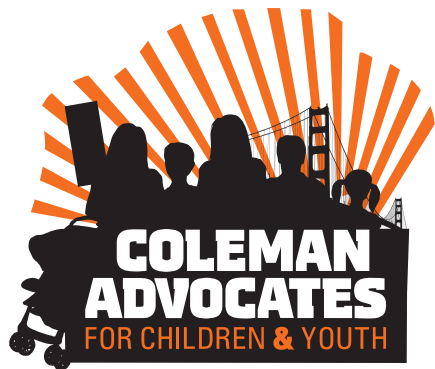




JUST NEWS FOR FAMILIES

SPRING 2012

JUSTICIA NOTICIAS PARA LAS FAMILIAS



Keeping Families in San Francisco

Coleman's Campaign for College, Jobs and a Secure Future for All!

Coleman's youth and parent members are organizing to increase educational and employment opportunities so that all San Francisco families can stay and thrive, in the city they call home.

Every year, more families are pushed out of San Francisco because of the high cost of living, the lack of quality jobs and safety net services, and a public education system that is not adequately preparing students for college or career. Coleman youth and parent members – in their schools, neighborhoods, and in the city's halls of power – are working to make San Francisco a place where all families can achieve economic security.

In 2012, Coleman members are calling on the school district to ensure that students have the resources and support they need to be on track to graduate college and career ready. And we are calling on the Mayor and Board of Supervisors to

invest in proven workforce development, worker protection, and job creation strategies for low-income youth and families.

Did you know?

FACT: Income inequality is greater in SF than it is nationally, and it is increasing.

FACT: SF has the smallest percentage of children of any major U.S. city.

FACT: A recent ED Trust-West report ranked SFUSD last, among 147 CA school districts, for performance of African American and Latino Students.

FACT: Even two parents working full-time at our city's minimum wage do not earn enough to cover the high cost of housing, childcare, transportation and other essential expenses in SF.

Para esta información en español, llama al 415-239-0161 o mandar un correo electrónico a karen@colemanadvocates.org y recibirás el boletín en español.

Coleman's 2012 Education Equity Campaign Priorities:

- ✓ Ensure all students in SFUSD are prepared for and have access to the A-G Course Sequence.
- ✓ Expand high quality tutoring and academic support options for highest need students.
- ✓ Expand emotional and mental health student supports.
- ✓ Invest in both in-school and extended day credit recovery options.
- ✓ Sustain current funding for Restorative Practices, and commit to full implementation of the Restorative Justice policy.
- ✓ Sustain current funding for the Ethnic Studies program.

Coleman's Spring/Summer Jobs Campaign Priorities:

- ✓ Increase funding for culturally competent job-readiness programs for working class communities of color.
- ✓ Expand job opportunities for youth and transitional aged youth facing the most barriers to employment.
- ✓ Expand worker rights education and advocacy, and increase accountability for employers.
- ✓ Protect funding for the childcare subsidies that working parents need.
- ✓ Uphold local hiring in the construction trades and the America's Cup Event.

Add your voice! Let the city and school district know that ALL youth and families have a right to a secure economic future in SF. Sign our campaign supporter card at www.colemanadvocates.org

Student Leaders Fight to Close the Achievement Gap at City College

A New Student Voice for Equity at CCSF

Coleman's community college student organizing program, Students Making a change (SMAC), on a shoestring budget, and in less than two years since its formation, has established itself as a powerful voice for low-income students of color at City College of San Francisco. SMAC's advocacy has been central to multiple education equity policy reforms on campus, including English and Math accelerated course implementation, priority registration of SFUSD graduates, improvements to financial aid counseling and application processes, dramatically expanded resources for civic-engagement work-study positions, establishment of a Filipino Retention Program, and the development of a landmark Resource Center for AB540 (undocumented) immigrant students. SMAC also provides ongoing leadership

development opportunities, skills-building trainings, and academic support services for members and other CCSF students.

For the past several months, SMAC student leaders have been leading a dynamic campaign to reform CCSF's antiquated and ineffective placement testing policies, so that students have more options for placing into Math and English. Multiple studies have confirmed that placement tests do not accurately determine students' preparedness for required curriculum, and using test scores as a sole measure of placement disproportionately prevents students of color from reaching their academic goals.

