

SPEAKER BIOS

Kabir Ahmed, YouthPower!, DRUM - Desis Rising Up & Moving

Kabir is a 17 year old immigrant student who was born in Dhaka, Bangladesh and raised in Queens New York. He is a member of YouthPower!, an immigrant youth organizing program of DRUM - Desis Rising Up & Moving. DRUM is a membership–led organization of South Asian low-wage immigrant workers and youth, many of whom are fighting deportation. DRUM organizes for immigrant, worker, and education policy change. DRUM runs a South Asian Workers’ Center, the Immigrant Justice Program, the Global Justice Program, and YouthPower! Kabir joined DRUM YouthPower! last year as a student at Hillcrest High School. YouthPower! organizes working class, Desi immigrant youth for immigrant rights, access and protection for undocumented students (Immigrant Safe Zones), and legalization.

As an alumni of Hillcrest High School in Queens, Kabir has experienced abuse by School Safety Agents and seen his school turned into a prison. Students at Hillcrest are regularly handcuffed and beaten in "Strip Search Rooms.” Kabir helped lead a demonstration in December 2008 with the NYCLU, receiving immense media coverage. He continues to organize students to hold the school system accountable. As a YouthPower! member of DRUM, Kabir organizes and builds leadership of immigrant youth to know their rights and take action through the Student Safety Act campaign and NY Student Union. Since his membership, Kabir has recruited many members, raised awareness on student's rights issues and organized actions by youth. He currently attends City-Tech College in NY majoring in Radiology.

Judith A. Browne, Co-Director, Advancement Project

Judith Browne has an extensive background in civil rights litigation and advocacy in the areas of education, voting rights, housing, immigrants’ rights, and employment. Browne is a recipient of the distinguished Skadden Fellowship and joined Advancement Project at its inception in 1999, after serving as the Managing Attorney in the Washington, D.C. office of the NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund, Inc. At Advancement Project, Browne has directed the Opportunity to Learn Project, and now directs the Strategic Initiatives Project. She is widely respected for her legal work on voting rights and fair housing issues, and in the public advocacy arena, Browne’s work on discipline policies and the criminalization of youth in public schools has received national recognition.

From its inception, Advancement Project has worked with grassroots organizations to eliminate zero tolerance, as well as advocating for equitable schools. Under Browne’s leadership, Advancement Project has been successfully dismantling the Schoolhouse to Jailhouse Track, reducing the unnecessary criminalization of students by their schools. Browne and Advancement Project staff have authored several reports including the groundbreaking study in 2003, *Derailed: The Schoolhouse to Jailhouse Track* and *Education on Lockdown: The Schoolhouse to Jailhouse* that documents how public schools are becoming feeders to the juvenile justice system. Browne also co-authored the highly acclaimed report, *Opportunities Suspended: The Devastating Consequences of Zero Tolerance and School Discipline*, which examines harsh disciplinary measures, racial disparities in school discipline, the long-term consequences of suspensions and expulsions including loss of educational opportunities, and alternatives to strict discipline. Browne’s work has been published in journals, newspapers and in *Essence* magazine. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of the National Center of Fair and Open Testing (FairTest), which challenges the misuse of standardized tests and is a Convener of the Forum for Education and Democracy. Browne is a graduate of Columbia University School of Law and served as a Tobias Simon Eminent Scholar at Florida State University Law School and is currently an Adjunct Professor of Law at Georgetown Law Center. She has appeared on national and local news and was named one of the “Thirty Women to Watch” by *Essence Magazine*.

Maisie Chin, Co-Founder and Director, Community Asset Development Re-defining Education (CADRE)

Maisie Chin is Co-Founder and Director of CADRE – Community Asset Development Re-defining Education, an independent, grassroots parent membership organization in South Los Angeles. Launched in 2001, CADRE’s mission is to solidify and advance parent leadership to ensure that all children are rightfully educated regardless of where they live. Through human rights-based community organizing and policy advocacy, CADRE parent leaders are fighting to end the pushout of low-income families of color from public schools and the school-to-prison pipeline.

Recently in February 2007, CADRE’s parent-led Right to Education Campaign achieved a major victory when its human rights documentation, people’s hearing, advocacy, and media work significantly helped ensure the Los Angeles Unified School District’s passage of a new district-wide school discipline policy based on Positive Behavior Support. Maisie is a native Californian and child of Asian immigrants. She has been part of the educational and social justice movement for 15 years, dedicated to fighting institutional racism by protecting and transforming public education in low-income neighborhoods of color. She also has 18 years of experience in facilitation, training, and organizational development. Maisie holds both a Bachelors of Arts in History and a Masters of Arts in Urban Planning – Community Development from the University of California, Los Angeles.

