



# AVID about ADVOCACY

the  
interactive  
guidebook

by  
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# NEED to KNOW

*Here are some words used throughout the book that you may want to know if you don't already!*

**Advocacy:** An activity done by an individual or group to influence and encourage others to support a particular cause.

**Civic Engagement:** An individual or group involving themselves in their communities to make a difference in issues of public concern.

**Lobbying:** An attempt to influence decisions made by government officials in a lawful manner.

**Op-Ed:** An opinion piece expressing one's thoughts on a matter that is physically opposite of the editorial page in a publication.

**Legislators:** People who created laws.

**Vocational:** Used in connection to employment/an occupation.

**Humanistic:** Related to the principles of humanism (emphasizing the value of human beings, the value of thought, and the value of rational)

Showing sympathy for  
others through kindness  
and assistance

Being able to  
create a  
relationship with  
someone else or  
another thing

Being able to do  
something  
efficiently and well

## **CARING**

## **COMPETENCE**

## **CONNECTION**

# **THE 6 Cs OF POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

## **CHARACTER**

The qualities  
associated with  
an individual

## **CONTRIBUTION**

adding something  
to a group, project,  
collection, etc.

## **CONFIDENCE**

Having trust in  
one's abilities



# Message from Me

Hi! My name is Kieran, and I am currently a Girl Scout Senior (almost an Ambassador!). I've been in Girl Scouts since I was six years old, and I've earned my Bronze and Silver Award in the past. Some of my hobbies are art, writing, baking, and theatre! For the past nine months, I've been working on this project that you are looking at now: Avid About Advocacy! I first had the idea back in the summer of 2020 because of a new policy that was passed in my county which allows students in grades 7-12 to have one excused absence per schoolyear to participate in some form of civic engagement. This opportunity is so special since our county was the first in the nation to adopt it.

With this guidebook, my hopes are that you get inspired to embark on your own act in advocacy, and for you to be able to experience the ups and downs of creating change.

Our generation is responsible for our future, and we need to take charge in order for our voices to be heard and respected.

So, get fired up, and lets get started!



# ABC Advocacy



Get to know why advocacy and civic engagement are so important, the benefits in participating them, the impact you have through your actions, and how to keep useful track of your work.

# IMPORTANCE OF ADVOCACY

Advocacy is a very active process, meaning that there is always work to be done. One of the best things about advocacy is the freedom and range you have with it between the what, where, how, who, when, and why.

## IN THE USA....

- *we have a democracy - the power is in the people to elect officials to represent us and we can influence our country's procedures and rules*
- *we have the freedom of religion, assembly, press, petition, and speech*

Some countries in the world do not have the same rights that we do. Therefore, we should use our privilege and access to give voices to those who can't/aren't allowed to!

# IMPORTANCE OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Civic Engagement is simply getting involved some way in your community. That can be through volunteering, voting, group activities, etc. Civic engagement and advocacy a lot of times go hand and hand because with both you're becoming civically involved and are participating in making a difference.

## IT'S CRUCIAL TO BE ENGAGING, NOT JUST OBSERVANT BECAUSE—

*It's beneficial to not just rely on the information you see, but to interact with those facing the hardship.*

*You can create mutual and meaningful contributions to your community and our society.*

*The best way to learn something new is through experiencing it! It can teach us about empathy, compassion, and selflessness among many other things. In addition, you can pick up a new skill, meet new friends, or find a new passion!*



More positive  
emotional well-being.  
reduced levels of  
anxiety, reduced level  
of depressive  
symptoms

## **BETTER MENTAL HEALTH**

## **INCREASED ENGAGEMENT OF COGNITIVE FUNCTIONS**

ex: the ALS Ice  
Bucket Challenge,  
Race for the Cure

## **DIRECTLY HELPING HEALTH RESEARCH**

# **BENEFITS OF BEING INVOLVED**

## **INCREASES SOCIAL RESOURCES**

An expansive social  
network, increased  
connections, norms,  
social trust

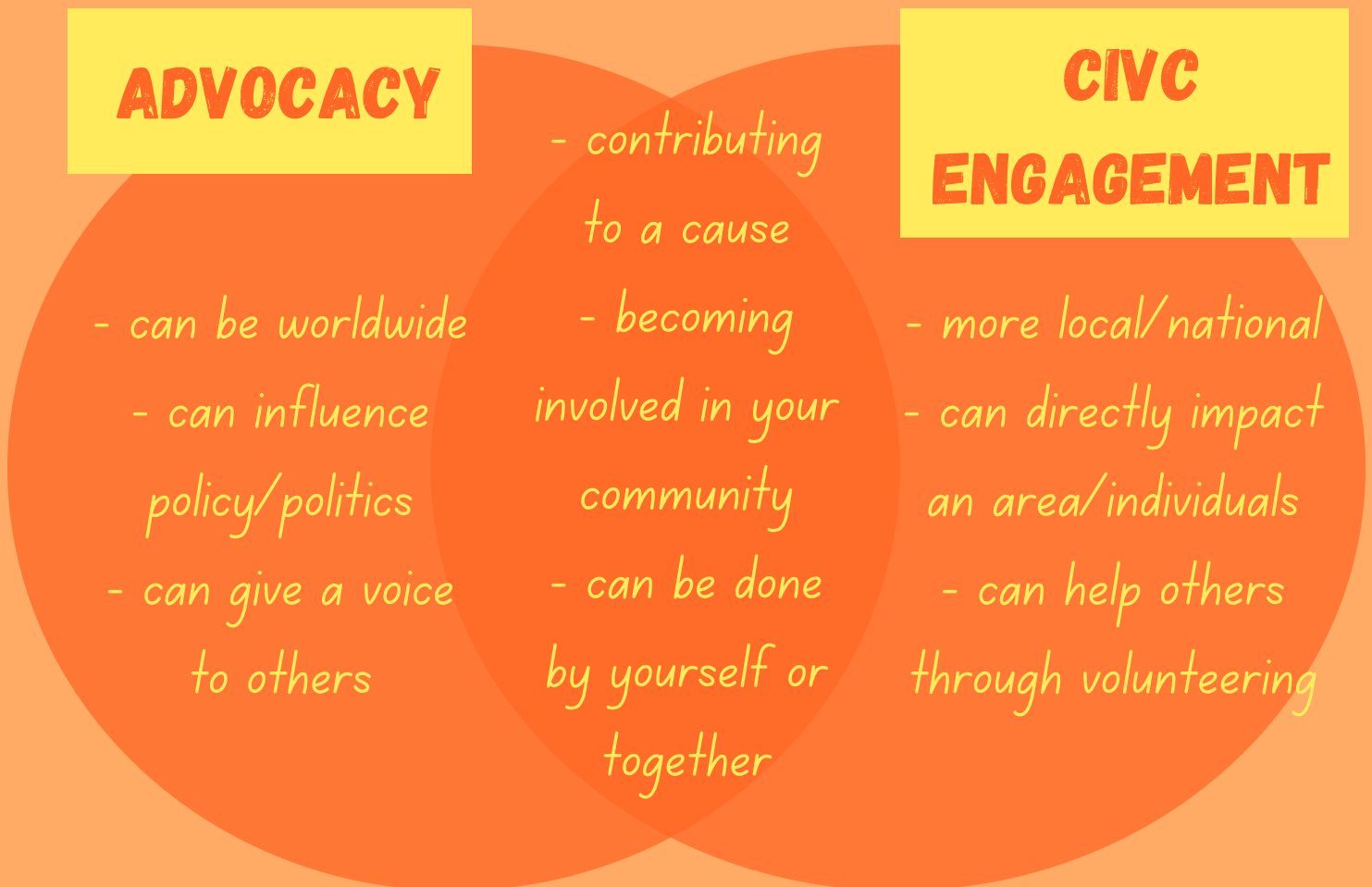
## **HELPS BUILD A SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND A SUPPORT SYSTEM**

## **MORE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE**

walking, moving  
around items,  
building, lifting,  
carrying, etc.

# ADVOCACY .VS. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Although the terms 'advocacy' and 'civic engagement' are often used interchangeably in this guidebook, there are some differences in what they are.



**Advocacy and civic engagement really go hand and hand, and they both benefit one another in their pursuits.**

# THE BREAKDOWN

***It is important for young people to be active in their community in order to uphold and encourage life-long civic participation.***

***LEADS TO***

***The main idea of being an active citizen is about how you empower yourself and how you empower your community.***

***MORE LIKELY***

*greater civic pride*

*greater civic responsibility*

*a sustained community well-being*

*future economic growth*

*a stronger community connection*

*to vote (when able)*

*volunteer in adulthood*

*gain confidence, increase employability, and develop skills*

*stay involved in service*

**Positive behaviors + attitudes + actions =  
beneficial outcomes**

# THE DIFFERENT DOMAINS OF IMPACT

Success in advocacy can be measured in several different ways. But how do we measure it? It's helpful to evaluate and monitor the outcomes of your advocacy efforts along the way in order to keep track and be on track with your goal.

## TO START OFF...

*What is your goal?*

More importantly, what type of change do you want to enact? Is it...

- 1.) Changes for individuals*
- 2.) Changes to a specific sector (social care, health, etc.)*
- 3.) Changes to a community*
- 4.) Changes to an advocacy effort*



# A SPECIFIC TARGET

Once you have chosen a certain domain of impact, next, you can determine a specific goal within that domain. Here are some examples...

## IF YOU CHOSE...

### 1.) Changes for individuals

*I want to help... locate resources, provide special services, contact elected officials, or show support.*

### 2.) Changes to a specific sector

*I want to encourage policy... development, adoption, blocking, implementation, evaluation, or maintenance.*

### 3.) Changes to a community

*I want to... create new connections, implement new ideas, help local organizations, or find new solutions.*

### 4.) Changes to an advocacy effort

*I want to gain.... new partnerships, more collaboration, new advocates, organizational visibility, awareness, or base growth.*

# THE RESULTS OF ADVOCACY

There can be many outcomes from advocacy efforts, although, advocacy is a job that is constantly moving and changing.

## SHORT-TERM:

- New and stronger networks
  - New events in political happenings
- Coverage of issue in media
- Change in attitudes and behaviors from officials and spectators
- New information acquired

## LONG-TERM:

- Change in legislation
  - Change in policy
    - Financial commitments (through budgets)
- Implementation of promises/commitments

*\*\*note how there are a lot more short-term outcomes - this is due to advocacy always taking an active role*

**Advocacy is an ongoing learning process of planning, acting and reflecting.**

# BEST MONITORING METHODS

Advocacy can deliver partial results, so an advocacy group needs to regularly monitor and measure the effectiveness of their efforts to identify the most beneficial plan.

**here are a few tips on how to do so:**

## *1.) Keep records.*

This can be of meetings, conversation, or general communication with your target audience. It's helpful to keep track so you can look back and see what your initial plans were, and the reactions to your actions.

## *2.) Track your interaction with the media.*

It's important to see if your effort is getting any traction! See what is said about it, and reflect on responses from key officials.

## *3.) Implement surveys/interviews to determine impact*

The main point! Reach out to your target audience directly to see what they have to say. Involvement with your audience shows how much you care, and shows them that you appreciate their thoughts and opinions.



The



# Importance of Advocacy & Education



*Learn about the vital intersection of  
education and advocacy, and how to  
increase your knowledge in both  
subjects through each other.*





# THE ROLE OF THE YOUTH

Young peoples' opinions and voices have only recently started to be heard, however, they aren't regarded. Events, decisions, and actions that can affect their future don't even involve them – so what should they do?

*Young people benefit from participating in civic engagement. Not to mention, communities need their energy and and voices to address problems.*

**The most efficient way that our society knows how to state their opinions on certain topics are through voting. However, unless you're 18 years or older, you can't vote. Luckily, there are many other ways to amplify your voice (and that's the idea of this guidebook - how to do so!)**

*Advocacy gives young people a voice which they otherwise wouldn't have full access to until they're an adult.*

# LACK OF EDUCATION

Although the voting age is 18, you may be surprised to know that only 1/3rd of adults in the US can name all three branches of government, while 1/3rd can't even name one - and the lack of education surrounding civic functions doesn't end there.

*30% of 12th graders say they've never participated in a debate.*

*33% of US adults (born after 1980) consider democracy essential.*

*37% of US adults cannot name any of the rights granted in the first amendment.*

*And 42 states (+ DC) require at least one course in civic education.*

School is one of the few social institutions provided throughout the nation. The purpose of education is for vocational discovery, the development of becoming a good citizen, and its overall humanistic goal. A big aspect of education that is not highlighted here are social values, and to function properly, we need to focus as young people on those skills.

# PROVIDING POSITIVE LEARNING

In order to enable an atmosphere where students can gain knowledge about civic involvement and civic functions, there needs to be a positive learning environment provided.

**here are some ways educators can do so:**

## *1.) Classroom Instruction*

General teaching! It's a very familiar tactic, although, sometimes it's harder to get the point across since it's less engaging than other choices.

## *3.) Service Learning*

Volunteering! This is the most direct way to be hands-on, and teaches other lessons like empathy and selflessness.

## *5.) Student Government*

Through your school's student government, you can learn the basics on how governments operate with positions, committees, and elections.

## *2.) Open Discussions*

There are many clubs in school and out of school that relate to advocacy and service. If one doesn't exist for a topic that interests you, make one!

## *4.) Extracurricular Activities*

This can be on current events, controversial issues, or anything! It's good practice for voicing your own thoughts and opinions in a comfortable area.

## *6.) Simulations*

Whether of a democratic process or a political occurrence, simulations can place somebody into the shoes of somebody else's life or duties.

## **ENRICHED "21ST CENTURY COMPETENCIES"**

Employers value certain traits in their prospective employees (the 6 C's of positive youth development) all of which are taught through civic learning.

With civic learning, students typically become more aware and involved in their local area.

## **AN ENGAGED COMMUNITY**

# **BENEFITS OF CIVIC LEARNING**

## **PROMOTED CIVIC EQUALITY**

Through civic learning, connections are created among diverse backgrounds, and empathy is shared between them.

Due to having a higher quality of civic learning, these particular schools are more likely to be more connected and have a lower drop-out rate in result.

## **BETTER SCHOOL CLIMATE**

# ENGAGEMENT IN GOV'T. FUNCTIONS

The most effective way of learning is through experience (I'll say this a lot). While you may learn about government functions on a large scale (federally), it's more realistic and impactful if you begin small (locally).

## 10 Ways to Get Involved in Your Local Government

- |                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1.) Assessment/Mapping          | 6.) Designing   |
| 2.) Bill of Rights              | 7.) Planning  |
| 3.) Advocacy                    | 8.) Membership in Certain Groups<br>(Committees, Commissions, Boards) |
| 4.) Networks/Social Media       | 9.) Funding/Charity   |
| 5.) Congress/Summits/Speak Outs | 10.) Training   |

**As Democratic Spaces for Young People said, "Establishing youth councils or other structures for youth leadership not only brings the perspectives of the younger generation to the table, it also catalyzes and enriches engagement efforts generally."**

# REINFORCEMENT OF KNOWLEDGE

Although someone may have been teaching the information about civic involvement – did it really stick? For me, it is really beneficial to connect certain topics I've learned to other things I know/enjoy or through hands-on learning.

*It is stated by educators that difficulty of connecting classroom material to real life is a big contributor to low levels of engagement.*



*The solution to this problem - PBLs. PBL stands for Project-Based Learning, and in it, students can create a product that causes them to make connections to further reinforce new concepts..*



*Sustainability education leads to connections in realities worldwide.*

Through certain strategies, such as Project-Based Learning, students are able to build relations, and this definitely extends to civic engagement with education as well.

# CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

So – why does education matter for advocacy and civic involvement? It all boils down to the term "critical consciousness", which means becoming aware of inequity, inequality, and oppression when launching social action.

***Basically, in order to succeed in advocacy, you need to understand what you're fighting for.***

*Think of it like baking a cake:*


- In order to make a cake, you need ingredients (social issues)*
- Next, you need to follow the steps and measurements so the cake will come out perfect (understanding)*
- Finally, you put the mix in the oven to bake (social action)*
  - Afterwards, you can enjoy (success!)*

**Today, youth are faced with a variety of social issues that can directly impact them.**





# The Who, What, Why



*Investigate how to effectively advocate,  
the foundation of advocacy, different  
causes you can advocate for, and how  
to begin your own advocacy plan.*

# THE KEY ELEMENT IS REFLECTION

Before you begin your journey of advocacy, one of the most important aspects is reflection. This means that you can **see** the problems in your community, you can **identify** what they are, and you **want** to **address** them. You can remember this by the acronym, **siwa**.

## *ok, but why should this come first?*

- *to impactfully civically participate, it's important to recognize that others in your community have different beliefs, opinions, and values than you do*
- *you can become aware of the struggles, ethics questions, and social problems in your society that are possible to change*

It's more beneficial if you learn from the past than leap into the future. By understanding different perspectives and the priorities of your community, it'll be easier and more helpful for your plan in the long run.

# PURPOSEFUL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

As mentioned earlier, civic engagement is crucial to advocacy. The goal is to raise the standard and quality of life in your community through your actions, which takes motivation, commitment, and creativity.

**now, this doesn't mean you have to volunteer every single weekend for the rest of your life to be a good citizen - here are some other activities that are considered civic participation:**

Activism/Advocacy →

Civic Learning →

Community  
Service/Volunteerism →

Service Learning →

Community Related  
Internship →

*\*\*later in this section\*\**

*discussion of politics or current events,  
voting, engaging with elected officials*

*picking up trash, working at food  
banks, donation of old clothes,  
restocking books at the library*

*tutoring, giving presentations on  
important topics like vaping, field  
trips*

*\*\*check web or flyers for  
opportunities in your community\*\**

# EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY

As an advocate, you can put effort into your work, however, will it be effective? The way you try to persuade and inform your target audience about your cause can make a whole difference in reaching your goal, and the impact imprinted on your community.

**here are five examples of how to advocate effectively:**

## *1.) Define your goals*

Make sure you know what you're working towards before you start working!

## *2.) Identify your target audience*

Make sure you know who you're trying to help/reach out to with your action!

## *3.) Craft your message/purpose*

Why is this cause important to you? What difference will it make? Who will it impact?

## *4.) Create forms of outreach to spread your message*

How will you tell others about your effort? Is it accessible to your target audience?

## *5.) Educate and Persuade!*

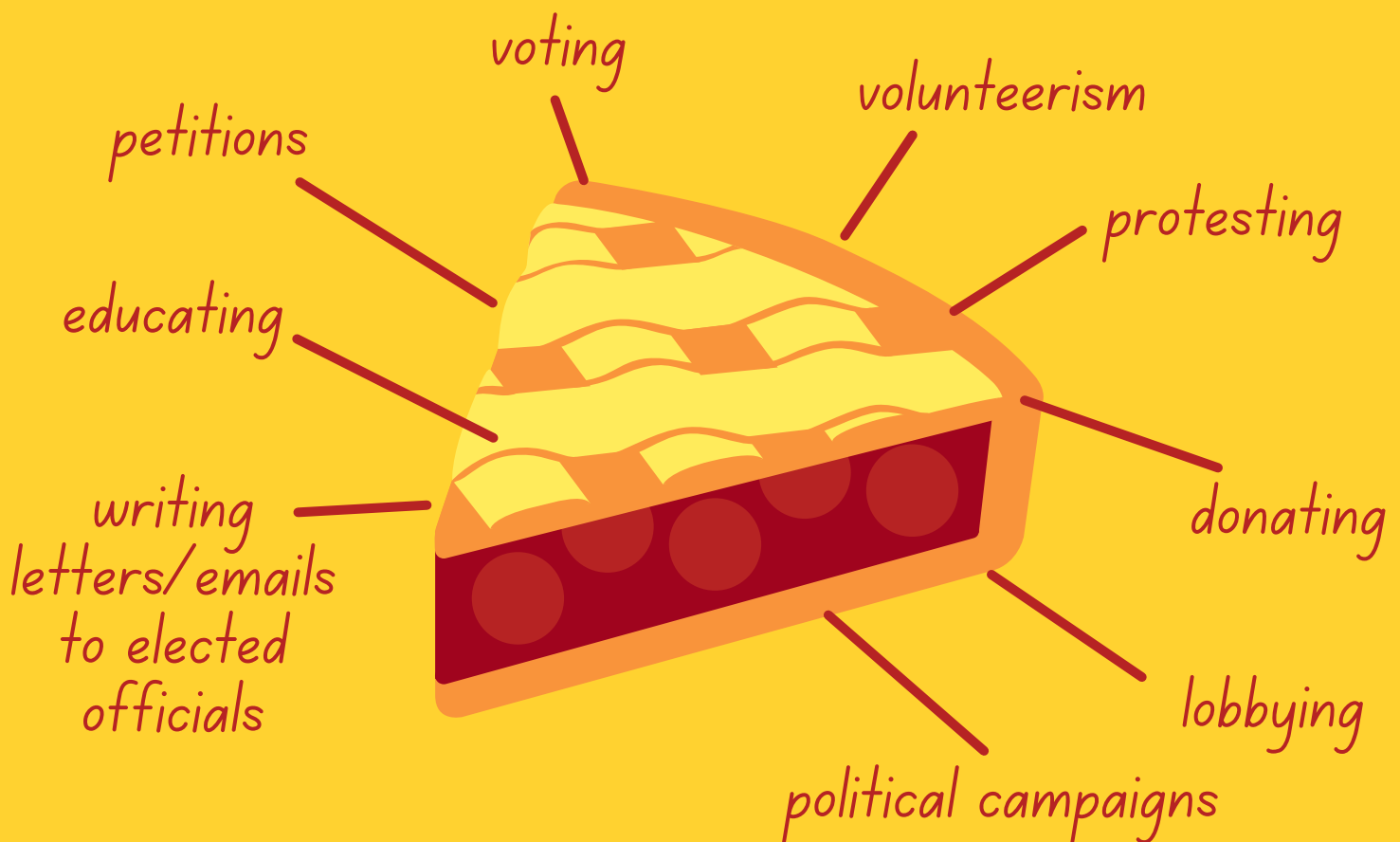
Communication!!! The way to get far in advocacy is through building/keeping up relations.

## *6.) Evaluate Effectiveness*

Reflection!!! What worked? What didn't? How can you improve next time?

# THE MAKEUP OF ADVOCACY

So, we've learned about the importance of advocacy, the definition of advocacy, and it seems like everything in between, – don't worry, there's much more to come ;) – but what does advocacy actually consist of? Advocacy can take many forms, and these are just a few.



***Just like this image, all of these listed forms are just a slice of the pie of advocacy. Other 'slices' will be covered throughout the guidebook, but not all. Advocacy is very broad and is really what you make of it.***

# SOCIAL ADVOCACY

Just like the pie slice above, there are many other slices of in the advocacy pie. The title of the pie slice we're focusing on is called "social advocacy". Social advocacy is acting through our society to defend/uphold the rights of those who are not granted with the same privilege due to disadvantage or discrimination.

## ***The purpose of social advocacy is to...***

- encourage people to practice their rights
- influence decisions
- empower social change
- promote social inclusion
- create equality, justice, and fairness

Social advocacy groups are any organization that are creating community awareness activities

ex: the American Civil Liberties Union [ACLU] protects the liberties and rights of people in the US, who have obtained those rights through the US Constitution

# CAUSES TO ADVOCATE FOR

Here's the bottom line – you can advocate for any matter that is important to you.

Some causes are advocated more for than others, but that doesn't mean that your passions aren't valid. It just means that the subject needs more light and amplification because ***it only takes one person to start a movement to make a change.***

However, if you need some ideas of causes to advocate for, here are some listed below!

*Equal Pay, LGBTQ+, Addiction, Housing, Homelessness, Violence, Public Health, Freedom of the Press, Women's Body Rights, Racism/Discrimination, Treatment in the Workplace, Indigenous People, Child Protection, Sexual Assault, Government Transparency, Immigrants and Refugees, Private Prisons, the Death Penalty, Unemployment, Climate Change, Psychology, Human Rights, and so much more!*

***\*\*to find associated organizations, look on our website\*\****



# GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY

This is what you've been waiting for since the beginning of this guidebook: how to begin an advocacy action plan from the ground up. Planning is a very pivotal step because a good plan can make or break your efforts.

*Step 1.) Identify your opportunity/issue/challenge*

*Step 2.) Research your topic identified in step 1 in order to understand your choice in depth*

*Step 3.) Determine your target audience + analyze their perspective*

*Step 4..) Build a team*

*Step 5..) Establish a common communication system*

*Step 5.) Create goals*

*Step 6.) Form a timeline*

*Step 7.) Collect/find/create any necessary resources needed for your project to be successful*

*Step 8.) - Get to work!!*

# PROJECT PLANNING CHECKLIST


Now since you have read everything over, here's a quick checklist you can come back to and use for your project!

## Avid About Advocacy Planning Guide


- ☐ THE WHY: Define the purpose of your project
- ☐ THE WHO: Identify your target audience and their wants
- ☐ THE WHERE: Is this a local issue? National? International?
- ☐ THE HOW: Develop a plan so your project can be successful
- ☐ THE WHEN: Form a timeline for your project so you stay on track
- ☐ THE WHAT: Create an idea/product to bring awareness to your topic



# Advocacy is All Around You!



*Realize the different types of advocacy,  
your influence on others, advocacy  
events happening in your community,  
and some well known advocates.*



# ADVOCACY IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Advocacy sometimes seems very flashy with thousands of people coming together to make a change. However, advocacy isn't just the big things. Advocacy can be as simple as going to a teacher for help when you're confused on a math problem, or the following...

## Self Advocacy

Speaking up for yourself.

*ex: Letting the cashier know they overcharged you, asking for a fork at a restaurant.*

## Individual Advocacy

Supporting someone else.

*ex: Helping an elderly person figure out bus/shuttle schedules, informing school officials about bullying.*

## Community Advocacy

Groups of people acting for positive change.

*ex: Picking up litter in your town, calling a meeting to discuss a new committee.*

## Political/Public Advocacy

Acting upon an issue locally, state-wide, or federally.

*ex: Lobbying, writing a letter to your elected official, campaigning, protesting.*

^^ aka the other slices of the advocacy pie

# UNCONSCIOUS INFLUENCE

Without realizing it, you influence many people on a day to day basis. Through your ideas, opinions, and thoughts, you can change peoples' perception on certain topics. Advocacy has a lot to do with influence, and keep in mind some ways that you can unconsciously influence others.

*- include your peers in your search for advocacy outlets*

*- take some time to talk with your family/friends on how you can be a voice for good*

*- thing bigger than yourself!  
Consider other perspectives,  
and be open-minded!*

**Make sure to do research on different topics too! Try to get your information from objective, non-bias sources.**

# ACTIVISM IN MY COMMUNITY

In your community, there are probably several different advocacy events going on that you don't even know about! Below, I have some advocacy/civic engagement events that have recently occurred in my own community!

**For example, a school's PTA is an advocacy organization because it advocates the needs of parents while helping fund different events.**

*A county-wide policy that allows students in grades 7-12 to have one excused absence a year in order to participate in a civic engagement activity*

*82% of my county registered to vote in the 2016 general elections, and it was 72.1% for the state of Virginia*

# FAMOUS ADVOCATES/ADVOCACY EVENTS

As we all know, media plays a crucial role in activism nowadays. Words can spread like wildfire, and movements can gain participants in a pinch.

**here are some well-known recent advocates and advocacy events:**

*Black Lives Matter: A movement to intervene in violences and injustices inflicted onto Black communities.*

*Greta Thunberg: An eighteen year old Swedish environmental activist who began the School Strike for Climate movement.*

*Malala Yousafzai: A 23 year old women's education activist who is the youngest Nobel Peace Prize recipient.*

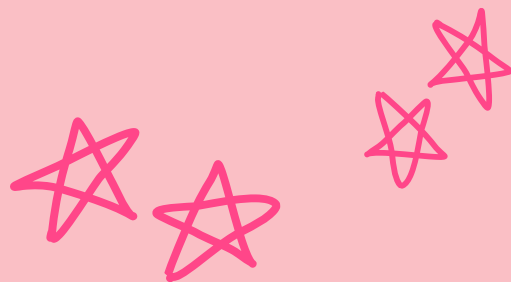
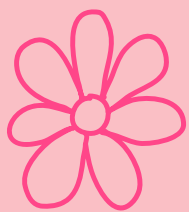
*Me Too: A movement that advocates for survivors of sexual violence.*

**In addition, people use the concept of ethos (appeal to authority/credibility), pathos (appealing to emotions), and logos (the use of reason/logic) for persuasion.**

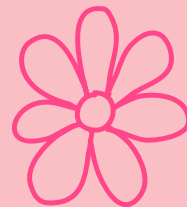




# Advocacy in Afterschool



*Read about real life stories detailing the value afterschool programs and activities provide for youth in their advocacy efforts, and their advice in taking part of advocacy.*



# THE VALUE OF AFTERSCHOOL

Previously, we have talked about the importance of education on advocacy, but how can we further connect our knowledge with hands-on learning beyond the 7 hours, 5 days a week we spend at school?: That's where afterschool comes in.

*Afterschool can be seen in many forms such as school clubs, local organizations, sports teams, workshops, lessons, etc. It can be formal or informal, but either way, it is actively engaging.*

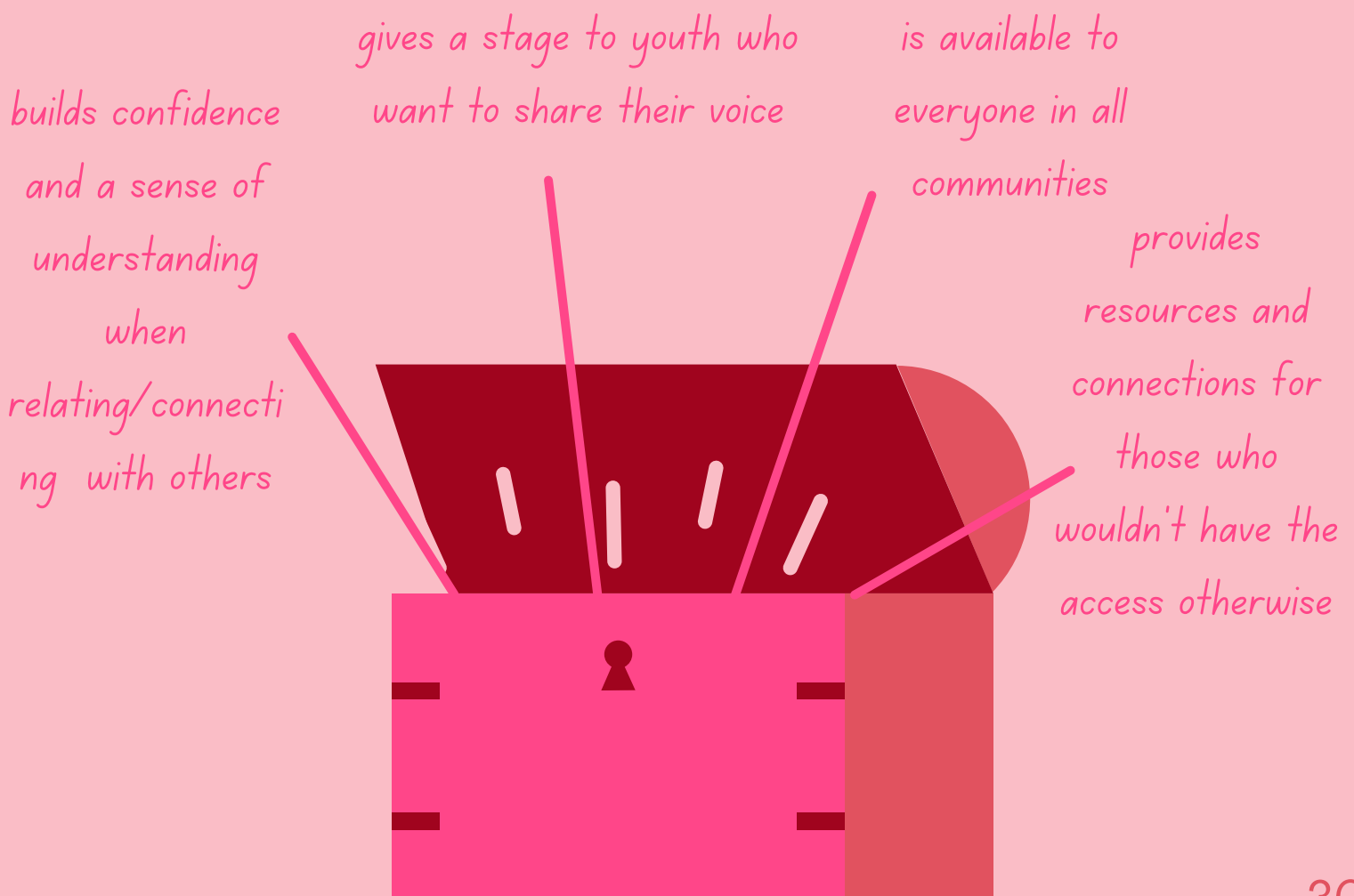
*By being involved in afterschool, you develop and gain responsibility, time management, persistence, strategical/critical thinking, leadership, and so many other skills that can be used throughout your life everyday.*

*Not only are these programs fun and educational, but they are also inspirational. Afterschool activities inspire youth to be engaged, knowledgable, and civically minded.*

# OPEN OPPORTUNITIES

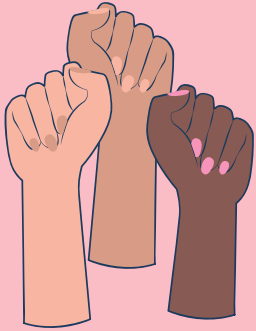
Through extracurriculars, afterschool activities, and summer programs, students are provided with the chances to increase their civic engagement while participating in valuable hands on experiences in order to become involved, informed, and conscious individuals.

