIEVERS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM: This scholarship opportunity is for foster youth and other low-income students at one of the following Washington State high schools listed at <http://www.waedfoundation.org/achievers/AchieversSchools.htm>. Students must apply during their junior year. It can provide up to \$9000 per year for four years for attendance at an eligible Washington State college. For more information call 1-877-655-4097 or visit www.waedfoundation.org/achievers/ASForms.htm. *Deadline: November 15th 2005 for high school juniors who will begin college during the 2007-2008 academic year.*

OTHER PRIVATE SCHOLARSHIPS: Visit the Washington Education Foundation/ Other Scholarships website for links to free scholarship searches www.waedfoundation.org/sites.htm

For questions contact Mary Anne Herrick at the Washington Education Foundation at 1-877-655-4097.



Jim Theofelis

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ABOUT US: The Mockingbird Society is a private non-profit organization dedicated to building a world class foster care system and improving the other systems that serve children and adolescents in foster care. The *Mockingbird Times* is a monthly newspaper written and produced by youth who have experience in foster care and/or homelessness. All youth employees of Mockingbird Society are paid between \$7.50 and \$8.50 an hour. Additionally, youth from across the country submit articles, art work, poetry and are compensated up to \$25 per published piece. The *Mockingbird Times* has a monthly circulation of 28,000 copies being distributed across Washington and the U.S.A. Youth involvement is the key to the philosophy, values, and success of The Mockingbird Society and, as such, youth are involved in all aspects of organizational development and decision-making. All donations to The Mockingbird Society are tax-deductible and greatly appreciated. No part of the *Mockingbird Times* may be reproduced without the written permission of The Mockingbird Society. All contents copyright 2004 The Mockingbird Society.

Poetry Corner

My Motherhood

I'll never again have the life
I tried so hard to achieve
that's a harsh realization
To be pregnant when you're a teen
To give birth to a child
When I myself am still a kid
But I got so much more growing up to do
Well at least I thought I did
But I can't go back now
After all I messed up
And why should my baby have to pay
Because I didn't use a glove
So back to reality
I'm gonna be a mom
At least I'll finally have a family
Because I never really had one
Well I guess I can't complain
Because I'm not doing this alone

There will be a father figure
In my child's life and home
Wow, this is all so new to me
I can't believe this truth
But the state of shock I'm in
Won't change the baby in my womb
I myself can no longer be a child
And do what us teens do
And every choice that I make
Affects not one, but two
No more smoking cigarettes
Or partying all night
Because my baby's welfare
Is more important than my good times
So I'll sit at home
Munching on fruits 'n such
Realizing how lucky I am
That my youth is done
I'm gonna have a baby
I guess it was all just in due time
Now I know what my purpose is
To make this baby's life better than mine.

—KATHERINE GRAVES

Meet Our Staff

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A Mockingbird Inside Your Mailbox:

Make a difference in the lives of our most vulnerable youth.

I want to support The Mockingbird Society

All donations are tax deductible and all donors receive the *Mockingbird Times*. Enclosed, please find my check made payable to Mockingbird Society in the amount of: \$

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Hieroglyphics Makes Your Head Bounce

DARIUS REYNOLDS

If you are really into underground Hip-Hop, then I have an album for you. The group's name is Hieroglyphics, and the album is called Full Circle. This is the first time I have bought one of their cd's and it really blew my mind. The lyrics are great and they really did a good job of putting their beats together. My favorite member of the group is Del the Funky Homo-Sapien. Del is a really good rapper and has his own weird and unique style. If you've ever heard the Gorilla'z song, "Clint Eastwood," then you know what I'm talking about. Here is an example from that song, "I'm in them, Every sprouting tree. Every child apiece Every cloud you see. You see with your eyes I see destruction and demise corruption in disguise From this enterprise Now I'm sucking to your lies" Now if that doesn't make you think then I don't know what will. Expect a lot more admirable verses like that from Del on this album. There are a total of eight members in the band,



Full Circle



Hieroglyphics

including Del. The other members names are Casual, Phesto Dee, Tajai, Pep Love, A-plus, Opio and Domino. This group is lyrically on another level. They don't rap about jewelry and cars or how much money they have like many mainstream rappers. They talk about their rap skills and their life. They also like to use a lot of metaphors.

The group puts a lot of energy into their music and it's always flowing. The songs make you want to bounce your head and learn the songs so you can rap with them. Most of the songs on the album made me think a lot, especially "Maggie Mae." In this song they talk about one of their friends who has mental issues.