Matthew Cregor, Staff Attorney, Southern Poverty Law Center

As a staff attorney with the Southern Poverty Law Center, Matthew Cregor works on federal, state, and local policy efforts to improve school climate (e.g., school discipline code reform, expansion of state- and district-level structures for Positive Behavior Supports, and federal law/policy initiatives related to school discipline). Matt also co-facilitates the Dignity in Schools Campaign’s Alternatives to Zero-Tolerance Working Group – a working group of teachers, parents, and advocates pushing to expand practices that improve school climate and reduce suspension, expulsion, and school referrals to law enforcement. Matt taught 5th grade in the Bronx, NY, and is a 2006 graduate of the Georgetown University Law Center.

Saneta deVuono-Powell, Racial Justice Project Fellow, American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California

Saneta deVuono-Powell is currently the Racial Justice Project Fellow in the Policy Department at the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California. Her work at the ACLU-NC has focused on education equity and criminal justice. Saneta has worked to guarantee voting rights for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people in California through litigation, public education, policy advocacy and community outreach. She is also engaged in addressing discriminatory discipline and policing faced by young people of color as they are pushed out of schools and into the criminal justice system. As part of her work on school bias and pushout she has worked with students, parents and community members as well as conducted workshops with public school teachers.

Saneta graduated from Sarah Lawrence College, was a visiting scholar at the W.E.B. DuBois institute at Harvard University and earned her J.D. from Boalt Hall School of Law, University of California Berkeley. Prior to law school, Saneta worked as a filmmaker and editor of documentaries on the Rockefeller drug laws and the incarceration of juveniles, in addition to creating internationally exhibited experimental video installations.

Bernadine Dohrn, Director, Children and Family Justice Center, Bluhm Legal Clinic, Northwestern University School of Law

Bernadine Dohrn, activist, academic and child advocate, is Director of the Children and Family Justice Center and Clinical Associate Professor of the Northwestern University School of Law Bluhm Legal Clinic. The Center is a holistic children's law center and a national policy center for the comprehensive needs of adolescents and their families, providing critical analysis and knowledge about youth law and practice, matters associated with the administration of justice, and the preparation of professionals who advocate for children. She is an author and co-editor of three books: "Race Course: Against White Supremacy (co-authored with William Ayers) (2009), "A Century of Juvenile Justice" and "Resisting Zero Tolerance: A Handbook for Parents, Teachers and Students". She is also the author of "I'll Try Anything Once: Using the Conceptual Framework of Children's Human Rights Norms in the U.S.", Univ. of Mich. Journal of Law Reform (2007); "Somethin's Happening Here: Children and Human Rights Jurisprudence in Two International Courts", UNLV L.Rev. Summer 2006; "All Ellas: Girls Locked Up in Feminist Studies" (Summer 2004); and "Look Out Kid/It's Something You Did! Zero Tolerance for Children in The Public Assault on America's Children: Poverty, Violence, and Juvenile Injustice" (2000).

Ms. Dohrn writes and lectures on international human rights law, torture, children in conflict with the law, racism and juvenile justice, and school law. Ms. Dohrn teaches children's rights and human rights law at Northwestern and is a visiting professor at the University of Chicago and Leiden University Faculty of Law in the Netherlands. Ms. Dohrn is a graduate of the University of Chicago College and Law School. She has three sons and two grandchildren.

Nancy Franklin, Coordinator for Behavior Support, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)

Nancy Franklin is a Coordinator for Behavior Support in Los Angeles Unified School District, working on the implementation of effective and efficient practices in the area of positive behavior support. As an educator with 36 years of experience, she has enjoyed a wonderful career in both New York and California, having taught children of all ages, pre-school through adult. Nancy does a great deal of professional development in school-wide positive behavior support, behavior support planning, functional behavioral assessment, classroom management. She works with school teams as well as groups of administrators, teachers, parents, and paraprofessionals.

Nancy's special interests include the development of welcoming school environments; ethical discipline, the reduction of out of school suspensions using suspension alternatives; matching student misconduct to what the student needs to learn; and support for school staff and parents in developing and owning evidence-based proactive and reactive practices that work! Her over-arching passion is doing the best for the children, staff and families of Los Angeles as well as her own family every day.

John Gardner, Illinois PBIS Network

John Gardner is a retired superintendent and works as an Educational Consultant for several programs in the state of Illinois. In 2003 he contracted with the emerging PBIS program and has participated in developing the current PBIS Network in Illinois. Mr. Gardner has served as a teacher, building administrator, Assistant Regional superintendent of Schools, Director of a thirteen county Educational Service Center, and as Superintendent in Illinois. Current areas of interest include teacher and administrator training around Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports; Ruby Payne's "A Framework for Understanding Poverty"; institutional culture; and state and national policy issues as they relate to public schools. Mr. Gardner and his wife Gayla reside in southern Illinois and enjoy their three children and their growing families.