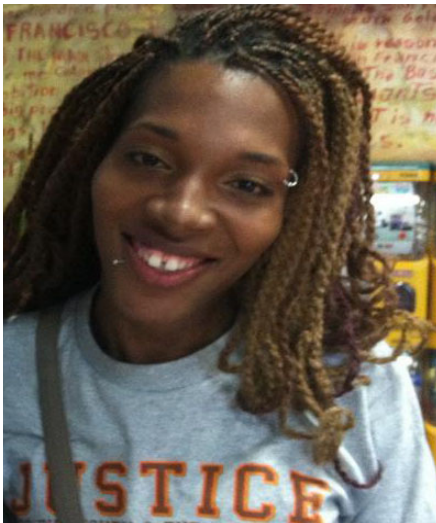
To demonstrate broad campus support for reforms, SMAC initiated a petition drive and collected hundreds of student



and faculty signatures. Additionally, SMAC leaders met with campus officials, testified before various CCSF committees, organized a campus educational forum, consulted with national experts, and shared their research findings – along with their personal experiences related to placement testing – at CCSF Board of Trustees meetings.

On Thursday April 26th, after 5 hours of discussion, the Board of Trustees voted to adopt SMAC's recommendations, making the test advisory only and allowing for student choice in placement. We consider this vote an important education equity milestone and a crucial step towards closing the student achievement gap at CCSF!

SMAC Leader Elitininanesi Mafua'ofa



As a low-income, multi-racial transgendered young woman, Elitininanesi – her friends call her “Toody” – consistently received messages of low expectation from teachers, counselors, and others in her schools and community. But Toody was determined to make something of herself. She enrolled in the Community College of San Francisco in 2006. From

day one, it felt like an uphill battle. She didn't know anyone or where anything was on campus and all her attempts to get support didn't seem to get her anywhere. Like most students at CCSF, Toody had to work to support herself and pay for student fees and books, while enrolled in a full course load. At times, it has felt overwhelming and Toody wasn't sure she was going to be able to make it through.

Two things have helped Toody sustain her commitment to get a college degree despite all the challenges: 1) her desire to be a positive role model to her younger siblings and to all low-income young women of color and transgendered people, and 2) the student-leaders in SMAC who provide her with a network of acceptance and support.

“Even though we come from different cultures, backgrounds and neighborhoods, the students who started this project connected on a very deep level. We all know what it feels like to struggle on a daily basis and we share a vision and goal of making it easier for other low-income students of color.

Every time I feel like I just want to give up and drop out, I think about my friends in SMAC and I know I would miss them like crazy. Without them, I wouldn't have anyone to push me to keep going, to keep me fighting and doing what I know I am meant to do, which is to be a leader for positive change.”

While SMAC is housed on the City College campus, Toody visits the Coleman community center often. At Coleman, Toody is constantly asking questions and shadowing staff members in her effort to acquire the information and skills she needs to take back to SMAC for its campaigns and activities.

Toody is excited and driven by the prospect of becoming a four-year university student in the near future, but she says she will always remain committed to the cause of community college students.

“Community College is where the struggle is. It's where the heart is. Students in community colleges have experienced just about every challenge life has to offer and so we understand what needs to change and how. And we have the connections to the community to be leaders not just on campus, but in our neighborhoods. And not just for a few years, but for life.”

Ending the School to Prison Pipeline

Coleman's Founding Vision Remains Strong

The SFUSD achievement gap is perpetuated and intensified by a range of aggressive, unregulated and biased disciplinary practices that disproportionately impact low-income African American and Latino children, depriving them of their fundamental right to education, and in many cases pushing students permanently out of school and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems.

Disciplinary practices in the country's public schools have been making headlines lately, with widespread local and national media coverage on a recently released Department of Education report. Last month, Coleman's Restorative Justice Youth Organizer travelled to Washington D.C. to serve as a representative for the Alliance for Education Justice, in conversations with the Department of Justice and the Department of Education about the report and its implications for local, state and federal reforms. And Coleman youth leaders, later this spring, are planning to visit Sacramento to educate elected officials about pending legislation related to school disciplinary practices.