I encourage every Hip Hop fan to listen to this album and I guarantee you will be at the nearest music store buying it. I also encourage parents to let there kids listen to it if they are into Hip Hop. There is not a lot of profanity and unlike mainstream music, Hieroglyphics sends a positive message. 🐦

Arts Fair!

Come explore your creativity, enjoy snacks and refreshments, and tell what kinds of arts programming you'd like to see at the new 2100 Building.

Local artists and musicians will be performing and showcasing their work to help us create a vision for a vibrant arts program in our new space.

Experience some new things and share your ideas with us!

Join us on Tuesday, March 30th from 4-7:30pm at 2100 24th Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98144

All children and young adults are invited! Don't miss this fantastic evening!

Put together by Arts Corp, YMCA of Greater Seattle, Treehouse, Youth in Focus and The Mockingbird Society.

What is Love?

BRIDGETT SIROSHTON



EVERYONE HAS HEARD that cheesy early 90's techno song, by Hadaway "What is love, baby don't hurt me no more." Why did this song become so popular? I'll tell you why—because everyone wants love. So what is love about and why is it so important for us to find out? For many girls, romance and love go hand-in-hand. We dream all the time about finding "Mr. Right," or that special someone who makes us feel wanted and loved.

According to Sarah Bodnar's article in Cosmopolitan "there is no such thing as the one." This is bad news for anyone who thinks there is a special soul mate, waiting for them. Bodnar has some good news as well, claiming that the world is full of people who have the potential to be Mr. or Ms. Right. Just think about this, ladies, Bodnar is saying there are more options! Here is another surprise, according to Helen Fisher PhD, who did a study and wrote a book called *Why We Love: The Nature And Chemistry Of Romantic Love*. Fisher studied 17 people and performed brain scans on each person. Fisher

found that regions of the brain light up in the CAT scan machine when they were shown pictures of their mates, and the area of the brain that promotes motivation. Fisher also claims, "Love at first sight does exist."

Fisher goes on to say that it is possible for us to fall for someone in a split second. Think of all those times that you told yourself on the first date, "I love this man." Another point of interest is Fisher's claim that men fall in love faster than women. I know many girls who would dispute this however, because it seems like we're always the one waiting for the phone call. According to Miss Fisher, "the male brain is equipped to put more stock in visual cues" meaning that they are visual creatures, relying heavily on first impressions and physical traits.

Remember these thoughts before you put yourself through dating hell. There is more than one person out there, and love at first sight doesn't necessarily mean love. Love can happen more than once. Maybe on your next date, your expectations won't be so high that you think your date is the only one out there for you. Remember the sexiest thing is confidence. I heard somewhere that attraction is only 50% looks and 50% confidence. You can have all the beauty in the world but if you don't believe in yourself and have confidence, there's no point! 🐦

ALUMNI CORNER CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

me it was a carriage worthy of a king. Together we went to a nearby drive-in for hamburgers. My back was sore and I sat stiffly. Dad noticed and complimented me for being a tough little man and not complaining about my pain. I was so proud to please him. As we drove back to the Receiving Home, he said, "John, I need to tell you something." I hoped that he was going to say that I was coming home with him and Jimmy. "John, you need to know that I am not really your dad, I don't know who your dad is."

At first, I didn't believe him. Then my heart wanted to scream. I wouldn't give him the satisfaction. I sat stiff and straight, and when the tears started to come, I turned away like I was looking out the window. Not a word passed my lips. When the car pulled up to the curb by the Receiving Home, I glanced out the corner of my eye toward him. Our eyes never met. I strained to push open the heavy car door with my shoulder and stepped out onto the crumbling concrete. I walked slowly up the stairs to the building. I wanted to give him time to call my name and say he changed his mind. No sound broke the night. My head hung low. He was gone. Forever.

Following that, I was moved roughly fifteen times in an eleven-year span. Each placement is not described, only those that struck me as notable. I survived this long string of placements in foster homes, group homes and various institutions such as orphanages and detention homes through luck and pluck. I often stole food and other items, ran away time and time again and engaged in petty crimes.

In 1967, at the age of twelve, I was placed into a residential boys home where I lived for a few years. "Graduating" as a nineteen-year-old, the odyssey continued. I was abandoned by [the] orphanage and by most of the staff after I left there. I was filled with anger, loneliness, fear and events that I look back on in disbelief.

Most high school graduates go away to college with a sense of excitement and a yearning for independence. Of course, while they make plans to fully enjoy the freedom that college life will afford them, they completely take for granted the security system that is backing them up. At home, they have parents, a home, access to money and, if everything fails, a warm place to return to and lick their wounds before trying again to tackle the world on their own.

