



Name (optional): _____

Prep Session #1, Jan. 19, 2008

Every successful endeavor has a strong foundation.

That's why we think that this Saturday's prep session for the Civitas Active Citizenship Conference is so important.

We will start with you! What important issues are happening in your life? Are you feeling the pressure of college admissions and the accompanying needs for financial aid? Are you feeling overworked and wondering if you'll ever see free time again? Are you bored and looking for new things to do? We want to begin with you, because you are our initial connection to issues facing the world and its 6.5 billion inhabitants.

Next we want to explore issues that are happening to friends and family. Is someone having a health problem and having difficulty with an insurance company? Are they having to wait all too long to see the appropriate doctor to address their needs? Has someone else lost a job that he/she held for years and now will be lucky to find a job that pays half as much? Are there plans in the works to decrease the value of your family's home; perhaps a toxic waste site or a strip mall are planned to be adjacent to your neighborhood? Would someone you know be better off if more choices for schools were available?

Finally, we'll move of the ladder to global issues: nuclear proliferation, global warming, unchecked dictators, political and corporate systems that stymie democracy, Darfur, child soldiers, the melting north pole; you know the litany.

Documentarian Frank Popper will be present to record your views. This is the beginning of exploring issues related to active citizenship. First we want your ideas on what this concept means and how a high school student can be one. As we move on, we want your thoughts on "once you get it, how do you not lose it."

Part II – NIMBY & OIMBY

You may have previously heard the term NIMBY. It is an acronym for Not In My BackYard. What do you think this means? What are examples?

Here's a new concept: OIMBY. It stands for Only In My BackYard. We'll do our best to explain it and then ask you three questions about it.

1. OIMBY Question #1 and your answer(s).

2. OIMBY Question #2 and your answer(s).

3. OIMBY Question #3 and your answer(s).

Part III – General Questions

Below are some questions that we think to relate to the concept of Active Citizenship. Let's take a crack at answering them. We are open to any and all additional questions that you would like to suggest.

1. What issues (personal, OIMBY, global, whatever) are of most interest to you now?
2. What issues (personal, OIMBY, global, whatever) are presently of most interest to your friends (as you see it)?
3. Why are so many students apathetic and/or ill-informed? (If you care to, you can disagree with this assertion)
4. In your opinion, at what age are individuals most likely to become aware of issues beyond themselves?
5. What, if any, issues have ever gotten your blood boiling?
6. Why did this issue or set of circumstances get your blood boiling?

7. Do any of these school issues get you upset:
 - a. Censorship of school newspaper or what you can say at school or in a class.

 - b. Bullying
 - i. What expectations does one have for what a school can/should do about bullying?
 - c. General Fairness – pertaining to any number of specific issues.

Switching Gears:

8. What are the differences between charity and justice?

9. Suppose that you have a relative with spina bifida or some other serious illness or disease. From where would the money needed to treat the disease come? What do you think of this way of raising the money to treat the illness? Can you think of a better way?

10. When hardship occurs, do you ever respond with any of these emotions?
 - a. Sadness
 - b. Anger
 - c. Sense of unfairness

11. When hardship occurs, do you ever react by:
 - a. Name-calling
 - b. Retaliation or revenge
 - c. Solutions (example: a family intervention with an alcoholic relative)

19. Do you think that students are more sensitive to issues of unfairness and suffering than adults?
20. Speaking about adults, not students, why do you think that they have difficulty addressing and solving societal issues such as poverty, enforcement of human rights, and sustained peace?

Part IV – Global Issues

If we have time to get to this, we'll look at some global issues. These are the ones that get beyond our own personal experiences as well as NIMBY and OIMBY issues. Examples of global issues would be global warming, nuclear proliferation, Darfur, etc.

Next Prep. Session: Feb. 9, 2008

Some adults seem to “keep the spirit” and maintain a commitment to improving the world. Why are some capable of this and others not? On Sat., Feb. 9, we will work with 10-12 adults who seem to still be visionaries and are committed to change. How do they do it? What challenges face them? These, and many more questions.

We will have one or several panel discussions with adults with plenty of Questions and Answers. We will also divide into small groups so three or four students can have in-depth discussions with adults who (a) are not intimidating, (b) care about you and your welfare, and (c) care about the future of the world.