Well before it became a hot-button national issue, ending the criminalization of young people of color and closing the school to prison pipeline was a core part of Coleman's organizing and advocacy agenda. In fact, Coleman was founded in 1974 by juvenile justice system reform advocates appalled by the abuse and neglect of young children in the city's juvenile halls. And in the schools, Coleman youth and parent leaders won – or helped to win – key policies at the School Board including the 1999 “Safe Schools Resolution” that regulates police conduct on school grounds, the 2005 “Equitable and Fair Discipline” policy, and the 2009 SFUSD “Restorative Justice” policy. Coleman student leaders also played local leadership roles in the statewide “No on Prop 21” youth mobilization and co-founded FairCare, the city's first coalition dedicated specifically to promoting fair school discipline policies and practices.

In 2011, with support from the Just and Fair Schools Fund, Coleman was given the opportunity to hire our first designated staff person focusing on juvenile justice issues in the schools. Alize Asberry is a native San Franciscan, born and raised in the Mission and Excelsior districts. She has more than 12 years of experience as a community worker, teacher, and youth advocate in San Francisco, starting as a teenager organizing around juvenile justice issues. Just as significantly, Alize had personal experience as a high school student who was unfairly labeled as a “trouble maker” and subsequently pushed out into an SFUSD continuation school. This perspective gives Alize deep empathy and insight about the problems of – and solutions to – unfair school disciplinary and pushout policies and practices.

One of the components of our new Restorative Justice initiative at Coleman is a semester-long, classroom-based program for students at Downtown Continuation High School. As a school where SFUSD students are pushed out to from “traditional” schools, it has the highest concentration of students directly impacted by school disciplinary practices. Coleman developed the program curriculum to meet SFUSD academic core standards, while at the same time bring intensive leadership development to program participants.

Over 12 weeks, through a series of workshops, activities, guest speakers, field trips, research, and participation in Coleman youth-led organizing and advocacy efforts, students have the opportunity to examine the conditions that shape their individual experiences in SFUSD, as well as the systemic issues that impact their entire communities. Students are encouraged to see themselves as “college-bound”, no matter what negative messages they have received from their schools or society in the past.

When we first began the program at Downtown and posed the question to students, “Who plans to go to college?”, half of the students responded saying they didn't expect to go to college, and some said



they didn't expect to even *survive* in to their twenties. Two months into the program, and we put the question out to the youth again. This time, every single student in the room declared, “I want to go to college”.

As a culmination of the program, students will produce a short film on their experiences being pushed out of traditional high schools, and their ideas for how SFUSD can better address the needs of its students. Award-winning local filmmaker Kevin Epps will be supporting the Downtown students to create the film, which the school district has agreed to use as a training tool for teachers, counselors and administrators.

Did you know?

FACT: Multiple studies confirm that students of color receive harsher consequences than their white peers for committing the same offenses.

FACT: Recently released data reveals that in SFUSD, Black suspension rates are more than six times the rate for whites.

FACT: CA data shows that “Willful defiance” is the reason for *more than 40%* of suspensions, yet it can include failure to turn in homework or to pay attention in class.

FACT: DOE data reveals that Black or Latino students make up more than 70 percent of students arrested or referred to law enforcement by schools.

Read more about this problem and find out how you can support state legislative reforms at www.fixschooldiscipline.org

Our Jobs, Our Future!

Coleman Members Call for a “Jobs Plan for the People”

In 2011, after years of successful advocacy to expand city funding for youth jobs, job training, and childcare worker wages, Coleman members decided to take our workforce development agenda to the next level, and we began developing a new, multi-year quality jobs campaign.

