

# Speak.

A documentary on what's working and what's not working in teenage activism

By Megan Conway

Audio Documentary transcription

All comments said in context, as well as all typed up material.

SFX:

Intro music

Genny:

Activism can be really simple, people think you have to go to a rally or of you have to go to an organization and voice you opinion, but really, activism can be as simple as stopping someone from saying a racist word or saying "faggot" or saying you know "cracker" or just anything like that, if you just stop someone from saying that one thing, you have just become an activist.

SFX:

Music

Courtney F:

My name is Courtney, I am 18, and I attend Mountain View High School.

Rachael E:

I'm Rachael Eichner, I'm 18 and I go to Mountain View High School.

Carly H:

My name is Carly, and I'm 17, and I go to Los Altos High School.

Jacob K:

My name is Jacob Kleitman, I am 17 and I go to Mountain View High School.

Andrew W:

Andrew Walsh, Mountain View High School, I'm 15.

Abir A:

Abir, 18, Mountain View High School.

Genny D:

My name is Genny, my age is 18, the school I got to is Mountain View High School.

Narrator, Megan C:

What do you think of the mandatory 10 community service hours required for graduation?

AA:

I think that, ... Well, I don't think that community service should be mandatory to graduate. I think maybe for teachers to give extra credit if you do them, because a lot of people do them anyways, so some people end up with like 300 community service hours and some who don't really do community service end up with none. So, I don't think that graduation should be based on whether you do community service or not.

JK:

Well honestly, I don't think it's needed. Umm, a lot of kids do community service anyways, for things like Boy Scouts, a couple of my friends had to do Eagle Scouts projects, and they needed a lot of help with it, and even though it didn't technically count, it was still just a lot of community service done. And I know a lot of kids just BS the whole thing, and just make up stuff to fulfill the requirement, so they don't have to go out and do community service, because they're forced to.

RE:

My views on the mandatory community service hours for Civics, are a little mixed. I think it's a good thing, but I think they ask for too many. In one semester, 10 hours, it's just kind of a lot.

CF:

My views on the 10 hours of community service for graduation is that I actually don't like it, like some people don't have time to go out and do community service. They have work, they homework, they have to deal with family life, like I have chores, I can't find time to have ten hours of community service. I think it's stupid.

CH:

I think that it, it's good because it gets people to help out the community but it's also kind of a hassle, trying to find a place that you want to help out. Overall it helps the community and then you get to be able to graduate, so in the long run it's better for everybody.

Dave Blasquez, Civics teacher:

Community service is a good idea, if the student is committed to a program. I don't think that forced community service though is the best way going about doing it. Well, it's a district policy, and the district had a good idea in encouraging students to commit themselves to the community, because I think that if you commit yourself to the community, you get a better understanding of the people that live in your community, and the needs of your community, and to be a part of it, buying into I think is positive.

Narrator:

Do you think that in a way, the mandatory hours actually decrease the number of teens who would want to volunteer otherwise?

AW:

No because people who don't want to do it probably don't want to do community service in the first place.

JK:

Not really, but I think it just puts unneeded pressure on the students to go out and do community service. Um I think if they changed it to, instead of having to do it in the semester that you're taking Civics, to maybe 40 hours over your entire high school thing. It would be a lot easier for the students to get it done, because then they wouldn't feel the pressure to get it done within a certain time. They could just do it gradually.

CF:

Yea, I feel like, before I was okay with me doing community service on my own terms, but because it's mandatory, it made me just not care as much. I think if it was a smaller amount of hours it would be better because it gives people a chance to experience something new but then they don't have to spend a whole lot of time doing it.

RE:

I think it makes them not want to. I feel like if it were 5 hours it'd be way easier to get seniors to be like, "Okay I can do that", but 10 hours, even if it's really simple, you can do one hour a week for 10 weeks and be done with it. It just seems like a drag. It's not even something you're looking forward to, or interested in doing, because it's required and no one wants to do it because it's so many.

AA:

Probably but, I don't think that community service should be like forced. If you're going to do community service, you want to do it because you want to, not because you have to.

CH:

Yea, I think if it wasn't mandatory less people would do it. Me personally probably [laughs]

DB:

Forced community service tends to drive people away from community service as a whole as they get older.

SFX:

MUSIC

Narrator:

So, I've noticed that a lot of people use derogatory words in everyday speech and don't really think anything of it, and I think that the people that actually do speak

out against it, are as Genny said, are activists. I think that their ability to want to speak out against something is good. And so I wanted to question a few other teens and see they thought about it, and this is what they said...

Narrator:

When you hear someone say a derogatory word, do you speak out against it or do you just let it fly? Do you use any of these words yourself?

AA:

Um, I think that most words, there are certain words that shouldn't be said, and if you do hear them you should say something. But there are other words that are "passable" I guess. Like certain "curse words", they're just part of the language, but other words, they can really hurt people. And even if they don't affect you in that way you should really say something if you know somebody who might get hurt by it, or if you're close friends with somebody who will, or anything like that.

JK:

I happen to be one of those people that uses a lot of derogatory words, but that's because I personally don't really care what other people think. I guess it's kind of annoying if you overhear someone using a derogatory term against you, and I've been told by random people before, "Can you not say that around me". And that's totally cool, I won't, I don't do it to piss other people off.

CF:

Yes I do, I do speak out against them. If I strongly disagree with a person I will let them know not to say those words around me. Certain words I am totally against using, I've always been against using them ever since I was little, like if I heard it I would know what it was and I would yell at people. I just try and speak out against it, I'm like, "Hey you shouldn't say that" kind of thing, except for I'm more vulgar, when I tell them not to [laughs] I just think it's inappropriate and it's rude and I think it's ridiculous and childish and some big word that I don't remember, but it means that it's stupid. It's ignorant and obnoxious and cruel.

SFX:

MUSIC