

eAdvocacy: Basics, Best Practices and New Tools

Email Best Practices

These training materials have been prepared by Aspiration in partnership with Radical Designs and ScoutSeven

Funded by the ZeroDivide Foundation

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radicalDESIGNS


ZERO DIVIDE
Infinite Possibilities


ASPIRATION

**BETTER
TOOLS
FOR A
BETTER
WORLD**

Learning Goals

- ▶ Learn email composition fundamentals
- ▶ See examples of doing “The Ask”
- ▶ Understand the role of email templates
- ▶ Enumerate email template elements
- ▶ Explore composition for different goals

Email Composition

- ▶ Design for Clear Messaging
 - Know what you want your user to learn and do
- ▶ Keep Tone Casual and Personal
- ▶ Design for Skimming
 - Subject line is critical
 - Information should be easily accessible
- ▶ Know The Art of “The Ask”

Email Composition

- ▶ Key premise: you have minimal time to engage reader
 - Key message should be stated up front
- ▶ Think in terms of Subject line and 3 main points
 - State the problem
 - State your solution
 - State ways to get involved



Subject

Urgent Action: Free the Panchen Lama!

Problem



On April 25th, Gendhun Choekyi Nyima, Tibet's Panchen Lama will turn 17 years old and spend yet another birthday as a prisoner of the Chinese government. Over a decade ago he and his family were unjustly detained by Chinese authorities and have been held under house arrest ever since. No information about his whereabouts or well-being has been released.

Solution

This week, Tibetans and their supporters will protest at Chinese embassies and consulates around the world calling for Gendhun Choekyi Nyima's freedom. Please help secure the release of the 11th Panchen Lama by sending the message below now.

Action



Send a letter to the following decision maker(s):
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Li Zhaoxing

Below is the sample letter:

Subject: Free the Panchen Lama Now.

Take Action!

Instructions:

[Click here to take action](#) on this issue or choose the "Reply to Sender" option on your email program.

Tell-A-Friend:

Visit the web address below to tell your friends about this.

[Tell-a-Friend!](#)

What's At Stake:

On April 25, 2006, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, Tibet's 11th Panchen Lama will turn 17 years old and spend yet another birthday as a prisoner of the Chinese government. He has not been seen or heard from in over a decade, since he and his family were abducted by the Chinese government.

In 1995, at age 6, His Holiness the Dalai Lama recognized Gedhun Choekyi Nyima as the 11th reincarnation of the Panchen Lama, Tibet's second most important spiritual leader. Shortly thereafter, the young child and his

Action

Action

Background

Email Composition

- ▶ The subject line is the most important part
 - Experiment with different ones
- ▶ People do not read emails; they scan them
 - Make it easy for supporters to quickly find info
 - Be aware of where “the fold” is on the email
 - Focus on making message "skimmable"

Doing “The Ask”

- ▶ “The Ask” refers to what action you want your recipients to take
- ▶ Make it easy to see “The Ask”
 - Make The Ask specific
 - Repeat The Ask several times in different places
 - Use a sidebar and graphics to highlight The Ask
 - Give multiple options and methods for people to take action and participate

Dear David,

As the nation focuses on ways to improve our health care system during National Cover the Uninsured Week, a bill that could gut your health insurance is making its way through the U.S. Senate.

The bill, S. 1955, would allow health insurers to bypass state requirements for minimum benefits. That means it could eliminate key benefits in your coverage, including cancer screenings, contraception, emergency services, mental health care and diabetic supplies. Stop S. 1955 from gutting your health insurance. Tell your senators to oppose the bill.

[Click Here to Take Action](#)

Every state has written specific health protections into its laws, requiring insurance companies to cover certain necessary services. S. 1955, pushed by Wyoming Sen. Mike Enzi (R), would allow insurers to jack up prices for services they're now required to cover—or eliminate coverage for them altogether.

The Enzi bill would encourage discrimination, letting insurers raise premiums based on your age, your gender, your health status and more. It would price the elderly and the sick out of the insurance market, taking health care coverage away from those who need it most.

