



The newsletter of the Center for Commercial-Free Public Education

# not for sale!

THE  
CENTER  
FOR **COMMERCIAL-FREE  
PUBLIC EDUCATION**

WINTER 2002

*CCFPE Pressure Pays Off...*

## Coke Forced To Announce Changes In Schools

*Claim They No Longer Will Emphasize Exclusive Contracts*

**R**eacting 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



ELENA WHITE-NEGRETTE

has been pushed out, they have left kicking and screaming," said Hagelshaw. "They want us to think that this is an educational-based 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

**T**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 overwhelmingly voted to take an organizational stand against exclusive cola deals in public schools. The 2.6 million-member teachers' union adopted New Business Item #20, effectively opposing "exclusive marketing and vending contracts that commercialize schools and tar-

*continued on page 3*

## Across the Country, Coke Locked Out

**I**n 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 Center for Commercial-Free Public Education is a national coalition of students, parents, teachers and community members working for commercial-free public education.*



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PUBLIC EDUCATION**

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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ELENA WHITE-NEGRETE



## 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

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

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



ELENA WHITE-NEGRETE

**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." ✕

## STAFF

**Andrew Hagelshaw** *Executive Director*

**Elena White-Negrete** *Associate Director*

**Emily Heath** *Senior Program Director*

**Max Cohen** *Youth Advisory Board Co-Chair '01/02*

**Nell Geiser** *Youth Advisory Board Co-Chair '01/02*

## BECOME A MEMBER!

*and help us fight commercialism  
in public schools*

### Membership Levels:

- ☐ \$15 (student) ☐ \$35  
☐ \$60 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Send to:

The Center for Commercial-Free  
Public Education

1714 Franklin Street, #100-306

Oakland, CA 94612

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extent provided by the law.*

# Seven Ways to Fight Commercialism



THE COMMERCIAL-FREE  
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## *in your district*

# 1

**Walk Through:** Get a group together and walk through 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.

# 2

**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.

# 3

**Create a petition:** Get your friends, neighbors, co-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.

# 4

**Get rid of 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.

# 5

**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 building, 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!

# 6

**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.

# 7

**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

from across the country in 2001

**Seattle, WA** Three years of pressure from CCC's pushes the district into passing a district-wide commercialism policy that would remove Channel One from Seattle public schools.

**Portland, OR** Group of parents, community members, and students including Raquel Bournhonesque, Kathleen McAuliffe and Youth Advisory Board member Alex Diamond organized against exclusive Pepsi contract. School Board decided to enter into exclusive contract with Pepsi but organizers have formed a committee to draft a district-wide policy on commercialism.

**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.

**Oakland, CA** YAB member Max Cohen and Center staff taught California students and parents how to kick corporations out of schools at the third annual Upset the Setup in September.

**Pittsburgh, PA** 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.

**New York, NY** The Stop the Commercial Exploitation of Children coalition came together to protest the Golden Marble awards for excellence in effective advertising to kids! Youth Advisory Board member Tristan Kading was presented the "David and Goliath" award for his stand against a McDonalds assembly in his high school.

**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.

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

**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.

**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.

**San Francisco, CA** YAB member Max Cohen tabled and led a workshop at Young, Loud, and Proud (YLP) in July, reaching hundreds of high school age youth and teachers.

**Llano, CA** Parent Robert Williams successfully pressured his school district in High Desert to stop their mandatory school assemblies that teach students to sell brand name products.

**San Diego, CA** Center staff tabled at the National School Board Association convention in March and distributed 1000 sample policies to school board members from around the country.

**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.

**Los Angeles, CA** Parent Valerie Tuna and the Occidental College Center for Food and Justice have organized a committee to push for a nutrition policy in the Los Angeles Unified School District.

**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!

**Cherry Creek, CO** YAB member Nick Salter has performed a walk-through of his high school and is getting other students together to fight commercialism.

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

**Hobe Sound, FL** School Board member M.L. Hearst succeeded in kicking Channel One out of his district!

**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.

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

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

**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!

# SCHOLASTIC DROPS GOLDEN MARBLE SPONSORSHIP AFTER NATIONAL PROTEST

In addition to the protest, the SCEC held its 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. ✕

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." ✕



“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

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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.

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### 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. ✕



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