Despite the relatively low unemployment rate as a whole in San Francisco, the vast majority of Latino and African American working parents & young adults remain on the margins of the city's economy. Low-skilled jobs are either disappearing at an alarming rate, or workers are subjected to demeaning conditions and wages. Many of Coleman's high school and community college members are unable to find jobs at all, and without this crucial early employment experience, they have little hope of being competitive for living wage jobs in the future. Many of our parent members are working multiple minimum wage jobs, facing abusive working conditions, and are still unable to make ends meet. Workforce development programs are few and far between and those that do exist are often geographically and culturally inaccessible to those most in need.

It has become regular practice to hire transplants from other cities around the country, while turning a blind eye to the underutilized talents and skills of San Francisco residents. The city has opened its arms to some of the biggest and most

powerful companies of the world, but at what cost? Payroll tax breaks and zero employer accountability are not serving the interests of the working people of this city.

During his fall campaign, Mayor Ed Lee released a 17-point jobs roadmap plan that outlined his vision to create employment opportunities in San Francisco. Unfortunately, there is nothing explicit in the plan addressing the economic and employment needs of low-income communities of color who have been effectively shut out of most areas of the job market in San Francisco.

More recently, the Mayor launched a jobs initiative with the goal of 5,000 new public and private sector summer jobs for youth. Responding to community advocacy, the mayor's initiative includes an *explicit focus on low-income and disconnected young people*. This is a significant and encouraging development, and Coleman looks forward to working with our allies to ensure that the initiative truly engages the young people most in need, and at the same time builds the capacity of existing youth jobs programs with

demonstrated track records of success.

Coleman staff, members, and allies - including our organizational partners in Communities United for Health and Justice (CUHJ) - spent nearly a full year engaged in intensive community conversations and research about workforce development strategies for low-income communities of color, and we consulted with a broad range of experts across the country. Our Spring/Summer 2012 campaign agenda reflects what we learned about obstacles to employment for San Francisco's low-income young people and parents, and the solutions to address them.

Together with our allies in CUHJ and the Progressive Workers Alliance, and our broad base of supporters, Coleman members are ensuring not only that jobs development is a top priority for our elected officials, but that any “jobs plan” the city adopts, directly and effectively addresses the unique employment needs and barriers in our communities and, ultimately, puts low income youth and parents of color in San Francisco back to work, in quality living wage jobs.



More than 300 Coleman members, supporters, and allies came out to City Hall for Coleman's "Our Jobs, Our Futures" rally and action. Supervisors Avalos, Chiu, Cohen, Kim, and Olague attended the rally to express their support. After the rally, we delivered hundreds of "job applications", along with our workforce development budget and policy priorities, to the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors.

Coleman Advocates would like to recognize and thank our Board of Directors for their leadership, commitment and support.

2011-12 Officers: Maria Luz Torre, President • Rosario Cervantes, Vice President • Rick Judd, Treasurer • Sara Howard, Secretary • Greg Tanaka, Exec Committee member. **Members:** Stephen Bingham • Roel Blanco • Prudence Carter • Curtis Chan • Ianthia Mack • Giuliana Milanese • Ana Pérez • Jaymee Faith Cadiz Sagisi • Cynthia Yannacone .

The Long Haul to Equity

Coleman's Multi-year Education Justice Campaign

The fight for quality education, as a fundamental human right and a strategy of upward mobility for low-income people and people of color, remains central to Coleman's work to keep families in San Francisco. In 2009, we won the passage of a landmark policy mandating the implementation of the UC "A – G" requirements in all SFUSD high schools, as part of a larger effort to ensure equal access to a college-and-career path for every student. For the last three years, Coleman has been vigilant in our A-G implementation, monitoring and advocacy efforts, in the face of consistent obstacles, to hold the district accountable to the goals it set and promises it made.

In 2012, through a combination of organizing, advocacy and collaborative implementation and assessment processes with the district and target school sites, we are continuing our efforts to ensure that SFUSD is following through on its commitment to closing the achievement

gap in SF schools, and students are getting the resources and support they need to succeed with the new, higher expectations.

For example, as a follow-up to our successful 2011 campaign to restore summer school for struggling 9th graders, we are closely monitoring this year's summer school budgeting, implementation and enrollment processes – and we are advocating for increased resources for in-school and extended day credit recovery options – to ensure that all students who fail an A-G class are able to make up the credits they need to get back on track to graduate.

