

Young People Bringing the Noise to the Political Season

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The Hall of Fame baseball player, Jackie Robinson, once said, “A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives.” In passing the baton to our young people, as adults, it is important that we engage with our youth and encourage them to be active participants in their respective communities. How do we, as a community, do that?

One way is to help them become involved in the political process. Civic engagement is not a luxury in this country, it is an absolute necessity if our young people are to take the reigns and lead the greatest nation in the world.

In a recent political “Get Out To Vote” (GOTV) rally, where New Jersey Senator, Cory Booker, made an appearance to support some local candidates, there were a number of young people at the event. After Senator Booker delivered some words to the audience and some specific comments geared toward the “tweens,” in the group, these young people later felt the need to ask questions and even take selfies with the Senator. Certainly, the impact this experience had on their lives will resonate one day.

Clearly, we’re seeing that in this highly anticipated presidential season – young adults and millennials are taking a stand and questioning the status quo on issues that matter to them – from education and social justice to a living wage and immigration.

This level of advocacy, young people taking to twitter and other social media, is evident in the voices of “Black Lives Matter” and its empowering declaration: “Not a Moment, but a Movement,” has caught hold across this nation. The same can be said about the “Dreamers.” This group of young Latino leaders, who have been pressing the issue on immigration reform with a pathway to American citizenship for young undocumented Latino people. They, too, are making a difference by bringing a public eye to the issues they find most important to their community.

I must admire the strong-wills of our young people. It seems they have forced the presidential candidates of both the Democratic and Republican parties to make race and social justice, along with judicial reform, a part of their agendas. They’re “bringing the noise” with a collective energy that is making a difference. And, more importantly, these young people are our next crop of leaders.

We’re all afforded the opportunity to make this nation and world a better place and the measurement of our success depends on how we impact the lives of young people today. Encourage them to get involved in their local races. To read what candidates stand for, and question their agendas. They have the tools – social media is a very powerful tool – encourage them to use it wisely and effectively.