Engaging Young Men as Allies Campaign

The Young Women’s Action Team (YWAT) is a youth-led, adult-supported social change project that empowers women to take action on issues that affect their lives (particularly issues of violence against girls and young women). The YWAT believes that girls and young women should be free from violence. We believe that through collective action, consciousness-raising, and organizing we can end violence against girls and young women.

The Documentary

The YWAT has produced a documentary called “Real Talk: Engaging Young Men as Allies to End Violence against Women and Girls.” In this documentary, YWAT interviewed several men who voiced their opinion on issues concerning violence against women and girls. On October 17, 2006, the YWAT premiered “Real Talk” at DePaul University to an audience of more than 180 people. The film subsequently has been screened at local high schools, colleges, and community-based organizations. So far, more than 10,000 people have viewed the film at multiple local and national screenings.

Male Allies


Survey

The YWAT considers our documentary “Real Talk” to be the first phase of our on-going research and documentation project. In phase two, we decided that we wanted to let young men speak for themselves. A small group of us developed a survey that we decided to administer to young men ages 12-24. Copies of our research findings are available by contacting us at rpywat@hotmail.com.

Train the Trainer

“Males as Allies: Train the Trainer” was a two-session interactive workshop that served several purposes. Young men between the ages 14-22 were taught about the root causes of violence by adult ally Ed Mills and YWAT leader Lillian Matanmi. Participants developed strategies to end violence and began creating a positive male identity. The men had the choice to continue their work against gender violence by involving and educating other men in their communities.
Conference

Due to the positive outcome of the “Talking About Misogyny” workshop at the “Love Is Not Blind” conference in February of 2007, YWAT decided to partner with our male allies (now known as MAN) to plan the “Talking About Misogyny” conference in February of 2008. Over 125 young men attended this event. This conference included workshops with an all male space allowing men to learn about different stems of violence against women and girls, providing a safe space for men to voice their opinions on how to end violence against women.

Male Ally Network (MAN)

After the train the trainer workshop, the Male Ally Network was established by adult ally Ed Mills and some young men. The group sought to educate young men in and around Chicago about violence against women and girls. They did so through their Male Ally Network Urban Project (MANUP). From June 2008 to December 2008, this project used several methods to achieve their goals. They intend showed movies and hosted an open mic event. The group disbanded in December 2008 due to an inability to financially sustain its work.

How To Get Involved

There are many ways that you can get involved to help end violence against women. For more information please visit our website at www.youngwomensactionteam.org or contact us by e-mail at rpywat@hotmail.com. You can also get involved by attending one of many YWAT events. YWAT will have an “engaging young men as allies” toolkit available in May 2010 at a sliding scale cost of between $50 to $100. If you would like to donate, all contributions are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Please make checks payable to Rogers Park Community Council and write YWAT on the memo line. Mail checks to: P.O. Box 607751, Chicago IL 60660.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the following for their support and contributions:
- Our donors
- Members of MAN
- Mariame Kaba
- Jane Ball
- Ed Mills

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