Coleman staff and leaders regularly testify at Board of Education meetings, participate in public actions, make presentations to SFUSD staff, and meet with SFUSD officials to discuss A-G implementation progress and advocate for our budget and policy priorities. In all of these venues, in addition to credit recovery options, we have been advocating for comprehensive A-G course access;



Coleman's Education Equity Campaign Organizer, Pecolia Manigo, at the annual School Site Council Summit, training SFUSD staff on effective parent engagement strategies in communities of color.

expansion of tutoring, academic support, and mental/emotional health services; full implementation of the Restorative Justice policy; and protection of current funding for the ethnic studies program.

As a result of Coleman's persistent advocacy, our partnerships with key SFUSD staff and Board of Education members, and our leadership on the SFUSD New Graduation Taskforce, several key A-G implementation benchmarks have been met and "College and Career for All" has been established as a top priority this year for the Board of Education, with the goal of 100% of students completing the A-G course sequence.

YMAC Leader Goyette Williams



Goyette is junior at Burton High School and a YMAC youth leader. She joined YMAC at the beginning of her sophomore year (she is now a junior) and quickly transformed from a shy young woman, preferring to stay in the background at

meetings and actions, to an outspoken, passionate, dedicated youth organizer committed to changing her school, district and community to better serve the long-neglected interests of low-income youth and families of color. Goyette was born and has been raised, by a single mother, in the Bayview neighborhood of San Francisco. She knows first hand the challenge of being a student struggling to succeed in an under-resourced school and being part of family struggling to make ends meet in a city pushing record numbers of African American families out every year.

When the SFUSD, in response to a budget deficit, decided to cut all summer school classes in 2010, Goyette was directly impacted. She desperately needed summer school to make up credits to be on track to graduate, and many of her peers were in the same situation. Goyette was one of the most assertive youth voices pushing Coleman to launch a short-term campaign to restore summer school. She

testified at a hearing and was quoted in the local newspaper about her personal academic challenges. Ultimately, we won a commitment from the Mayor to dedicate \$250,000 to partially restore summer school.

Since then, Goyette has been one of YMAC's strongest youth leaders, recruiting new student members, facilitating meetings and workshops, designing and carrying out survey drives, testifying multiple times at Board of Education meetings, and speaking at citywide rallies. Most recently, she co-led our first major jobs campaign action, a rally and creative action at City Hall that brought out more than 300 people.

Goyette is particularly committed to building unity among YMAC members, and among students at her school, across the racial, ethnic, gender, sexuality and other divisions that keep low-income students from recognizing their common struggle and common interest.

PMAC Leaders Model Community-Ownership of Public Schools

Some Highlights from 2011-12

Technology and Tutoring at Cleveland

Last year, Cleveland Elementary School PMAC (Parents Making a Change) leaders launched and won a campaign that resulted in the creation of a computer lab, including 28 brand new Apple iBooks! This is a huge development, given that many Cleveland students do not have computers at home and it is essential that they have regular access to computers to ensure their academic success and prepare them for computer use in middle school. To develop their technology proposal, parent leaders visited other schools in SFUSD and researched other districts. To win their campaign, they made their case before members of the Board of Education, the Assistant Superintendent, the Director of the Technology Department for SFUSD, and the Cleveland School Site Council. To manage and expand the new technology programming at Cleveland, PMAC leaders developed, and are helping to lead, a

Technology Committee that includes the Principal, teachers and parents. To expand the program and hire staff support, parents have been carrying out a range of grassroots fundraising efforts, including a successful silent auction.

Earlier this year, Cleveland parent leaders launched an additional resource development campaign at the school – this one to increase onsite tutoring supports. In March, as a direct result of PMAC member advocacy, the School Site Council voted to award an initial “seed” investment for a new school fund to hire additional part-time tutors and learning support specialists.

