

Speak Up, People! ('Sup)

*Public Speech Contest for Youth in Los Angeles County by Stella Adler
Academy of Acting Los Angeles*

.... and the winner is

“Speak Up, People” ('Sup!) is a **Public Speech contest** for LA county residents under 24 years old. While we contact youth groups and grassroots organizations to participate, we also encourage local schools. In the 3 months leading up to the final contest, we will offer free workshops - to teachers and youth leaders.

All participating organizations in this contest will receive:

- 1) 5 page public speech lesson plan
- 2) Two free speech lessons (90 min each)
- 3) Certificates

For individual winners:

- The First Prize winner will get a trip to Washington DC, sponsored by House Representative Adam Schiff (proposed) along with a \$750 cash prize to the winner and his/her classroom, if affiliated with schools.
- The Second Prize winner will get a trip to Sacramento with Ben Allen (proposed) and a \$500 cash prize.
- The Third Prize winner will get a tour and one-day internship with Councilman Mitch O'Farrell (proposed) at LA City Hall.

OUR PROGRAM WILL INCREASE CLASSROOM ENGAGEMENT

Our workshop will teach the basic techniques of **debating skills**, which promote critical thinking (reflective and independent thinking) and empathy (understanding the logical connection between two ideas).

Group settings are the perfect way to get the students thinking. When they are around their classmates, working together, they get exposed to the thought processes of their peers. They learn to understand how other people think and that their way is not the only route to explore.

When this valuable skill is introduced to students early in the education process, students will be capable of having complex thoughts and becoming better problem solvers when presented with difficulty. It is important for students to possess a variety of skills, but it is just as important for them to *understand* the skills, and how and when to use them.

The final contest will give them the roadmap and the opportunity to complete their project.

Engaging English Learners: In Los Angeles County we have many children who are immigrants and/or whose parents are immigrants, and feel self-conscious about their cultures, and especially their accents. It can be intimidating for them to speak in front of class, or even to volunteer, even though they know the answers.

If untreated, public speaking anxiety can lead to serious detrimental effects on one's quality of life, career goals, and other areas. For example, educational goals requiring public speaking might be avoided if a student sees the simple task of speaking up as daunting.

Stella Adler Academy's "Speak Up People!" training course is the response to this need. We have many ongoing outreach programs at our Stella Adler campus in Hollywood; however, we have noticed that the youth who could most benefit from these programs often lack accessibility to our campus.

Therefore, we are planning to bring our public speech training to local high schools and organizations from Venice, East LA, and the Van Nuys area.

OUR PROGRAM WILL REDUCE THE DROPOUT RATE BY ENCOURAGING STUDENTS TO BE PROACTIVE and BY VALUING THEIR VOICES

According to "Justice LA," