The newsletter of the Center for Commercial-Free Public Education



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WINTER 2002

THE COMMERCIAL-FREE PUBLIC EDUCATION

CCFPE Pressure Pays Off...

Coke Forced To Announce Changes In Schools

Claim They No Longer Will Emphasize Exclusive Contracts

Reacting to growing public concern over commercialism in schools and health risks caused by soft drinks, Coke announced a dramatic shift in their marketing strategy for North American public schools on March 14. The announcement comes in the wake of the Center's ongoing aggressive awareness campaign against exclusive cola contracts in schools across the country.

In what many view as a public relations move, Coke's new position includes encouraging non-exclusive contracts, producing special logo-free vending machines for schools, and offering students the option of nutritious "vitamin-enriched" beverages.

Andrew Hagelshaw, the Center for Commercial-Free Public Education's Executive Director doesn't put much faith in Coke's new strategy. "Everywhere that Coke

California high school teacher Charlotte Negrete-White encourages the National Education Association in July to support a resolution addressing commercialism in schools



has been pushed out, they have left kicking and screaming," said Hagelshaw. "They want us to think that this is an educationalbased decision, but we know that this is a business move forced by the bottom line."

Four years ago, Coke and Pepsi started brokering exclusive contracts with cash-strapped school districts across the country. Since then, 240 school districts in 31 states have entered into these agreements. Exclusive marketing contracts guarantee the companies a captive audience in a competition-free environment, with an implied product endorsement from the school administration.

Meanwhile, schools are finding that the multimillion-dollar promises are falling

short of balancing ailing budgets. Last year in Seattle, the district's Coke deal yielded less than \$14 per student. "Coke deals just are not worth it," said Seattle educator and anti-commercialism activist Brita Butler-Wall "One result of advertising in our schools is growing student cynicism. Teachers and schools lose the community's respect and self-confidence."

NEA takes stand against cola deals

World's Largest Teachers' Union Joins the Fight

his August, the Center gained a formidable ally in the fight against Coke and Pepsi in public schools. At the annual meeting of the National Education Association (NEA), 8,000 delegates overwhelming voted to take an organizational stand against exclusive cola deals in public schools. The 2.6 millionmember teachers' union adopted New Business Item #20, effectively opposing "exclusive marketing and vending contracts that commercialize schools and tar-

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Across the Country, Coke Locked Out

In the past few years, many school districts have turned down seemingly lucrative contracts with Coke and Pepsi to keep their schools commercial-free. Last year in Philadelphia, community opposition smashed a pending \$43 million deal with Coke. After recently refusing deals with Pepsi, Oakland and San Francisco schools are currently deciding if vending machines belong in their halls at all.

A couple of years back, Pittsburgh parent Tom Pandaleon contacted the Center to find out more about Channel One. Last May, Tom helped to keep Pepsi out of his children's school district. "They really took us by surprise," Tom said. "The Center let us know that Pepsi was about to cut a deal with the Pittsburgh School District. We got a group of parents, teachers and dentists together and got the contract tabled indefinitely."



THE COMMERCIAL-FREE PUBLIC EDUCATION

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Introducing Our New Senior Program Director

Since March, Emily Heath has been serving as the Center's Senior Program Director. Emily was formerly a community organizer with ACORN in Jersey City, and before that helped lead a campaign against Coke as a student at the University of Kansas at Lawrence.

Emily says that she enjoys working with people on a grassroots level. "Many local communities are losing control over their schools to international corporations. The work we do here is crucial!" *

Center Portrait

New Youth Advisory Board Members Declare: 'YOUTH AREN'T FOR SALE!'

The Center's Youth Advisory Board (YAB) equips young people who are fed up with aggressive marketing in their schools to do something about it. Working with the Center, YAB members create and circulate flyers and petitions in their schools, hold workshops and protests and organize their friends against commercialism. YAB members are currently working on the second issue of UNPLUG!, a 'zine featuring essays, comics and poetry; and a website is in the works. Three new YAB members, Alex Diamond, Tristan Kading and Nick Salter, will undoubtedly impact the Center's fight against commercialism in schools.

15-year-old Alex Diamond helped organize a successful student campaign in his Portland, Oregon high school against Jostens exclusive graduation gown contract. "So many kids already don't want to be in school," Alex said. "Having to look at ads all day makes them want to be there a lot less. I think that's wrong."

Tristan Kading received national attention last spring when his school administration in Stonington, Connecticut punished him



Youth Advisory Board members Tristan Kading and Nell Geiser speak at the September demonstration against the advertising industry's Golden Marble Awards in New York.

for refusing to participate in a McDonald's Job Skills
Assembly. A vegan and animal rights activist, Tristan has been featured in print and broadcast media across the country and inspired many young activists. Tristan received the David and Goliath Award for Confronting Corporate

Marketing in Schools at the "Have You Lost Your Marbles?" awards in New York this September.

"It was great to go to New York and be around other young people concerned with the same things that I am," Tristan said. "I am really looking forward to serving on the Youth Advisory Board."

Seven Ways to Fight Commercialism



in your district

your school. Look for sponsored educational materials, posters and textbooks with company names and ads, banner ads on computers, Channel One, soda machines, etc....Take pictures, collect examples, and write it all down! Use this information to show your local school board members how much commercialism is in your district. The Center has example reports and forms to guide you.

Write an editorial or letter to the editor for your local newspaper: Explain why you're opposed to commercialism. Think of this as a way to reach a larger audience—everyone who reads it and agrees with you is one more person who can help. Be sure to include your contact info and The Center's. Call the Center for advice and examples.

workers, and family to sign on and collect signatures of people they know who oppose commercialism in schools. Bring these signatures (with the info from your walk-through) to a school board meeting to show members there is public opposition to commercialism in your district.

Channel One: Does your district have Channel One? If so, the contract rolls over each school year. Work with other students, parents, teachers, and community members to pressure your school board not to renew the contract. Call the Center for articles and information on Channel One.

Hold a town-hall meeting, public forum, or teach-in: Invite school board members, teachers, students, community members, and local organizations to come to a discussion at your local library, school build-

ing, or church. Have information (the Center has many resources) about commercialism in schools and how it relates to your district. Let the public voice their concerns!

Get a committee together to draft a district-wide commercialism policy: Do you know people who are concerned about this issue?

Get them together and draft a policy dictating what, if any, commercialism should be allowed in your district. Find a sympathetic school board member to work with you and use the tactics above to get the word out! The Center has sample policies available.

issue to build about globalizissues that eff

Identify allies: Talk to everyone you know about this issue to build support! Local groups who are concerned about globalization, environmental issues, education,

issues that effect children and youth, and health groups are often concerned about this issue. Attend their meetings, write and call their members—the more people who speak out, the more likely you are to win! Call the Center for other contacts in your area.



just some of the

Victories & Actions

trom across the country in 2001

Oakland, CA YAB

wide commercialism pol-

into passing a district-

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Seattle public schools.

Channel One from

CCC's pushes the district

years of pressure from

Seattle, WA Three

dents and parents how taught California stumember Max Cohen out of schools at the to kick corporations and Center staff

third annual Upset the

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Oakland, CA The soda from the pub-Finance Committee and advertising for Schools, prompting removal of all soda Committee to drafi Education said no the Oakland Publi a proposal recomto another Pepsi attempt to enter of the Board of the Nutrition mending the ic schools.

trict-wide policy on commercialism.

Boulder School Board to form a members led by student Trevor Boulder, CO A group of students, parents, and community "commercial-free zone" in the Geiser are working with the Ycas and YAB member Nell **Boulder Public Schools.**

Llano, CA Parent Robert Williams successfully pressured his school district in school assemblies that teach students High Desert to stop their mandatory to sell brand name products. San Diego, CA Center staff tabled at the

together to fight commercialism

walk-through of his high school

and is getting other students

Cherry Creek, CO YAB mem ber Nick Salter has performed a

San Diego, CA

Los Angeles, CA Center staff

outh and teachers.

of high school age

reaching hundreds

and led a workshop

Max Cohen tabled

San Francisco, CA YAB member at Young, Loud, and Proud (YLP) in July, and board member Nick Leon

tabled at the 2001 NEA

Convention in July, distributing

school staff. The Center helped

NEA members pass two new business items, one of which

info to over 1000 teachers and

took a stand against school dis

tricts entering into exclusive

beverage contracts.