Don't let Congress cut your benefits and raise your premiums. Tell your senators to oppose S. 1955.

[Click Here to Take Action](#)

The Enzi bill hands to powerful corporate trade organizations, which want to sell

Don't Let Congress Cut Your Benefits

Take Action

S. 1955 would cut health coverage by eliminating state standards for benefits. Tell your senator to protect your health care by opposing S. 1955.

Take Action

The Ask in the text

The Ask repeated

Ask in Sidebar

GREENPEACE



Dear David,

25 October 2005

Don't **BLOW**
Ancient Forests
on Kleenex



I've been writing to you for weeks about Kimberly Clark, maker of Kleenex and destroyer of ancient forests. Kimberly Clark wipes out three million tons of virgin forests EVERY YEAR, and wastes them on disposable tissues. Well, there's just one week left before we make a stand against Kimberly Clark. Will you stand with me on November 3?

RSVP Now! Join us, and thousands of others across North America, for a day of action against Kimberly Clark.

On November 3, you have the power to make change. Tell your neighbors, your friends, your family and your local grocery store shoppers,

3 Ways to Help

1: **Donate Now**

Help Greenpeace Take a Stand. Become a Member Today.

2: **Take Action**

Visit our Action Center and take action today.

3: **Tell a Friend**

Forward this message to a friend. Help spread the word.

Make a Difference

Americans use 8.2 million tons of tissue paper products every year-- 55 pounds per person. If every household in the United States replaced just one 70-sheet paper towel roll made from

Multiple Ways to Take Action

Background

The Ask in the text

Dear Friends of Verified Voting:

As another New Year approaches, we reflect on what a busy year 2005 has been, and how much more remains to do in order to achieve transparent, reliable and publicly verifiable elections in our nation.

Through both of our organizations, VerifiedVoting.org (501-c-4) and The Verified Voting Foundation (501-c-3), we work to help those interested in election transparency -- whether officials, lawmakers or concerned citizens -- with research, information, commentary, materials and key connections as needed. None of this would have been possible without your ongoing support, for which we're very grateful. Below are some of the highlights we'd like to share with you.

VerifiedVoting.org

This year we've seen **19 more states pass voter-verified paper record requirements** (*the most recent, Wisconsin, is awaiting the Governor's signature!*)

Our legislative analyst helped with wording and key concepts for some of those bills, and we generated action alerts so that concerned citizens in those states could write to their lawmakers about the bills, coordinating with state and national groups to try to leverage the greatest support possible. Our thanks go out to all those citizens, groups and national organizations for pulling together, over and over.

We submitted written testimony on state efforts, such as an Alaska provision requiring audits (it passed!), and California's audit legislation (passed!), and have helped activist groups write county-level resolutions calling for manual audits.

This year we published "Draft Model Legislation" for voter-verified paper records and manual audit provisions, assisting anyone working on developing such a bill for their state. We also published "States with Audit Provisions" -- a resource used by citizens, lawmakers and even other research agencies.

We supported federal voter-verified paper record legislation in both the House and Senate. As part of a coalition of organizations, we helped plan, train for and participate in citizen meetings with lawmakers both in Washington DC (June) and in your own districts (August) with the HR 550 Lobby Days, and our Democracy Days (June). We also sent out action alerts resulting in thousands of letters to members of Congress on voter-verified paper record legislation, and hired a political adviser in Washington DC to help keep this issue visible with lawmakers and their key staff, and to help build much-needed affiliations with conservatives on this issue.

The Verified Voting Foundation

Some of our Foundation work is highly visible (public testimony), but much occurs behind-the-scenes, including providing links and connections to valued resources for those that need them, and more.

Verified Voting's founder Dr. David Dill testified about the urgent need for voter-verified paper records in several venues:

- the Carter-Baker Election Reform Commission (April),
- the Senate Rules Committee, at its first hearing on this matter (June), and
- the Election Assistance Commission in (July).

The Carter-Baker Commission heard the message: "Paperless electronic voting is hostile to election transparency..." In September they recommended voter-verified paper records for all voting systems.

We published charts showing the "Accessibility and Auditability" features offered by different voting systems (carefully researched by staff and interns), and the advantages of optical scan voting systems with ballot-marking devices, and greatly expanded the "Accessibility" section of our website.

This year we updated one of last year's important projects: the Election Incident Report System (EIRS). This infrastructure we helped develop and implement (with Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility, the National Coalition for Voting Integrity and our clients, the Election Protection Coalition) enabled the capture of 44,000 individual reports of problems encountered in the November 2004 election.

Some of that data is currently being used in legal actions to help prevent similar occurrences in future elections. The Foundation and several talented and dedicated volunteers updated the system and deployed it in 2005 elections in several states.

EIRS and the Verified Voting Foundation also provided information to, and were cited as a resource in, the recently-issued Government Accountability Office (GAO) critical report on Electronic Voting.

The Verified Voting Foundation sent written comments on the Draft Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VVSG) issued by the Technical Guidelines Development Committee (TGDC) of the EAC this year, and provided a mechanism that assisted thousands of you to do the same.

Having a team member in our nation's capital also allowed us to do more this year on developing relationships with disability advocates, and representing our organizations and issues at EAC, NIST, TGDC and other election reform forums. (She also helped launch a non-partisan election reform think tank for area university students.)

For both organizations, there's more: interviews, public speaking, participation in election reform conferences and panels, serving as expert witnesses, updating the website, answering inquiries, letting folks know about hearings, etc.... If you would like to know more about any of these activities, please contact us at any time.

Your support is invaluable in making all of this reform possible. Please keep us in mind as you think about your year-end [charitable donations](#). Such contributions give us much-needed flexibility to devote the necessary time and resources to the most important election reform issues. (Unrestricted funds are especially crucial as they let us respond quickly to issues as they arise.) Thank you in advance for your consideration.*

Happy Holidays to you and

Dr. David Dill, Founder



Action

Email Templates

- ▶ All sent messages should be based on a reusable email template
- ▶ Templates
 - Streamline and standardize communications
 - Convey organizational identity
 - Manifest best practices for email communication
 - Provide hooks for recipients to manage profile

Email Template Elements

▶ Message Header

- Include organizational logo and tag line in the header
 - Have it link to your website.
- Don't make the header too tall or it will push down "the fold"
 - Don't make it harder to view important content

Link to Campaigns

The Ella Baker Center
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

BOOKS NOT BARS • RECLAIM THE FUTURE • BAY AREA POLICEWATCH

PLEASE FORWARD ** PLEASE FORWARD WIDELY ** PLEASE FORWARD

Dear Friend,

Please Forward

Link to Archive

Note: the full text of this e-mail message is online at <http://www.sfpeople.org/dispatch>

SAN FRANCISCO PEOPLE'S ORGANIZATION

The SFPO Disp@tch INFO & ACTION ALERTS TWICE A MONTH

www.sfpeople.org

Web Address

List Type Contact #

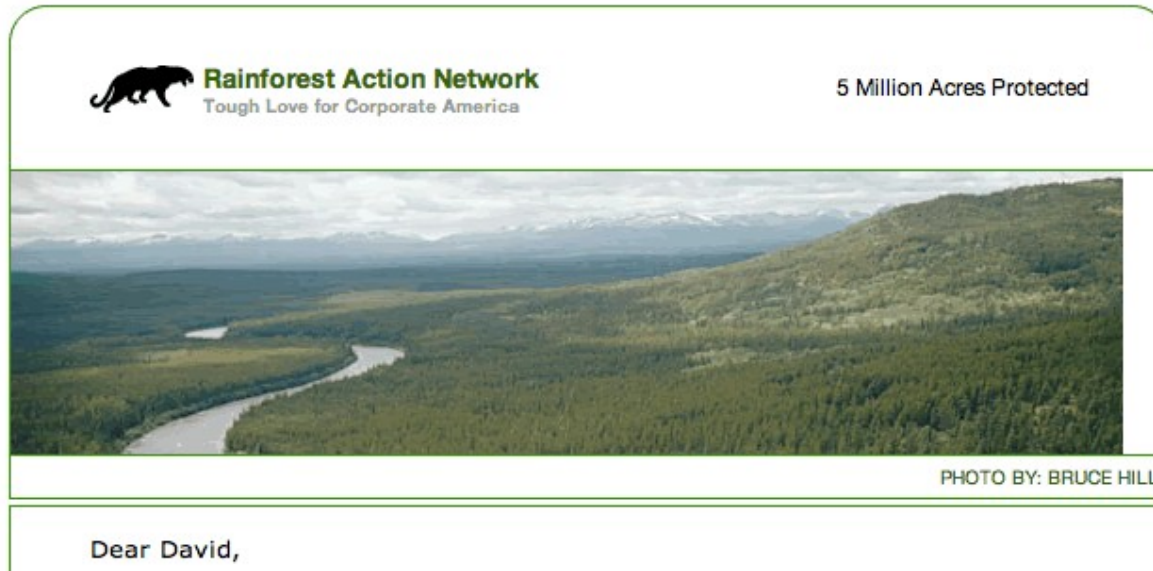
united for peace & justice

ACTION ALERT * UNITED FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE
www.unitedforpeace.org | 212-868-5545 | [Click to subscribe](#)

Subscribe Link

Example: Email Headers

Too Big
Pushes
Content
Below
Fold



Email Template Elements

► Columns and Sidebars

- Best used to pull out “the ask” and main message to a flashy and easy to read area
- Include an image and button for folks to click on that are related to the ask
- Sum up the goal of the ask or message of the email in one sentence below the image

ExxonMobil Announces Record Profit

The environment and consumers are paying for it

Dear TrueMajority member,

In his State of the Union speech Tuesday night, President Bush said that we are a "nation addicted to oil." He's right. Unfortunately, it appears the President is fueling that addiction, by threatening to veto a bill that would tax the record profits being reaped by oil companies – profits that come at the expense of consumers and the environment.

The day before the President's speech, the world's largest oil company, ExxonMobil, announced that it made **\$36.13 billion** in 2005. That is the largest profit ever recorded in the history of American capitalism.

Since President Bush is working to keep those profits from going to step up and hold ExxonMobil accountable for the environment and your wallet. Towards this campaign has created a short, funny video in

Click the link below to check it out, and then ask ExxonMobil to clean up their act:

<http://www.truemajority.org/ExxonToastsThePlanet.html>

We're sure the movie will make you chuckle. **Please share the laughs by forwarding it on to all your friends and family.**

The movie is humorous, but ExxonMobil's policies are not. Sadly, ExxonMobil's profits have come at a huge cost -- both to consumers like you and me and to our environment. ExxonMobil uses its billions to sabotage efforts to slow global warming and to lobby Congress in support of drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and off of America's majestic coasts. Instead, ExxonMobil should invest in energy efficiency and renewable energy, such as wind and solar power.

The good news is that we have a chance to change for the better the way ExxonMobil does business in 2006. ExxonMobil CEO Lee Raymond retired in December after a long and extremely costly run. This month, Rex Tillerson took over as ExxonMobil's new CEO.

You can help ExxonMobil change direction by asking Rex Tillerson to make the company a responsible corporate citizen that respects consumers and the environment.

[Watch the movie](#)



Image

Different
Color
Background

citizens
going to

Summary
And Ask

Dear MoveOn member,

Earlier this week 84% of us agreed we should challenge some right-wing incumbent Democrats in primary elections. Now, we're announcing our first MoveOn-member endorsement in a primary.

Ciro Rodriguez is running for Congress in the primary. He opposed the war in Iraq and has championed veterans' benefits. In the words of Marta from San Antonio, "Ciro would stand up to the Bush administration in Washington."

Summary

veteran
democrat

But Rodriguez is up against an incumbent—Henry Cuellar—who consistently voted against Democrats on important issues and literally campaigned for Bush in 2000. With a sprint to the March 7th finish we can put him down. Can you contribute whatever you can afford?

Ask

<https://political.moveon.org/give/springraces.htm?ff981vCSWogP4PdIbeEsw&t=4>

A Sprint to March 7th

In less than three weeks a progressive Democrat, **Ciro Rodriguez**, will try to unseat a right-wing Democrat in the pocket of the Bush administration. **With a sprint to the finish, help is urgently needed. Can you contribute whatever you can afford?**

Click Here

[Help A Progressive Win](#)

The really good news about this primary is that there is no Republican in the race. If Rodriguez wins in three weeks it will be a big progressive win.

Electing Rodriguez is one part of our two-part candidate strategy—taking back the House and supporting the more progressive Democrat in primaries.

We also have another candidate you can support today—Francine Busby (D) who is the MoveOn-member endorsed candidate in California's 50th district. She is running in a special election to replace Rep. Randy "Duke" Cunningham (R) who left Congress after pleading guilty to accepting bribes.

And like Rodriguez, the special election is coming right up—on April 11th. Every minute is urgent for these candidates. Together we can put them over the top. Can you contribute whatever you can afford?

Narrative
Image and
Story

<https://political.moveon.org/give/springraces.htm?ff981vCSWogP4PdIbeEsw&t=5>

Thanks for all you do.

—Tom, Jennifer, Matt, Justin and the MoveOn.org Political Action Team
Thursday, February 16th, 2006

Beat Bush's Democrat



Ciro Rodriguez' opponent, Rep. Henry Cuellar, is a symbol of the sort of Democrat we need to replace. He supports the war and the Bush Medicare drug debacle. He votes one out of three times with the Republicans. It isn't a surprise that Bush and Cuellar

Message Elements

- ▶ Include “Viral Marketing Information”
 - “Tell a friend” link
 - “Forward this email” link
 - Information on how to subscribe, if you were not the recipient
- ▶ The easiest way to grow your list and spread your message is to have you supporters forward your emails to their fiends.

Email Template Elements

► Message Footer

- Place all information about how to subscribe, unsubscribe, or manage your profile in the footer
- Other information related to the sending and receiving of the email are best placed here
- Place organizational contact information or links that do not show up in the header or sidebar
- Include the email address of the recipient
- Make sure you're in compliance with CAN-SPAM

Example: Footers

Books Not Bars and the Ella Baker Center can't survive without the support of our donors. Please take a moment to support us today: [click here](#) to donate.

Donate Link

Not on our list-serve yet? (Maybe this message was forwarded to you.) Sign up to get e-mail updates directly by going to <http://www.booksnotbars.org/subscribe>.

To UNSUBSCRIBE from this list, go to <http://www.booksnotbars.org/unsubscribe>

Update your preferences or contact information here: <http://www.booksnotbars.org/profile>

(Note: The first time you go to update your preferences, you must first create a login and password.)

Subscription

Example: Footers

Address &
Phone



GREENPEACE
702 H Street, NW
Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20001
(800) 326-0959

You received this mailing because you are subscribed to our mailing list. If you need to update your information or prefer not to receive these mailings in the future [click here](#) to update your account.

We value your privacy. If you have any questions about how we use your information please read our [privacy policy](#).

Privacy
Policy



Thank You for your Support!

Message Composition

- ▶ Use different templates and message styles for different purposes:
 - Fundraising
 - Newsletter
 - Live Event
 - Action Alert

Message Composition

► Fundraising

- Make your ask often and early
- Develop goals and give updates as you work to achieve those goals
- Communicate how \$\$ will translate into results
- Create and emphasize a sense of community
 - “If everyone gives \$5 we can...”
- Personalize tone: must be from “someone”



Personal Appeal

Dear David,

Last night, I spoke with DFA activists across the country about our "2006 Plan for Victory," and the one reoccurring theme I heard over and over again is: it's time to move America back in the right direction. It's time for Democrats to lead.

The Republican Party's culture of corruption has begun to crumble – and you helped make it happen by never letting up. Remember the billboards that you created and paid for in Tom DeLay's district? Or calling attention to the Downing Street Memos and having meetings with your Member of Congress? The national Social Security stories and the bilingual radio ads that you paid for?

Clear Ask

Let's keep the pressure on high this year. Contribute to DFA today:

<http://www.democracyforamerica.com/contribute>

In just the first two weeks of 2006, Republican super lobbyist Jack Abramoff pleaded guilty to corruption charges and is on his way to jail for at least ten years. Tom DeLay has permanently abandoned his leadership post in the U.S. House of Representatives. And GOP leaders from President Bush to Speaker Hastert are panicking over what to do with the dirty money they accepted.

Last year we rocked the Republican boat by exposing their true values – corruption, cronyism and corporate interests. This year we'll show them the power of the grassroots by electing Democratic governors, mayors and state legislators throughout the country – and regain the majority. But we need your support.

<http://www.democracyforamerica.com/contribute>

Over the course of the past few years, the values of our government and integrity of our democracy have diminished. It's time for us as American citizens to hold Republicans accountable for their lies, deception, failed policies and continued corruption. The only way to do this is by working for change from the ground up and electing candidates who share our values.

We have the opportunity to take our country back in 2006, but we need your support. You can make the difference by getting involved with your local DFA-Link group, by volunteering for local DFA candidates, and by becoming a monthly donor to Democracy for America.

Ask Repeated

Please donate to DFA today and help us take our country back in 2006.

<http://www.democracyforamerica.com/contribute>

Sincerely,

Jim Dean
Chair

Dear David,

Over the last twenty years RAN has achieved remarkable success in convincing corporations that environmentally and socially destructive practices are not welcome in the global marketplace.

During a time when many environmental groups have been put on the defensive, RAN is charging ahead. Year after year, RAN brings the fight for the environment to the doorstep of the world's most powerful corporations.

Through targeted, cutting edge market activism, we help keep our last remaining old growth forests and endangered ecosystems out of the hands of careless and corrupt corporations.

But we can't do this work without your help.

Please make a tax deductible donation today.

To make your contribution go even further, a generous donor is matching dollar-for-dollar all gifts up to \$50,000 that you make online before December 31, 2005.

As we look back over the last twenty years, we have much to be proud of. This is definitely a time for us to celebrate our victories. But more importantly, it's a time for us all to recommit to building a larger, stronger grassroots movement determined to create a sustainable and just society.

Many of the world's most endangered ecosystems still remain at the mercy of mining, oil, gas and logging activities—and the financial giants who fund them.

That's why we're ramping up our campaigns to bring

Our Recent Victories



Goldman Sachs
Victory!



JPMorgan Chase
Victory!

Our Campaigns

Old Growth

Global Finance

Zero Emissions

Button for
Ask

Sets A
Goal and
Timeline

Message Composition

► Newsletter

- Include a table of contents
- Keep it well-formatted, well-sectioned
- Employ short introductions
 - Links to full articles
- Maintain regular delivery schedule

Link to
Archive



The SFPO Disp@tch

INFO & ACTION ALERTS TWICE A MONTH

Sets
Delivery
Expectations

www.sfpeople.org

OUR PICKS FOR THIS EDITION (5/5/2006)

TOP PICK:

1) SATURDAY 5/6: Campaign Kickoff for Prop A: 'Stop Homicide Now!'

Join the grassroots campaign for a real, hopeful and winnable way to address the root causes of violence.

2) Who Wouldn't Want This? Clean Energy for the City by the Bay

May 15: Fun rally at Civic Center! Remind Mayor Newsom that SF wants clean energy now!

3) Help Give SF's Working Families a Chance at Home Ownership

May 10: Critically important decision about affordable housing at City Hall

4) SFPO Is Hiring! Seeking a Kick-ass Part-time Organizer

Get on the ground floor of SF's budding, hopeful coalition. Help organize our members and coordinate our annual convention!

5) THANK YOU for Supporting SFPO Last Month!

Big thanks for successful Art Auction and 'Ruin, Rubble, & Race' panel!

Index of
Content

Full
Content

1) SATURDAY: Campaign Kickoff for Prop A: 'Stop Homicide Now!'

Saturday 5/6 (tomorrow!) marks the beginning of a month-long push for something real, hopeful, and winnable. The Proposition A campaign—"Stop

Got Something for the Dispatch?

For future editions, we welcome tips and submissions from SFPO member organizations. And we encourage new organizations to join SFPO and contribute to this effort. We won't run every submission in the Dispatch, but we will make every effort to share news and actions reflecting San Francisco's diverse progressive communities.

E-mail your submissions to editor@sfpeople.org

Submission
Info

What Is the Dispatch?

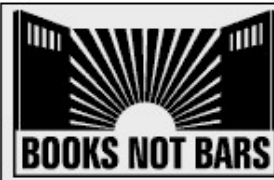
The SFPO Dispatch is an e-mail bulletin put together by the San Francisco Peoples' Organization. Twice a month, the SFPO Dispatch provide news and announcements, covering important issues and events throughout the city. The

Newsletter
Description

Message Composition

► Live Event

- Make sure that you include all the info that people need:
 - Date, time, location, directions, map link
 - Purpose and cost
 - Phone number to call for more info
 - RSVP info, link to registration page
 - Appropriate fundraising “hook”
- No reason to announce an event if people do not have the info to attend it



Fighting for a California that lifts young people up instead of locking them down.

PLEASE FORWARD ** PLEASE FORWARD WIDELY ** PLEASE FORWARD

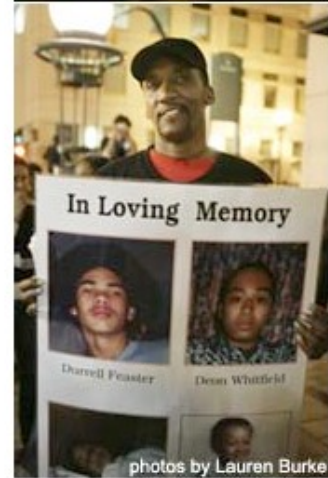
Jan 19: Please Join Us, Memorial for Durrell and Deon

"My son's and Deon's deaths showed the world that California's youth prisons are a national disgrace. We can build a new way of taking care of our youth in trouble. My son shall not have died in vain."

--Allen Feaster, father of Durrell Feaster

On January 19, 2003, the abuse and isolation of CYA drove Durrell Feaster and Deon Whitfield to take their lives. The system that was supposed to give them a second chance left them no hope. Two years later, the CYA has failed to close the dangerous youth prisons that cost these young men their lives.

Next Thursday, we will gather in the East Bay to honor Durrell, Deon, and all of the families who have lost youth to the CYA youth prisons. Please join us for an evening that promises to be moving and inspirational.



Purpose →

Time &
Location →

Contact
& RSVP →

What: NOT IN VAIN: The Two-Year Memorial in Honor of Durrell and Deon

When: Thursday January 19, 2005
6:30-7:30 pm

Where: Downs Memorial United Methodist Church
Fellowship Hall
6026 Idaho St
Emeryville, CA 94608

Online Map: <http://tinyurl.com/csu76>

RSVP: david@ellabakercenter.org
or 510-428-3939, ext. 243

Summary

- ▶ Good email composition has essential traits
- ▶ The art of “The Ask” is central
- ▶ Email templates streamline and standardize
- ▶ Template must contain specific elements
- ▶ Consider composition for different goals

End Of Section

- ▶ Questions?
- ▶ Comments?

Thank You!

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