But as I embarked on this same new adventure, I did so with a great sense of fear and no support system at all. I once again felt abandoned in almost all ways. I was adjusting to something new on my own, as I had so many times before. I did not know what to expect and was not successful in making friends to help me through the transition to adulthood.

The child welfare system, did a poor job on my behalf when I was emancipated. With only a couple of exceptions, those adults whom I had relied on over the past few years were now inaccessible to meet. Legally and physically I was an adult, with the entire attendant opportunities to achieve. Socially and emotionally, however, I was very immature. I was aware of this even while experiencing it, but I felt I had nowhere to turn for counsel. 🐦

John Seita, Ed.D, alumni of 15 foster homes, is now a professor at Michigan State University and the author of three books related to his experience in foster care including God Is In The Kitchen And Other Everyday Miracles available at Amazon.com and other retailers.

For the full text of John's story, see our website at www.mockingbirdsociety.org/alumnicorner.php

Are you a young writer or artist? Then Mockingbird wants your poems, news articles, and artwork! We will pay you between \$15-\$25 for each piece we publish in the *Mockingbird Times*! Visit us online at www.mockingbirdsociety.org!

Check out this issues' bonus articles online! Just go to www.mockingbirdsociety.org and check out our Online Articles section under the *Mockingbird Times*!

Foster Care Summit

DARIUS REYNOLDS



For the past nine years, the Families for Kids Partnership has been working towards finding a permanent home for every foster child in Washington State. One strategy of the FFKP is to hold an annual the Washington Permanency Summit. I attended the last summit of this kind in February.*

The summit began with Casey Family programs welcoming guest speaker Uma Ahluwalia, Assistant Secretary of DSHS, who talked about strengthening Washington's Child Welfare System. Governor Gary Locke was the Keynote Speaker. Locke talked about Accomplishments in Permanency for Children, a fundraising group whose goal is to raise money for children in Washington State's Foster Care System. At this event I had the honor of meeting Governor Locke, which was one of the highlights of the day.

After the speeches, we broke into groups of about 15 and separated to different rooms to attend what was called "Action Planning." Each group had a certain topic to discuss. My group talked about permanency planning for adolescents in foster care and how to make it easier to get adolescents adopted. I am pretty sure I was the only one in the group who didn't work with a government agency, or the judicial system. This made me pretty uncomfortable because I thought there would be a lot more youth. The session had two different parts. First we came up with ideas that could make finding

foster kids permanent homes easier, like giving youth more of a voice in the decision making part of their life. For example, asking youth what they are looking for in a home, and training youth to be more independent when they can't get a hold of their caseworker.

During lunch there was a memorial for the late Rosie Oreskovich, former assistant secretary for DSHS. After lunch we went back to our groups and started the second part to the action planning. For the second part we had to pick three ideas that we thought were the most important and that were possible to do in two years. The three ideas that my group picked were: giving youth a voice; addressing special needs for adolescents; and defining permanence and kinship. I mentioned that there should be a program made that will sit youth down when they first get in foster care and tell them what is going on and what they can do for themselves to make things easier for them. At the end of the summit every group gave a quick description of what they worked on. Uma Ahluwalia and Bobbe Bridge from Washington State's Supreme Court made closing comments.

I really wish that I had the opportunity to go to forums and summits when I was in the system because I had a very bad experience with foster care. If people would have listened, I would have told them everything that was wrong with the system at that time. For example, out of the five case workers assigned to me, I only met and talked to one. Going to this conference restored a lot of my confidence in the foster care system because I met people who are really serious about their job and care about the kids. I am thankful for the chance to go to them now and be heard and see the people that are trying to change things now hard at work. 🐦

** In March, the FFKP will change to Catalyst for Kids, and the focus will be on more widespread youth issues.*

Kill Bill: Vol. 1

COURTNEY KONIETZKO



"I don't think there's anything to be afraid of. Failure brings great rewards – in the life of an artist."

—Director Quentin Tarantino, on the pressure to repeat the smash success of his last film, *Pulp Fiction*.

Kill Bill: Vol. 1 is the fourth film by Quentin Tarantino. Tarantino has been described as, "a god among directors." He is extremely talented and all of his films are worth checking out: *Pulp Fiction*, *Reservoir Dogs* (with Steve Buscemi as Mr. Pink, he is sooo sexy in that role!), *Jackie Brown*, and *Natural Born Killers*. (*Kill Bill* is technically his fourth creation because *Natural Born Killers* was directed by Oliver Stone but Tarantino wrote the screen play.)

Kill Bill is intense, tastefully bloody (except for the parts where someone is stabbed and blood gushes horizontally out of them like Old Faithful), graphic, and beautiful. The main character is "the bride," played by Uma Thurman, who also played one of the main characters in *Pulp Fiction*. She seeks revenge on members of the Deadly Viper Assassination Squad, a killing team composed of beautiful women who do her wrong and leave her for the dead.

The Squad is led by Bill, a cruel and mocking boss, who seems to hold the power. You don't see Bill's face in Volume 1 but parts of him are shown and you get to hear his voice...I have a feeling we'll get to see his face when "the bride" goes after him sometime in Volume 2

or 3. The bride used to be a member of the Deadly Viper Assassination Squad. I'm not clear on why the other vipers tried to kill her but I think it has something to do with her getting married.

There's a treat in the middle of the film where you get to see why one of the women (O-Ren Ishii) became an assassin, as the story of her childhood unfolds in Japanese Animation.

Kill Bill is heavily influenced by Japanese culture and parts of it were filmed in Tokyo. I think this adds to the film — to its beauty and individuality. There are many well choreographed action scenes in *Vol. 1* and I expect the sequels to be just as action-packed, though it's not what I'd call an "action" movie because there are too many other toppings on this cinematic pizza. Yuen Woo-Ping is the choreographer for *Kill Bill*. When I saw his name on the opening credits I thought to myself, "this movie has to be good!" Yuen is famous for his work on the action sequences in *The Matrix*, *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon*, and *Iron Monkey*.

Some parts of *Kill Bill* had me squeezing the hand of the person next to me just a little too tight. Not because it was scary but because it was suspenseful. The movie runs about two hours in length but it doesn't seem like that when you leave the theater. The movie is broken up into chapters so when you leave it's like putting down a good book. There is somewhat of a time warp in *Kill Bill* that leaves you thinking, "what?!" However, your questions are answered by the time

volume one ends. Whatever questions aren't answered will probably be in the sequels. We can look forward to *Kill Bill: Vol. 2* coming out in theater sometime in March or April. A pleasurable experience! Probably suitable for mature audiences due to graphic violence. 🐦



Kill Bill: Vol. 1



Quentin Tarantino

WHAT IS ADVOCACY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Shay Denev: How did you get started with advocacy and how long have you been doing it?

Nancy Amidei: My mother use to claim that I did speeches as a little girl (laughs). I've been advocating since I was a student. After I finished college, I went into Peace Corps. In Peace Corp, I worked in Nigeria and at one point, hitchhiked across South Africa. I saw malnourished children and there was no food. After I came back home to America, I looked around and realized there should not be hunger in America. We have plenty of food to go around.

SD: Can you give an example of issues you have advocated for in the past?

NA: I've advocated for ... making sure that people had food. I worked in Washington D.C. with an organization called F.R.A.C. (Food Research Action Center). There was a situation where the government was planning on substituting ketchup for vegetables in the school lunch program to save money. We disagreed with that and so we found out the facts, took on Congress and the White House and won. Other issues I've advocated for are foodstamps and meals for senior citizens.

SD: In your own words, how would you describe advocacy?

NA: It just means speaking up. That's my favorite way of explaining it.

SD: What arguments would you use to persuade young people to get involved in advocacy?

NA: If you do get involved, I can't promise you will win, but if you don't get involved I can promise you won't have a chance.

SD: Do you know of any ways that young people get involved in advocating for what they believe in?

NA: They can wear a button stating what they are advocating for, they can carry folders with a certain statement about an issue printed on the back for everyone to read and they can put signs in their windows at home. They can also attend a town hall meeting. It helps if you already have a good question in mind when you get there. Another way you can get involved is campaigning for a good potential candidate. This means passing out flyers, knocking on doors, basically just getting the word out there. Just speaking up is advocacy. People tend to get scared because they think they need to be an expert on an issue to speak up, but that's not the case.

SD: Do you have anything else that you might want young people to know about advocacy?

NA: Never underestimate your power.

Advocacy can be a powerful life tool and you can start by just getting yourself involved. By speaking up, you are advocating for people who may believe they don't have a voice and by letting yourself be known, you are changing the world one step at a time. The people have the power, whether they are young or old, so take advantage of it and start making positive changes in your community. Good luck and *have fun!* 🐦

Exciting Development for Mockingbird!



This issue is a major organizational benchmark for *Mockingbird Times*. For the first time youth reporters and staff orchestrated the layout for the entire paper. Yay us! Well done Dennis and Shannon! 🐦