## Afterschool...



# GROWING THROUGH GIRL POWER

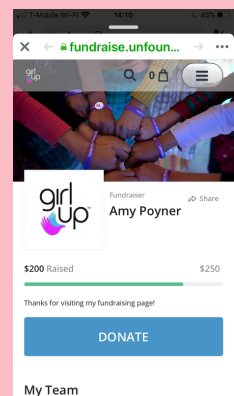
Ever since freshmen year, Krutika and Amy have been involved in their school's club, Girls United.



*Krutika said, "I have always been a passionate feminist, and I wanted an outlet to use my education and resources to help mitigate gender inequalities in any way that I could."*

Through distributing posters and signs, holding donation drives for local women's organizations, and even meeting with US Senator Tim Kaine on Capitol Hill, the girls have greatly impacted their school and community.

*"I think by educating students on the problems in developing countries, the club has made people more globally-aware and therefore more likely to strive for change," Amy expresses.*



Both agree that by creating a safe space where you can openly express your thoughts and ideas, you become empowered, enlightened, and aware.

*By being involved in Girls United, Amy says, "I have made so many good friends and by committing to a shared activity, like volunteering or advocacy, our relationships have strengthened."*



In their junior year, they became co-presidents of the club together. Discussions at typical meetings include a wide range of topics that are often unaddressed in the field of women's inequalities like the lack of resources provided to women in prison or homeless shelters, the impact a birth certificate can make on a woman's freedom, and the gender spectrum.



*As Krutika noted, "Girls United is a club dedicated to educating about women's rights, advocating for gender equality, and celebrating girlhood."*

**GROWING THROUGH GIRL POWER**

# DELVING INTO GOOD DEEDS

Volunteering has been a big part of Layla's life as a Girl Scout, Elizabeth's life as a tutor, and Lauren's life as she has been working on her own service project, cleaning up a local district park. In addition to that, they are all members of service clubs at their school.



*Layla joined Junior Civitan because, "I enjoy volunteering and completing fun activities that help others."*

One of her favorite activities was for Project Linus where the club created felt blankets for children in need. Similarly, Lauren's favorite activity for Key Club (where she is the co-president) is when they made packaged meals for a homeless shelter last year.

*"By researching and taking part in the service projects, we are able to gain a deeper understanding of the needs of our community," Lauren relays.*



The focus of the two clubs are to tackle local issues by informing their community on them, providing solutions to those problems through service activities, and having fun while doing so!



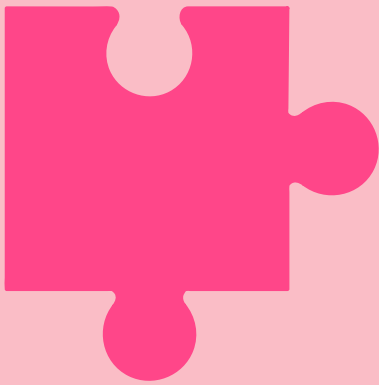
*Elizabeth explains, "Being in Key Club has allowed me to do projects and activities I haven't been able to do before, allowing me to contribute to the community more than I've done so before."*

Like everyone else, it has been difficult adjusting to the new virtual atmosphere we were emerged into. This especially is the case with these service clubs since most projects done normally are hands-on. To combat this, the two clubs have taken on projects including online thank you cards to essential workers, a sports equipment donation drive, and individually creating toys for dogs in animal shelters.

*Lauren states, "Key Club has taught me how to create service projects and how to make them accessible to all members of the club, especially in a virtual setting."*







*"Being able to help others is amazing and helps make one feel more integrated within their community," Elizabeth reflects.*

Although these clubs work on a local level, both organizations are affiliated with larger national organizations, which provides connections to projects and volunteers around the globe.

While service clubs include quick activities, they make long lasting impacts on those who benefit from the projects, and those who have created the projects. Through Key Club and Junior Civitan, the girls have made new friendships and connections to local organizations like a clothing recycle company, hospitals in the area, and assisted living centers.

*The biggest takeaway Layla has taken from Junior Civitan is that, "A group of people with a common interest can come together and help other people while also having an amazing time."*

**DELVING INTO GOOD DEEDS**

# TURNING PASSIONS INTO PROFITS

One of Erin's biggest hobbies is cooking. With her time during quarantine, she began cooking frequently, and decided to start something that catered to her interest: a local meal service.

*"I created this meal service because I wanted to give everyone the experience of a gourmet meal, even if they couldn't make one for themselves. Additionally, I love cooking and baking, so I wanted to use my talents to raise some money for a couple charities," she remarks.*



Those charities were Mustard Seed, an organization that takes care of those who are disabled, and a local food bank.



*Erin adds, "This meal service gave me an opportunity to serve my community and show me what it really means to cook out of love. I now has a deeper understanding of how my actions can impact my close community while having a greater ripple effect in the world."*

# MEANINGFUL MEDIA

There are many different opinions about the impact and proper use of social media. Depending on who you ask, you'll get different answers. However, for Rainn and Nic, they have taken advantage of this digital age in a positive way.



*Rainn mentions, "Media so clearly reflects our everyday lives that it's extremely prevalent in the way we perceive events, people, feelings, environments, etc."*

Rainn created their own initiative called "Untold Theatre".

Untold Theatre is a non-profit organization that promotes and educates others on representation, inclusion, and accessibility in media. They post informational slides about a variety of issues in theatre, hold a wide range of events, and even some original productions.

*Rainn started Untold Theatre because of their love of theatre, the arising Black Lives Matter Movement last summer, and their own personal lack of representation in media.*



*"I would like to make sure those like me don't have to feel that sense of going through a journey alone. Or like it's just not possible to be who you really are," Rainn says.*

Nic is a part of SEALS (student equity ambassador leaders), and was emailed to participate. They are on the Journalism/Student voice committee, and are only one of two at their school in the program.

*The biggest impact this initiative has left on Nic is that, "It inspires me to uplift student voices."*



Their favorite activity that they have done for this initiative is creating a blog about students' experiences in their county. Through this experience, they've learned how to interact with adults when talking about difficult subjects, have met many new people, and have been able to connect with others throughout the state.

*Nic ends by noting that this initiative is, "For students, by students."*

**MEANINGFUL MEDIA**

# RAISING THE VOLUME

It's not easy to stand up for yourself, and it takes a lot of courage to stand up for others as well. Kameela and Katie have given voices to others through their actions with protests and performances.

*Kameela explains, "By giving voice to others, I have been able to bring light to issues that people might not know about which can only help those who have been affected by injustices."*



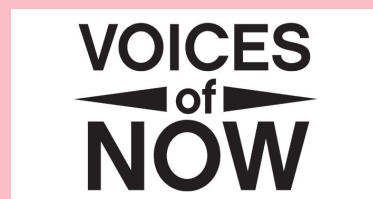
Kameela has been involved in the Black Lives Matter movement for four years, and started participating in protesting after the killing of George Floyd. She has been able to amplify and give voices to others, and has been able to see how deep these issues run.



*"My ancestors inspire me because they have been through so much and no credit has been given to them, so they have taught me that your work may go unnoticed but it creates a better future for generations to come"*

Katie is a member of the Mentor Ensemble for Voices of Now (VoN), and has been a part of the program since 8th grade. VoN is a theatre program that creates and performs pieces that tell personal narratives from the members of the ensemble in order to evoke the audience to explore societal issues.

*"It was refreshing to have adults who not only wanted to know my stories and the things I care about, but also do something about them. It allows me to have my voice heard and allows me to hear others' voices as well," Katie states.*



With VoN, Katie has grown so much as a person, she has learned so much about other people's experiences in the world, and her focus in social change has become much more intersectional.

*Katie says, "I also want people to feel less alone or ashamed in their struggles. I just hope that I can empower people and encourage them to make a difference as well."*

**RAISING THE VOLUME**



# CLUB CHATTER

When talking to the club members, I asked them a couple questions about their future involvement in service/advocacy, their passions, time management, the requirement of service hours, and the importance of civic engagement.