Judge Brian Huff, Family Court of Jefferson County

Brian Huff is the Presiding Judge in the Family Court of Jefferson County, the juvenile court in Alabama. He was appointed by to this position in 2005 and elected to a full term in 2006. He is the past chair of the Family Law Section of the Alabama State Bar and the Birmingham Bar Associations. He is a member of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, the National Association of Drug Court Professionals, and the Alabama Association of Juvenile Judges. He presides over several specialized dockets including the Truancy, Juvenile Drug Court, Gun Court and Return to Aftercare Program (RAP) dockets. Judge Huff also oversees Reclaiming Our Youth – a multi-faceted, collaborative juvenile justice reform effort unique to Jefferson County. R.O.Y. aims to improve the juvenile justice system from pre-intake through disposition by working with school officials, law enforcement, service providers, families, and communities to promote positive youth development, restorative justice and family involvement..

Catherine Yonsoo Kim, American Civil Liberties Union Racial Justice Program

Catherine Yonsoo Kim is a staff attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union, National Legal Department where she works with the Racial Justice Program. She has been involved in litigation and advocacy surrounding Native American education rights, school desegregation, juvenile justice, racial and religious profiling, government watchlists, and indigent defense reform. More recently, she has focused her work on challenges to the school to prison pipeline, the practice of criminalizing students, predominantly students of color, for trivial schoolyard misconduct. Catherine began working on racial justice issues for the ACLU in 2003 as the Marvin M. Karpatkin Fellow. Prior to that, she clerked for the Honorable Carlos F. Lucero on the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver. Catherine obtained her law degree from Columbia Law School, where she served as an editor on the Columbia Law Review, and her undergraduate degree from Cornell University.

Steve Korr, Trainer and Consultant, International Institute for Restorative Practices

Steve Korr has been working with young people and their families since 1985. He has experience in the fields of mental health, drug and alcohol treatment, outpatient counseling and alternative education. Steve worked for over a decade in several of the IIRP's demonstration schools as both a counselor and a school administrator, employing restorative practices with students, families and staff. Steve has facilitated many restorative conferences, both formal and informal, to address the needs of all who have been impacted by an incident of wrongdoing. He draws upon these experiences as a trainer and consultant to instruct others in restorative practices. Steve has also spent many years providing individual and family counseling. Steve worked as an administrator for a nationwide organization coordinating mental health, addiction and family services. He has also consulted with numerous leaders within faith-based organizations to facilitate restorative interventions for families dealing with the strain of an addicted family member.

Marco Nuñez, Director of Organizing, Padres & Jovenes Unidos

Marco Nuñez was born in Mexico and immigrated to the United States where he grew up in Colorado. In addition to the two years he has been with Padres & Jovenes Unidos, Marco has eight years of experience as a labor organizer, first with UFCW International Union and then with SEIU Local 105. In 2000, he got his Bachelors in International Affairs from the University of Colorado in Boulder. As Director of Organizing, he has provided the strategy and leadership to help the organization grow. Marco brings not only his diverse experience in community organizing, but also passion and commitment to the work of Padres & Jovenes Unidos, and the overall struggle to achieve justice for all.

Joyce Parker, Citizens for a Better Greenville / YAPS

Joyce became involved in grassroots organizing throughout the community as a tribute to her parents' legacy. She looks back on how she was raised, "there was no doubt in my mind what I had to do as I sat around the traditional "Sunday Dinner" table listening to my brother talk about what he and some other parents were concerned about in regards to decisions being made in our school district that they believed would have a negative impact on not only their children but on all of the children as well as on the community as a whole. In spite of the fact that I do not have any biological children, I still possess that motherly concern and commitment to making sure that our children are given whatever they need to be successful and productive citizens. My parents exemplified the highest form of citizenship as they moved through life making a difference wherever and whenever they could. My involvement in community organizing is just a natural fit for me. My mother, who is 91 years old and was raised by her grandmother who was a slave herself until the age of twelve, sets the standards by which I engage this work. Nothing is impossible and quitting is not an option."

Affiliations: Citizens for a Better Greenville / YAPS, Prevention of Schoolhouse to Jailhouse Coalition, Mississippi Delta Catalyst Roundtable, Fannie Lou Hammer Sister Roundtable, Mississippi PBIS Alliance, Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities, Washington County JDAI, SxSW, Delta Consortium for Positive Change, and Greenville Public School District Partner.

Citizens for a Better Greenville is a grassroots community-based organization dedicated to developing a community organizing process that enables the community to hold public officials accountable to the needs and interests of often disenfranchised grassroots communities. We came together in 1999-2000 and incorporated in 2000-2001. We work toward strengthening the existing standards of living for all citizens to ensure they receive a quality education, maintain a healthy environment, achieve community revitalization and enjoy socio-economic development by channeling the impact of community organizing to empower positive change.

Rodney Skager, Professor Emeritus, Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, UCLA

Rodney Skager is Professor, Emeritus in the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at UCLA. He is part time Senior Research Associate at WestEd, a consultant to the Drug Policy Alliance, and founder/co-director of the California Student Survey sponsored by the Office of the California Attorney General. His focus is on youth drug policy, especially drug education, student assistance, and alternatives to deterrent punishment. He is the author of *Beyond Zero Tolerance: A Reality-Based Approach to Drug Education and Student Assistance* and recent professional articles and book chapters on youth policy in relation to substance use. He has presented at conferences and workshops in Australia, Canada, Italy, New Zealand and Puerto Rico in addition to the USA.

Liz Sullivan, Human Right to Education Program Director, National Economic and Social Rights Initiative (NESRI)

Ms. Sullivan works with parents and advocates to promote policy change in public education to guarantee students' right to dignity and a quality education. She has conducted research projects to document human rights violations in U.S. public schools, and has provided trainings to parents, youth and organizers about how to incorporate human rights standards and strategies into their advocacy. She has worked as a consultant with Human Rights Education Associates and as Project Coordinator at the Center for Economic and Social Rights, where she authored the report "Civil Society and School Accountability: A Human Rights Approach to Parent and Community Participation in NYC Schools". She holds a BA from Brown University and a Masters degree in Public Policy from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Holly A. Thomas, NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund, Inc.

Holly A. Thomas joined the NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund, Inc., as a Liman Fellow in September 2005. She has worked with both LDF's Criminal Justice Project, with a focus on juvenile life without parole sentencing, capital punishment, and indigent defense, and LDF's Education Practice Group, with a focus on the school-to-prison pipeline, school desegregation, and voluntary integration. In 2008 LDF published "No Chance to Make it Right," a report authored by Ms. Thomas exploring juvenile life without parole sentencing in Mississippi, and particularly racial disparities in such sentencing. Ms. Thomas' current work focuses on issues surrounding school disciplinary policies and the school-to-prison pipeline as well as capital habeas appeals. Ms. Thomas received her law degree from Yale Law School in 2004, where she served as Co-Chair of the Collective of Women of Color in the Law and Co-Director of Yale Law School's Capital Assistance Project. From 2004-2005 she served as a law clerk to the Hon. Kim McLane Wardlaw of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in Los Angeles.

Julie Washington, UTLA Elementary Vice President

Julie Washington was born and raised in Los Angeles and has attended several LAUSD schools. Becoming a teacher was something she wanted since the 2nd grade. Growing up in the 1960s during the Watt's Riots instilled within her a commitment to social justice and the fight for equality for those who do not have a voice in this society. These commitments led her to teach at an inner city elementary school for over ten years. She received her BA in Child Development from Cal State University Northridge. Her teaching career began at a children's center in Santa Monica Unified, where she taught for seven years. Her life since then has been devoted to serving the children of Los Angeles. Her activism with the union began when she realized the Teacher's Union should speak to the inequalities of our schools. She began at UTLA as a Chapter Chair, then became a Board of Directors Member and is now serving her second term as Elementary Vice President. United Teachers Los Angeles is the second largest teachers union in the United States. At UTLA, she heads several committees, including Elementary, Professional Development and the Charter Taskforce. She is the Lead Negotiator and the Leadership Conference Chair, which serves over 800 members annually. She is an active member of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the National Education Association (NEA). Her passions for social justice lead her to become the National NEA Caucus Chair of Education not Incarceration, which is focused on preventing student pushout through creating a nurturing environment. The focus is on implementing humane and effective discipline in schools and providing space for children to achieve academic success. She has presented at various conferences throughout the United States and was chosen by NEA to represent the U.S. at several international conferences. The fight for equity, access and voice continues to inspire her to dedicate her life to this cause.

Jack Wuest, Executive Director, Alternative Schools Network

Jack Wuest is the founding director of the Alternative Schools Network (ASN), the largest not-for-profit coalition of alternative schools in the country with 49 members and an annual budget of more than \$10 million. For the past 36 years, Wuest and the ASN have collaborated with city and statewide agencies to develop a wide range of innovative projects that involve primarily inner-city children, youth and adults in the areas of education, employment, support services, community relations, arts, sports and recreation. In the past decade, Wuest has worked with the City of Chicago to develop the Workforce Investment Act Youth Program for high school dropouts. Most recently, he served on the Illinois Statewide Task Force on Re-Enrolling Students who Dropped out of School and continues as a member of the Council on Re-Enrolling Students. Additionally, Wuest has conducted and commissioned extensive research in areas including youth employment and education, juvenile justice, adult education, community colleges, social services, defense spending, and tax policies. Wuest continues to work on issues and concerns that relate to inner-city education, on a statewide and national level.