



The future is up to
us and only us.

The Advocacy Advisor

T H E S T U D E N T V O I C E

Ira Chaleff

In November, when we first began our advocacy project, we began researching leadership. You can't have a smooth advocacy project without someone in the leadership role and you can't be a leader without knowing what leadership is. Knowing this, we began to research the leadership by reading Kouzes and Posner's, *The Student Leadership Challenge*. We studied the five principles of leadership, which are: encourage the heart, model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, and enable others to act. During this process, Dr. Marty Krovetz, a published author, a former professor at San Jose State, and a key player in starting Renaissance Academy, came and introduced us to the concept of leadership vs. followership. He opened up our eyes to the importance of followers. We had often perceived followers negatively, but in reality, a good leader is nothing without his/her followers. Dr. Krovetz introduced us to Ira Chaleff and his book, *The Courageous Follower*. Mr. Chaleff researched, and is an expert in followership. After we got introduced to his book, a few of our students decided to research and do a presentation on leadership vs. followership for exhibition. These students got in touch with him and facilitated two phone interviews with him. Thanks to Lusiana G. and Carolina O. R. we have maintained a relationship with Mr. Chaleff. Just last week, during spring break, a group of our 8th grade classmates went to Washington D.C. along with Ms. Ibrahim. Coincidentally, Mr. Chaleff lives in D.C.. When he found out we were going to be in D.C., he requested to meet with us! It made us feel special that he drove to come meet us, although he knew we would only have about 20 free minutes. This was a time for us to talk to him about our advocacy project and ask questions. It was inspiring to know that he was inspired and impressed with our work. He showed us a few translated copies of his book, and he informed us that he is spreading the word to his colleagues. Knowing that he is willing to support us is empowering! Recently, Mr. Chaleff donated to our Donors Choose. Whenever we receive donations, we become even more motivated. So, thank-you to Mr. Chaleff for your interest and support in our project. Your contributions have been very motivating for us all.

Emily Spacek's Blog

An eighth grade student, Grecia M., took the initiative to contact the Mayor of San Jose,. Mayor Chuck Reed responded via e-mail to her, and he posted a comment on Emily's Blog!

"To the students of Renaissance Academy , Thank you for taking the time to share the details of your Student Advocacy Project with me. I am very impressed that you have taken the initiative to raise money for new technology at your school. Your efforts serve as a great example of how young people can make a difference in their community and help make San José an even better place to grow up. I commend you for your determination to enhance your education and look forward to hearing more about your progress. Best of luck with your fundraising and keep up the good work! Sincerely, Mayor Reed"

Kim Mesa

On April 11, 2011, Kim Mesa came to talk to our advocacy class on how to improve our presentation. She gave us great advice, telling us that we should not only build relationships but we should ask allies for funding. Kim Mesa stated that we, the eighth grade students, were even better than some college students she had ever seen. We greatly admired her presence and commitment to this project. We need all the allies we can get, and this is just one step forward to achieve our goal. Once again, thank you for all this support.

How You Can Help

*Spread the Word

*Contribute to our grant on Donorschoose.org: "Student Advocacy: Welcome to the 21st Century" www.donorschoose.org/renaissance.ibrahim

*Visit Emily's Blog on the RA website and on our school website under the "News" Tab and write comments www.arusd.org/



Mr. Chaleff
Talking with Students
In DC

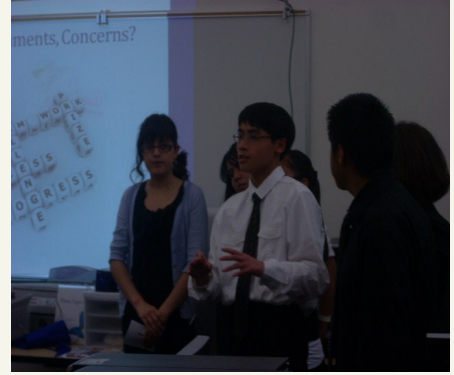
*"You are not the leaders
of tomorrow...you are
the leaders of today..."*
-Darcie Green

AERF Meeting

On April 20th, during spring break, a group of 8th grade students attended an Alum Rock Education Foundation (AREF) Meeting. We presented our case for why we deserve Apple iPads at Renaissance. We shared a PowerPoint that gave an overview of our advocacy project. This included: what we want why we want it,

and how we plan to accomplish our goals. Also, we requested that the foundation support us by funding one iPad for us to use while creating presentations, rubrics, and lessons. The presentation was led by Nazaret Lechuga and Alex Jimenez. Then, students took turns presenting different slides. Finally, we transitioned into a Q & A session. At this

time, members of the foundation asked many questions to the student panel. We got a lot more questions than expected. We had never faced a situation like this. However, no matter how many questions were thrown at us, we handled them with a great sense of maturity. All in all, this was a great experience and another big step forward for us.



Students Presenting to the AREF Board

ARUSD Board Meeting

For the past four month Renaissance eighth grade students have been attending the ARUSD Board Meeting. On April 14, 2011, fifteen Renaissance students attended the April meeting. At the meeting, several of my classmates thanked both Superintendent Manzo and Trustee Green for attending our community meeting in which the eighth grade students gave an advocacy update. My classmates stated that the support of all the board members was of great importance to them. I found it interesting that each and every one of my fellow advocates talked so comfortably and confidently among a horde of people. Little did everyone know that the time crunch left us only about two days to prepare. Every one of the board member's comments of the Advocacy Project was utterly moving and highly appreciated. Being acknowledged by all the board members boosted up our confidence as well as meant a lot to all of us.



Students at the ARUSD Board Meeting

LEADERSHIP VS. FOLLOWERSHIP

Leadership

This advocacy project has brought all of us together for the better. Along with working together, we've learned important leadership skills. We've learned to encourage each other to help get through feeling overwhelmed with the amount of work we had to get done. Since we have gained so much encouragement, we have been able to stay positive and committed which is essential for leaders who are trying to engage others in the shared vision. We have identified the problems we face, and as leaders, we are challenging the system in a mature matter to overcome these problems. Student leaders have enabled us to take action. We've grown as leaders, but most importantly, we have grown as people.

Followership

Before the presentation by Dr. Marty Krovetz, we talked only of leadership in our advocacy group. We were assigned a chapter in the book, *The Student Leadership Challenge* by James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner. After a few weeks, we were experts on certain leadership practices. We knew what it took to be a good leader, but we never thought of what it would take to be good follower. Dr. Krovetz's presentation on followership opened our eyes to qualities of not just good leaders but also good followers. Dr. Krovetz presented a powerful points to our advocacy class based on what he had learned from Ira Chaleff's book *The Courageous Follower*. During the PowerPoint, we learned what responsibilities both leaders and followers hold. Without the followers, leaders would be nothing, and it's not just the leaders that make an organization great. It is also the followers that need to contribute and share feelings and ideas with their leaders. We learned that in order for this project to be a success we all need to be both leaders and followers. Throughout this project, roles will change—we have been called on to be leaders and followers. Each of our groups has a teacher--a leader. We are courageous followers simply because we ask questions, contribute to the group, and share our own ideas. But, we have also been leaders. We have taken this project into our own hands. We are setting the example and inspiring others.

Principles of A Courageous Follower

Followers must have the courage to...

~ assume responsibility

~ serve

~ challenge the leader

~ participate in transformation

~ take moral action

~ speak to the hierarchy