***Here are some of their following responses about the importance of advocacy and service clubs in school:***

*Layla says, "they encourage students to become active in more service opportunities in their communities and develop a passion for helping others."*

*"I do think it is important because clubs need to be accessible to everyone, and after school times are a good time for a lot of people," Lauren states.*

*Elizabeth answers, "I think it is important as I believe many students may struggle with finding opportunities in their area or not want to do so alone, but with afterschool clubs, it allows them easy access to participate with their peers from school."*

*"I think it is very important because it instills important skills in students about leadership, advocacy, communication, and organization. I also think that it helps build a body of conscious and passionate students," Krutika replies.*



*They all said that homework does not conflict with their clubs.*

# ADVICE FROM ADVOCATES

In addition to discussing their initiatives, the advocates provided some advice they'd give someone who is looking for motivation to dive into the world of advocacy.

## Here is what they had to say:



Nic says that having advocacy and service clubs in school is, "Super duper important! It's really important for students to have easy access to groups that support what they believe in."

"It can be tough getting started and you may feel discouraged, but don't give up. Even small actions are important and can have big impacts. So keep trying, and find like-minded people who want to work with you. Also, never stop learning!," Katie shares.

Rainn says, "Find a group of people to support you, especially if you're starting an initiative. Like I've said, it takes a community. This is a group effort. The more people you have to support, the better. Also, use your skills!

"It's important to be an advocate for the things you believe in, not just to stand up for yourself, but to stand up for others. When you advocate, you go out into the world and make a mark, touch the lives of others, and serve the world," Erin states.






"It is very easy to get discouraged when you start something new, especially new initiatives like clubs, but I think it is important to stay optimistic and always remember what you're doing it for (always think about your goal)!," Amy says.

Kameela remarks, "Don't be afraid of the judgment that might come with it [advocacy]. If you are truly passionate about something, you won't let other peoples' opinions affect your work."





# Take Action!

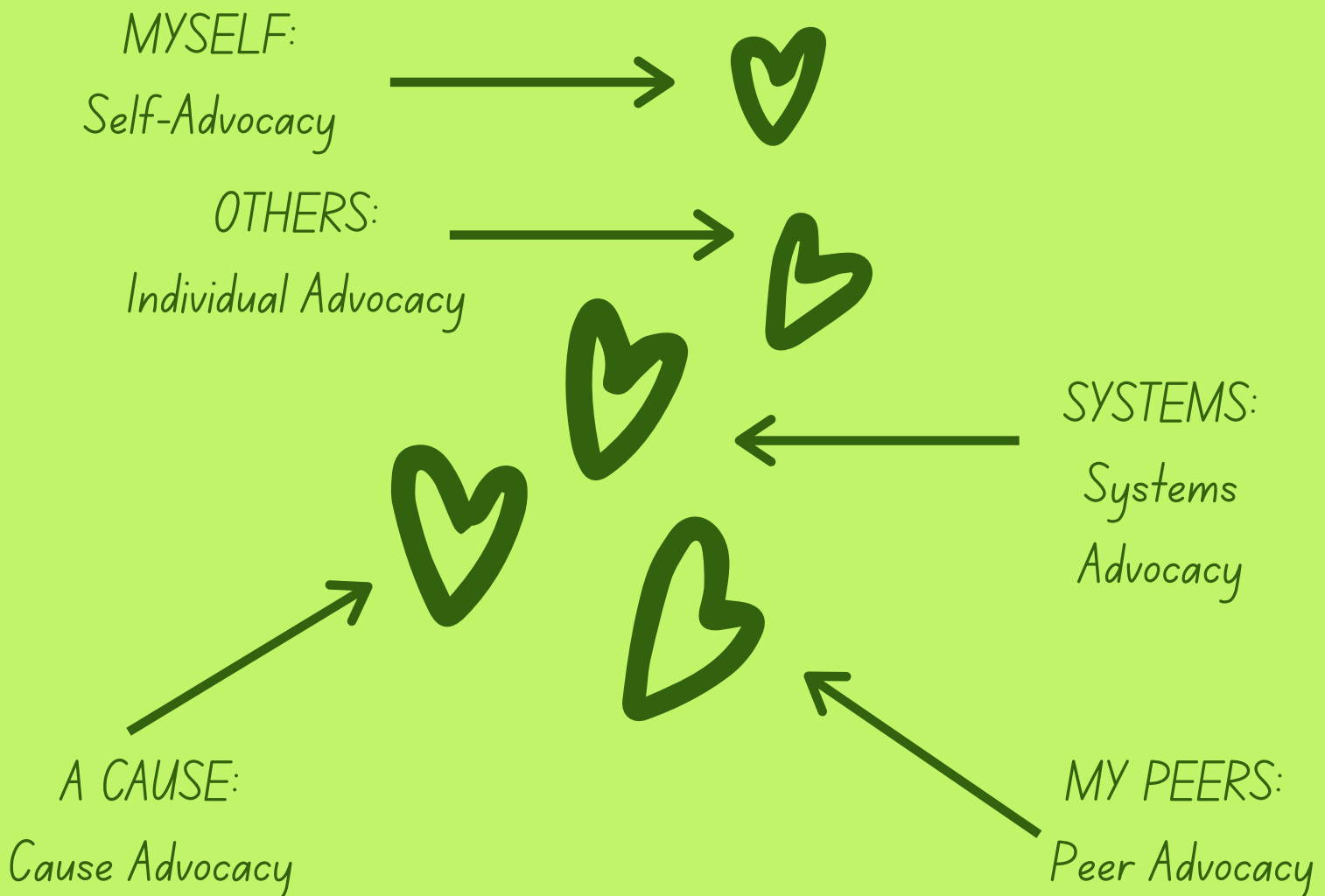


*Think about the different reasons to  
advocate, good habits to form in civic  
engagement, and how you want to  
participate in advocacy through forming  
your own plan.*

# REASONS TO ADVOCATE

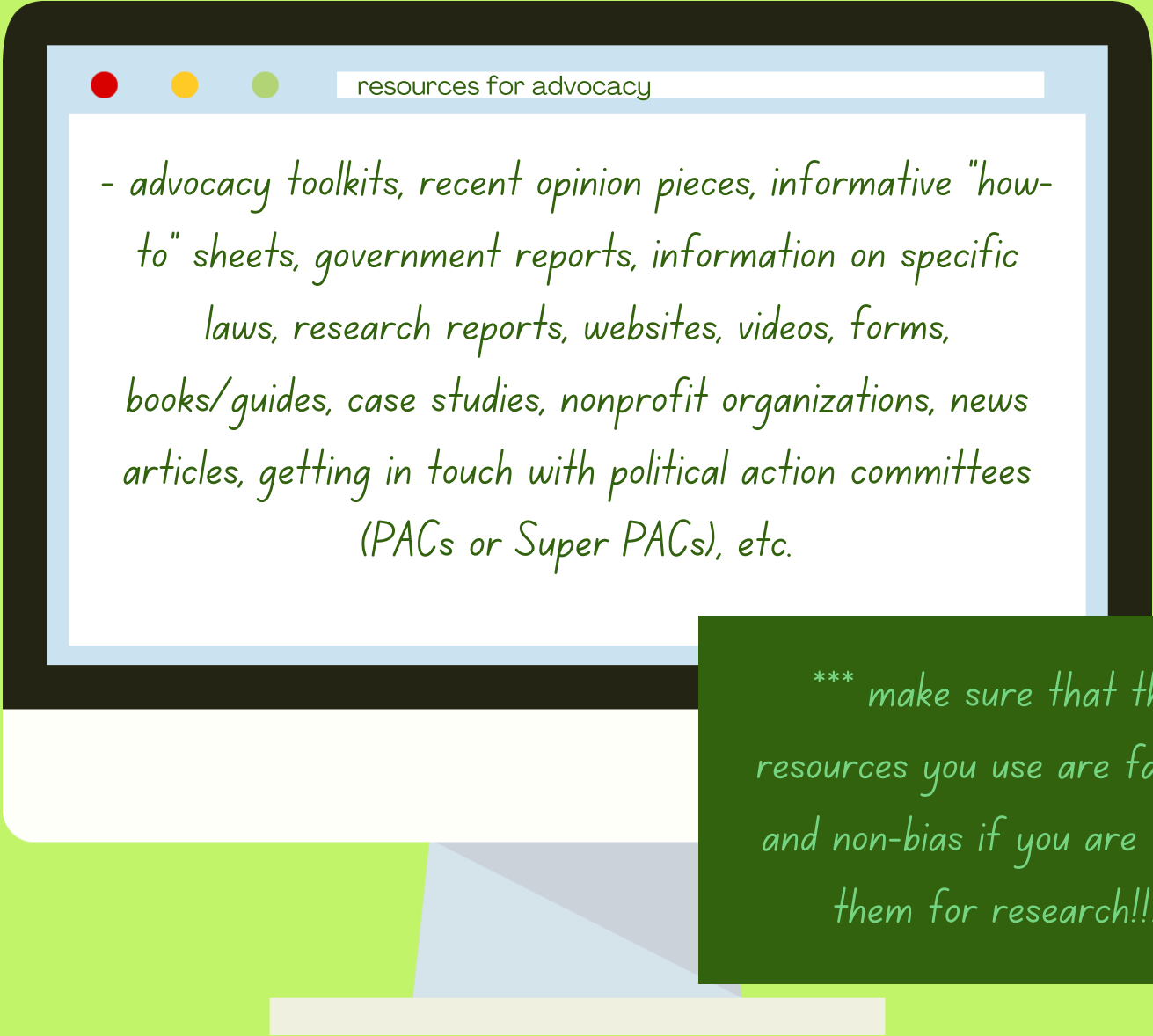
Through advocacy, you are supporting, defending, or arguing for a specific cause or issue. However, are you doing this for yourself, someone else, or for a systematic change?