Bilingual Education at Hillcrest

Hillcrest Elementary School PMAC leaders, concerned about the poor outcomes of the Spanish-language bilingual education program, launched a campaign to improve it. They began by researching best practices at other schools, and in other districts. Then



they met with SFUSD officials to learn about the district's bilingual education improvement plan and determine how it would address their concerns, and align with what they had learned from their research. As a direct result of these and other PMAC parent education and advocacy efforts, specific program reforms – including curriculum changes and an increase to the amount of class-time spent in English – have been officially added to Hillcrest's “strategic plan” (the set of commitments each school is required to submit to the district annually). Hillcrest parents are thrilled about this accomplishment and consider it strong evidence that the school's teachers and Principal are fully committed to improving outcomes for students in the bilingual program.

PMAC Leader Evelyn Cornejo



Originally from El Salvador, Evelyn moved to the Excelsior district of San Francisco in 2001 and has called the neighborhood home ever since. She first started coming to PMAC citywide meetings when her oldest child was enrolled in the Head Start Program housed in Coleman's community center. It was evident that Evelyn was a natural organizer from day one, but it wasn't until two years later, when her daughter was enrolled as a Kindergartner at Cleveland

Elementary School, that Evelyn stepped fully into her leadership potential.

Coleman wasn't yet working onsite at Cleveland when Evelyn first began advocating for reforms at the school. She had always been actively involved and forward thinking when it came to her daughter's education, and when she learned that Cleveland was one of the only schools in the district without a student computer lab, she immediately took action. Evelyn made her case to teachers, the Principal and others but, again and again, she was told there just wasn't any money in the budget for technology.

At the beginning of the 2010/11 school year, Coleman began working with Cleveland as one of our “target schools”, carrying out daily campus outreach and leadership development activities. Evelyn had already been working with Coleman for years, and so she was immediately a huge asset to the development of the PMAC group at the school.

Right way, Evelyn began educating other parents about how important

computer literacy is for student success. Soon, Cleveland parent leaders made the collective decision to launch an official PMAC campaign to win a student computer lab for the school. The successful campaign served as powerful proof for parents of the power in their numbers.

One of the reasons Evelyn is such an effective organizer is that she is able to immediately inspire trust and confidence in other parents. When Evelyn speaks, she speaks passionately, and it is evident to everyone in the room that she not only wants the very best for her own children, but for *all* children. Evelyn is also a talented event coordinator and has played leadership roles in countless PMAC campaign and school fundraising activities.

Evelyn is grateful for the support, and the sense of community and power, she gets from being a PMAC member. “*It is an amazing feeling*”, she says, “*to know that whatever dream I have for my children – and whatever change I want to make – I will never have to fight alone again*”.

THANK YOU!

From all of us at Coleman Advocates, thank you for your generous contributions! Supporters like you help us transform our shared dreams in to concrete improvements in the lives of San Francisco youth and families. We couldn't do what we do without you!



The 2012 Coleman staff, from left to right, and from back row to front: Chelsea Boilard (Director of Programs), Chris Ballard (Bayview Parent Organizer), Christina Canaveral (Economic Justice Campaign Organizer), Karn Saetang (YMAC Youth Organizer), Samantha Liapes (Development and Communications Director), Kevine Boggess (YMAC Program Lead), Alize Asberry (Restorative Justice Youth Organizer), Neva Walker (Executive Director), Pecolia Manigo (Education Justice Campaign Organizer), Gisela Venegas (PMAC Parent Organizer), Kathy Almendares (PMAC Parent Organizer), Karen Ramirez (Office Manager), Daisha Spires (Organizing Intern)

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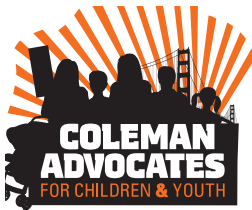
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WHO WE ARE

Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth is a member-led, multi-racial community organization working to create a city of hope, opportunity and justice for all children and families in San Francisco.

Youth Making a Change (YMAC), Parents Making a Change (PMAC), and Students Making a Change (SMAC) organize high school students, community college students, and parents to build our power to make change in our schools, our lives and our communities. Together, with our allies, we are organizing for quality education, good jobs, family resources and youth opportunities so that all youth and families can thrive in San Francisco.

Check out our staff, board, history, campaign, and other info at www.colemanadvocates.org or call 415.239.0161.



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