National School Board Association convention in school board members from around the country. March and distributed 1000 sample policies to

Naomi Butler hosted ing with Center staff tract. The San Diego ed against pursuing a community meet-School Board decidto discuss an exclusive beverage con-School nutritionist such a contract! Los Angeles, CA Parent organized a committee to push for a nutrition policy in the Los Angeles Unified Occidental College Center for Food and Justice have Valerie Tuna and the

School District.

staff and board member Media Literate America Conference in June and at the Association for a participated in a panel Carrie McLaren tabled included "Coke Dude" Austin, TX Center discussion which John Bushey.

New York, NY The Stop the Pittsburgh, PA Group of parents, teachers,

Commercial Exploitation of Children kids! Youth Advisory Board member the Golden Marble awards for excelcoalition came together to protest stand against a McDonalds assem Tristan Kading was presented the "David and Goliath" award for his lence in effective advertising to bly in his high school.

> wide exclusive beverage contract with Pepsi and have formed a committee to draft a dis-

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Youth Advisory Board member Rebecca

Melissa Butler, Darby Kaighin-Shields, and

and students including Tom Pandaleon,

New York, NY Due to continuous Assembly hosted by his high school. McDonalds Job Interview Skills out against a mandatory

Board member Tristan Kading spoke

Stonington, CT Youth Advisory

Hodge successfully lobbied other members of the Danbury Board of Education to vote no on

an exclusive contract with Pepsil

Danbury, CT School Board Member Joan

top computer for every student plan advertising to students from a lapnity members, the New York City Board of Education has removed

pressure from parents and commu-

against the culture of commercialism. honored to receive a Positive Schmio University School of Education for New York, NY The Center was award, granted by the New York making a difference in the fight

Takoma Park, MD Parent Mike Tabor

led a coalition effort to push commercialism issues in Maryland, leading to the introduction of a state bill by Sen. Paul Pinsky which attempted to limit soda and junk food sales in schools.

for private collection of student information. port. The bill limits access to public schools passes the U.S. Senate with bi-partisan sup-Washington, DC The Dodd-Shelby bill

convinced a district committee to decide consulting company to pursue "partner-Charleston, SC Parent Kate Young against a proposal to hire an outside ships" with corporate advertisers.

Sheehan formed a committee enter into an exclusive bevercommercialism policy after the school board voted to to push for a district wide Athens, GA Parent Bill age contract with Coke.

Hobe Sound, FL School Board member M.L. Hearst suc-Channel One out of ceeded in kicking

his district!

Center Releases Sample Policies on Advertising in Schools

Voung people encounter commercialism in their schools everyday—from being forced to attend assemblies sponsored by Exxon or Prozac; to learning from text books that use M&M's to teach important math concepts; to sitting in classrooms decorated with inspirational posters telling them to "Just Do It." To address the problem, the Center has released Sample School Board Policies to help districts develop guidelines to keep advertisers out of public schools.

The initial announcement of the Center's Sample School Policies coincided with the September 14,2000 release of the U.S. General Accounting Office's 45-page report on commercialism in public schools. After visiting 19 schools and seven districts across the country, the federal study uncovered a broad range of commercialism in schools, and an absence of policy to guide the school administration.

"The GAO is confirming what our Center has known for years," said Andrew Hagelshaw, Executive Director for the Center. "Brand name advertisers

SCHOLASTIC DROPS GOLDEN MARBLE SPONSORSHIP AFTER NATIONAL PROTEST

n early September some of the biggest ad industry players in the world gathered to honor artistry in children's marketing at the gala Fourth Annual Golden Marble Awards. The Center played a leadership role with the Stop Commercial Exploitation of Children (SCEC) Coalition) to protest the Golden Marbles, resulting in educational publishing giant Scholastic, Inc. withdrawing its support.

Noting that Scholastic's decision set a good example, the Center's Executive Director Andrew Hagelshaw said, "It's wrong to celebrate the multi-billion dollar flood of marketing that targets children without regard to its impact on their well-being."

In addition to the protest, the SCEC held it's irreverent "Have You Lost Your Marbles?" Awards Ceremony. The Government of Sweden was lauded for banning television advertising to children, while Reebok was derided for promoting unhealthy body images to teens. *

are disrupting the public school environment by using valuable time and space to push their products on a captive audience of kids. School districts obviously need

policies in place so that they can address the problem before it gets out of hand."

The Center's Sample School Policies were based upon existing anti-commercialism school policies from five US school districts. One district was San Francisco, which passed the "Commercial Free Schools Act" in 1999. The policies in San Francisco have proved successful, keeping a Pepsi Contract out of the district.