## I advocate for....



# RESOURCES FOR ADVOCACY

Once you know what you're advocating, you're probably wondering, "what do I use to begin?". That's exactly why I created this guidebook :) In addition, there are several other resources that can help!



- advocacy toolkits, recent opinion pieces, informative "how-to" sheets, government reports, information on specific laws, research reports, websites, videos, forms, books/guides, case studies, nonprofit organizations, news articles, getting in touch with political action committees (PACs or Super PACs), etc.

\*\*\* make sure that the resources you use are factual and non-bias if you are using them for research!!!

# HOW TO ADVOCATE ~ YOUR WAY

Based on your dedication, skills, and interests, the way you advocate can differ. Any sort of action helps, but here are the major backbones of creating a strong advocacy effort that you can take part in.

→ **Support:** *tell your story, talk to your friends/family, talk to the media, start a petition, or share content on social media*

→ **Fundraising:** *online, events, grants, partnerships, or donations*

→ **Political Action:** *you can get in touch with political leaders through the internet, meeting in person, through a call, or through writing an email/letter*

In addition, you can educate others about American history and governmental functions, volunteer for organizations that promote community well-being, or getting involved in nonprofits.

# GOOD PRACTICES MAKE PERFECT

We all know the saying, "practice makes perfect", and it's true. However, in order to make perfect, you also need to engage in good practices (like saying thank you!!!), and that is especially the case with advocacy.

*PREPARATION: Goal setting, identifying possible solutions, research, identifying key issues, creating a team, determining target audience.*

*COMMUNICATION: Create a common form of communication, be clear and detailed, be assertive, ask questions, listen to others and their ideas, use different medias to communicate in versatile ways, contact elected officials, build networks, provide updates.*

*DOCUMENTATION: Recording team meetings, writing down ideas, recording discussions, making a file for important documents.*

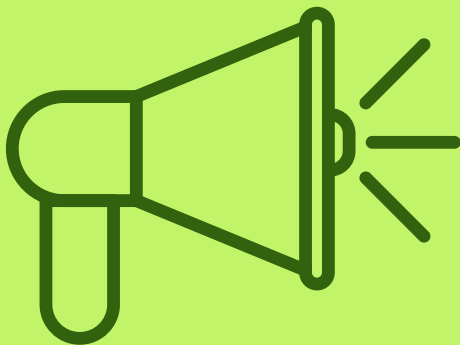
*LEARNING FROM MISTAKES: Follow up with team members if your goal is not met, figure out what actions can be taken for improvement, collaborate effectively.*

# GO GETTER ATTITUDE

The attitude you take on will impact the outcome of your initiative. It's important to keep an open mind, even when you run into a roadblock, and to learn from your mistakes.

**here are some ideas to get your project going:**

*write a letter to a newspaper editor, attend events for the cause, contact local legislators on the issue, learn about associated bills/laws, bring your friends/family with you to events, create connections with others who are working towards a similar goal, etc.*

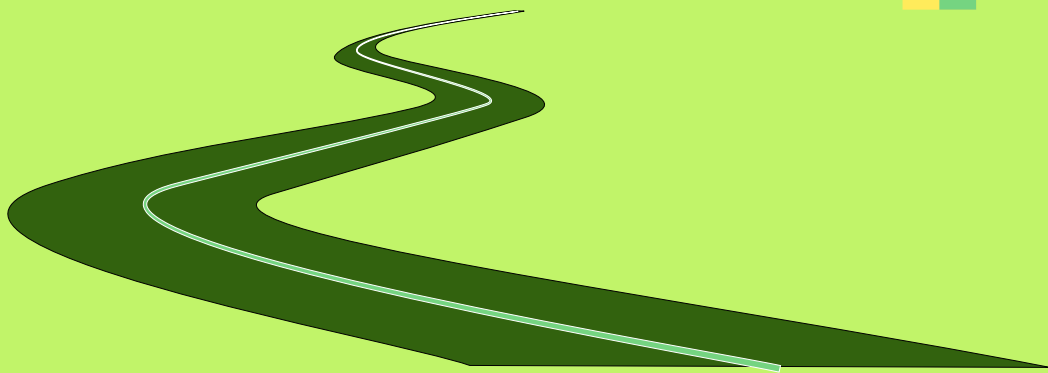


- Find and join local groups through social media or face to face
- Show up to events!
- Volunteer
- Make your voice and others' heard
- Help raise money

# TAKING TRUTHFUL ACTION

It's important like in anything to stay true to yourself and to keep your values. It's also important to keep in mind the values of others anytime and when you are becoming civically involved.

- *Remember to respect and trust how others want to take action*
- *Engage community members in a process that impacts them and their community*
- *Promote openness, participation, and clarity*
- *Create safe, positive, and encouraging environments for discussions*



# STEP UP TO SUCCESS

Ok, the thing this guidebook has been preparing you for since page one: The Steps to Get Started on Your Own Advocacy Journey.

## PREPARATION

1. **Identify** (what cause are you working for/against, what is your goal is, what are your objectives, who is your target audience, what message do you want to spread)
2. **Knowledge** (educate yourself on the issue, become connected with organizations that are working for the same cause, attend public events that are associated with that issue, know your rights!!)
3. **Develop** (build a team, create a common form of communication, continue forming you message, create a timeline)
4. **Fundraise** (raise money for your initiative in order for it to operate)

## IMPLEMENTATION

5. **Outreach** (communicate with your audience through different forms of communication, connect with others to continue to grow your team, bring friends/family along with you on this journey)
6. **Inform** (let your target audience know about your cause and your solution, educate your peers on the issue, invite others to be involved with you)
7. **Engage** (stay involved in your community, participate in the works of your actions, and don't just be a bystander!!!)

## REFLECTION

8. **Evaluate** (think about what went well, what didn't go well, what can be improved)
9. **Collaborate** (work together with your team to adjust your goal/plan, and on any further steps of taking action)



# TYPICAL TIPS

That was a lot of information. If you're feeling a little lost, here are some general tips to help you find your way and get started!

*find your passion, stay informed,  
develop your advocacy style, get  
involved, create bonds, use your voice,  
treat people and communities with  
respect and kindness*



- Research, ask questions, seek answers
- Build connections and find others that will support you in your efforts
- Develop an action plan/timeline
- Know your opposition, and maybe form a counterargument
- Set clear goals
- Utilize your resources
- Focus on your message

# TAKE ACTION CHECKLIST

Now since you have read everything over, here's a quick checklist you can come back to and use when you take action!

## Avid About Advocacy Take Action Checklist

- ☐ IDENTIFY: What's your goal?
- ☐ KNOWLEDGE: Do your research!
- ☐ DEVELOP: Get support from others, and find a way to communicate with them (+ build your plan)
- ☐ FUNDRAISE: Earn money to fund your project
- ☐ OUTREACH: Connect with your audience
- ☐ INFORM: Educate your audience
- ☐ ENGAGE: Stay involved and be a part of your project!
- ☐ EVALUATE: Reflect on the success of your project
- ☐ COLLABORATE: Work together to improve!



# Internet Advocacy



*Determine the impact of social media  
on society and advocacy, and how to  
best manage that impact in your daily  
life as well as utilize the impact in your  
advocacy efforts.*

# THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media has become essential in our everyday lives at this point. For our generation, we've grown up as social media as grown, and we now rely on it for information, entertainment, and communication.



