

January 30, 2008

Dear <<Name>>,

NOTE: Please don't forget this Saturday's (Feb. 2) workshop for those who did not attend the Jan. 19 one. If you were present on Jan. 19, you're welcome to attend this one as well since the ideas expressed by the new students will be fresh.

We announced in [yesterday's Civitas newsletter](#) the list of panelists and discussion leaders we will have for our Sat., Feb. 9 workshop in advance of the Active Citizenship conference. In case you missed, the participants are:

1. Paul April, teacher, Visual & Performing Arts High School
2. Make Baldwin, community activist (North St. Louis)
3. Jeffrey Boyd, St. Louis Board of Aldermen (22nd Ward)
4. Betsey Bruce, Political Reporter, KTVI-TV, Channel 2
5. Elliott Davis, "You Paid for It," KTVI-TV, Channel 2
6. Nikki Doughty, Director of Admissions, City Academy
7. Jackson Foote, Citizens for Missouri's Children
8. Ginger Imster, Director of Development, City Academy
9. Rachelle L'Ecuyer, Community Development, City of Maplewood
10. Felicia Pulliam, Community Development, City of Kinloch
11. Alvin Reid, City Editor, [St. Louis American](#)
12. Jamala Rogers, Community Activist; Columnist, [St. Louis American](#)
13. Jeff Smith, Missouri State Senator (4th District)
14. Steve Sorkin, Community Activist
15. Rachel Storch, Missouri House of Representatives (64th District)

This is an outstanding group of individuals. We looked for individuals who are not only accomplished, but also interesting. We want to be true to our commitment to try not to bore you!

What Is Happening on Feb. 9?

We want to remind you that the workshop is at Crossroads School ([map](#)) from 9:00 AM – 11:30 AM on Saturday, Feb. 9. Our schedule of events is as follows:

8:45 AM – Registration; collection of permission forms, personal release forms to be in Frank Popper documentary; collect fees, etc.

9:00 AM – Informal gathering / munch on refreshments

9:15 AM – Quick intro to morning's events

9:25 AM – Panel Discussion #1

9:50 AM – Divide into small groups; ideally one adult and 3-4 students each

10:15 AM – Break

10:30 AM – Panel Discussion #2

10:55 AM -- Divide into small groups; ideally one adult and 3-4 students each

11: 15 AM – Reconvene; share findings, insights, frustrations, goals, whatever

11:30 AM – Call it a morning!

What Do Students Do?

We are looking for lively dialogue between students and adults. As you see above, part of the time the format will be panel discussion; part will be small group discussions.

We want you to create most of the questions; to take a leadership role in drawing our speakers out. We urge you not to ask them about (a) what is a day in the life like, or (b) who do you support for president, or (c) what's your favorite restaurant in St. Louis.

We want to learn from the speakers how they have maintained a commitment to caring about the world while assuming the responsibilities of career, family, house payments, etc. Below are samples of the kind of questions we think would be illuminating. Try to put your own unique twist on a question, but also try to make the answer something that will be of interest to all concerned.

Samples:

1. What was the first experience in your life that made you aware of injustice in the world (or perhaps in your community, school, family, etc.)?
2. What sorts of current issues “make your blood boil;” get you upset? Do these issues involve problems that you attribute to individuals or “the system.?”
3. In your life, has there been an “ebb and flow” in when you engage in public issues and active citizenship? If so, under what circumstances have you been most involved and what circumstances least involved?
4. How do you strike a balance between your commitment to social change, your career, your family, your financial obligations, and just plain having a personal life? [in some cases your career may be a venue for you to engage in social change]

5. If possible, with regard to your job, could you estimate a ratio of how much time for idealism you have compared to time for pragmatism? [e.g. 30% idealistic; 50% pragmatic; 10% not sure; 10% fiddling around]
6. When you were in high school, did you have to deal with issues of peer pressure? In your current work, do you have to deal with another form of peer pressure? If so, how are they similar and how are they different? How do you respond to peer pressure?

We informed the speakers that:

1. We don't want prepared speeches; we want you to share your experiences about "caring" to whatever extent you are comfortable.
2. As moderator, if I start acting like Wolf Blitzer and incessantly interrupt you, get the hook and drag me off. It's about you and the students. People are as interested in hearing from me as they in watching umpires at the ballgame. The only thing that I will try to do is to provide equal time. Please don't be afraid of give and take with the students.

If you have any other questions, please don't hesitate to contact me by any of the means below. We really appreciate your participation in the project. We hope to see you this Saturday!