The Center's Sample School Policies were developed to assist child advocates, educators, parents and citizens in addressing the problems of commercialism in public schools before they get out of hand. Please contact the center by phoning 1.800. UNPLUG1, or log on to www.commercialfree.org, to receive your free copy of the Sample Policies. X

NEA Fights Cola Deals

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get students."

"This is a huge victory for us," said Center Board and NEA Member Nick Leon. "The largest teacher's union in the world has taken the position that Coke and Pepsi exploit children in their classrooms and that it is not okay."

Reacting to soaring rates of childhood obesity, juvenile diabetes and tooth decay several prominent health care organizations joined the fight. The National Health Advocates, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the American Dental Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics released public statements condemning cola contracts in schools.

Last February the USDA compiled a report requested by congress on the health affects of cola sales on public school campuses. "When children are taught in the classroom about good nutrition but are surrounded by vending machines," the report found, "they receive the message that good nutrition is merely an academic exercise." *



School Policy Battle Won in Seattle

On November 21, Seattle's School Board passed an anti-commercialism initiative that was five years in the making. In 1996, the Seattle School Board, facing a \$35 million budget shortfall, signed the "Advertising and Corporate Sponsorship Policy Act," opening schools up to corporate advertising and sponsorship.

One year later, parents, educators and activists formed the Citizens Campaign for Commercial Free Schools (CCCS). Since its inception, the group has grown to over 1,000 members including 65 educator groups and a dozen state legislators. The group's proposed anti-commercialism policies include prohibiting ads, logos and Channel One from 100 Seattle schools.

"We need these policies in place in Seattle," says educator and activist Brita Butler-Wall.
"Commercialism in our schools amounts to the privatization of public space and child abuse."

Local Victories

Actions Against Classroom Advertising

Oakland, CA

The Business and Finance Committee of the Board of Education said no to another Pepsi attempt to enter the Oakland Public Schools, prompting the Nutrition Committee to draft a proposal recommending the removal of all soda and advertising for soda from the public schools.

Danbury, CT

School Board Member Joan Hodge successfully lobbied other members of the Danbury Board of Education to vote no on an exclusive contract with Pepsi!

Stonington, CT

Youth Advisory Board member Tristan Kading spoke out against a mandatory McDonalds Job Interview Skills Assembly hosted by his high school.

New York, NY

Due to continuous pressure from parents and community members, the New York City Board of Education has removed advertising to students from a laptop computer for every student plan.

Takoma Park, MD

Parent Mike Tabor led a coalition effort to push commercialism issues in Maryland, leading to the introduction of a state bill by Sen. Paul Pinsky which attempted to limit soda and junk food sales in schools.

San Diego, CA

School nutritionist Naomi Butler hosted a community meeting with Center staff to discuss an exclusive beverage contract. The San Diego School Board decided against pursuing such a contract!

Los Angeles, CA

Center staff and board member Nick Leon tabled at the 2001 NEA Convention in July, distributing info to over 1000 teachers and school staff. The Center helped NEA members pass two new business items, one of which took a stand against school districts entering into exclusive beverage contracts.

Washington, DC

The Dodd-Shelby bill passes the U.S. Senate with bi-partisan support. The bill limits access to public schools for private collection of student information.

Portland, OR

A group of parents, community members, and students including Raquel Bournhonesque, Kathleen McAuliffe and Youth Advisory Board member Alex Diamond organized fiercely against an exclusive Pepsi contract. The school board decided to enter into exclusive contract with Pepsi but organizers have formed a committee to draft a district-wide policy on commercialism.

New York, NY

The Center was honored to receive a Positive Schmio award, granted by the New York University School of Education for making a difference in the fight against the culture of commercialism.

Pittsburgh, PA

A community group of parents, teachers, and students including Tom Pandaleon, Melissa Butler, Darby Kaighin-Shields, and Youth Advisory Board member Rebecca Meiksin successfully fought off a district-wide exclusive beverage contract with Pepsi and have formed a committee to draft a district-wide policy on commercialism.

Boulder, CO

A group of students, parents, and community members led by student Trevor Ycas and YAB member Nell Geiser are working with the Boulder School Board to form a "commercial-free zone" in the Boulder Public Schools.

Oakland, CA

YAB member Max Cohen and Center staff tabled at the third annual Upset the Setup in September and hosted a well-attended workshop teaching California students and parents how to kick corporations out of their schools. *X



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