*77% of the  
United States  
has a form of  
social media*

Social media has become an outlet for people to share their stories, and be able to connect with others worldwide. With the growth of social media, leaders have been able to spread their messages easily to a larger audience than they ever had before.

In addition, sharing information can be done within a click of a button, so we all have gained new exposures to content that we probably wouldn't have seen otherwise. That being said, social media can be negative since everyone leaves a digital footprint, but there are some positives like I've mentioned above, especially in the world of advocacy.

# UTILIZING THE DIGITAL AGE

With the prevalence of the internet and our devices, it's important to use them to the fullest. This can be through fundraising pages, social media, online petitions, email lists, advocacy softwares to track foot traffic, and virtual advocacy events.

## **here are some tips on how to do so:**

- *Balance your work in offline and online activities through integrating the two together*
  - *Consider the impact and your target audience*
- *Communicate and contact in a widespread manner, and do so clearly*
  - *Continuously grow your supporter list*
  - *Ask others to share your message!*
- *Observe new trends and try to implement them in your work for publicity*

**Please be safe and careful while online, and evaluate the reliability in your resources!**

# CATALYZING COMPONENTS

In order to kick off your participation in advocacy and civic engagement, you have to just get started. Here are some activities you can do to become involved in advocacy, and how you can help others get involved too!

## *Service-Learning Projects*

*you get to use your voice, do problem solving, reflect, flexible time commitment, and create meaningful goals*

## *Extracurricular Activities*

*you can join different groups/clubs based off of your interests and or skills, it is accessible to everyone, and you get to serve the greater good*

## *Role Play and Simulations*

*can be done in class, can be done with a group of people, teamwork and collaboration, gives an insight into the perspective you are playing*

## *Class Discussions and Debates*

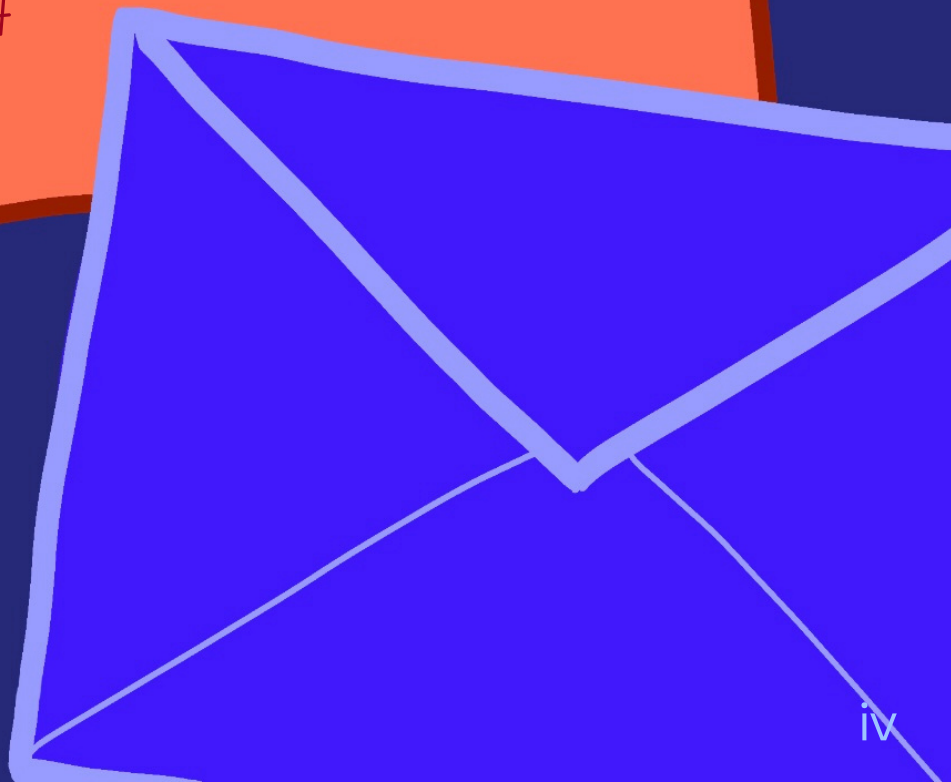
*you are able to connect to current events, share your thoughts/opinions, it is student-led, practices using respect, get to learn new perspectives, practice listening skills, can use your voice*

## *Connections between Home and School*

*you can discuss a variety of social issues, can be a role model of a good citizen, can build a stronger connection with your friends/family*

# thank you to...

- Amy, Elizabeth, Erin, Lauren, Layla, Kameela, Katie, Krutika, Nic, and Rainn for sharing your experiences with me, and letting me share your stories to inspire others
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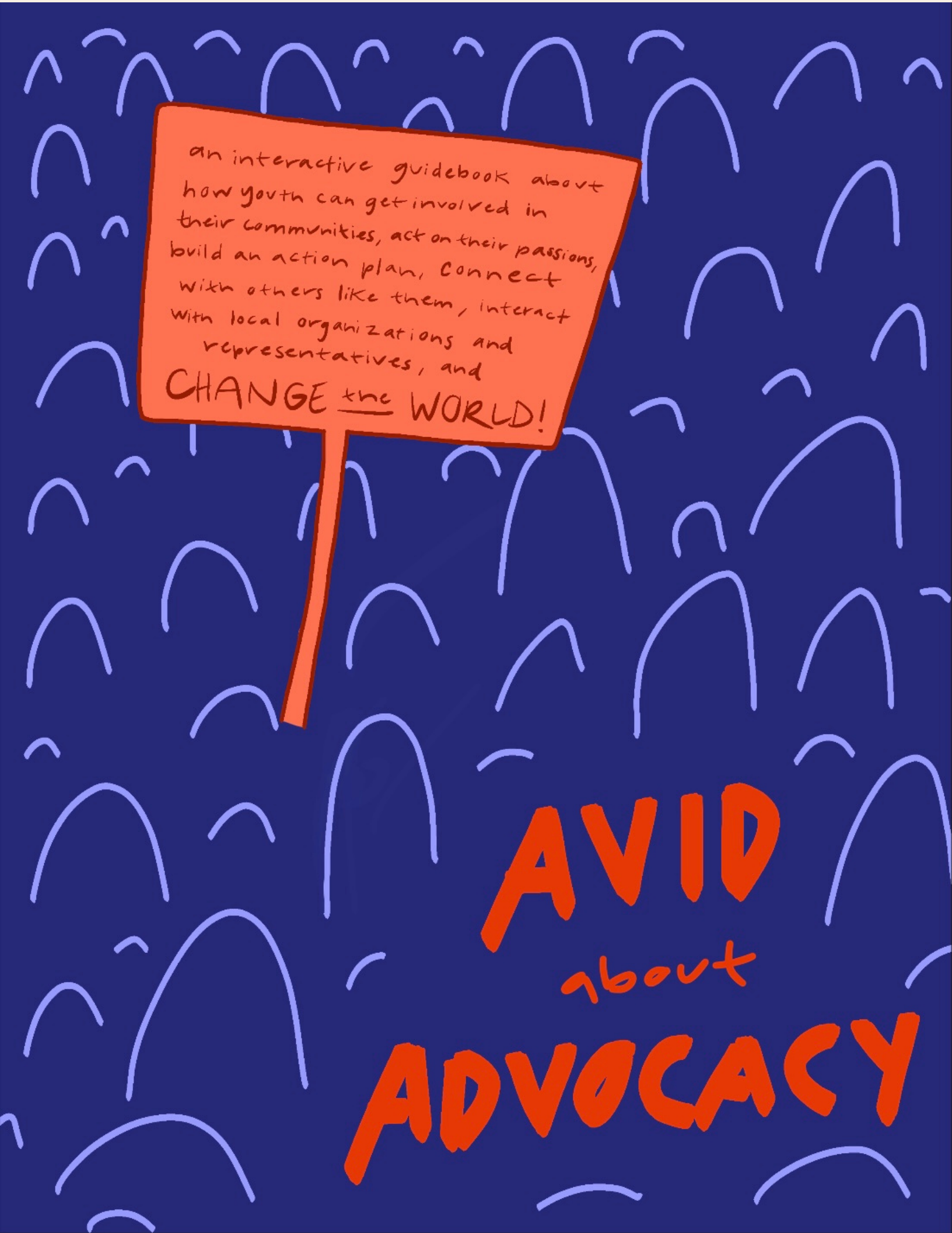




# thank you to...

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an interactive guidebook about  
how youth can get involved in  
their communities, act on their passions,  
build an action plan, connect  
with others like them, interact  
with local organizations and  
representatives, and

**CHANGE the WORLD!**

# **AVID** about **ADVOCACY**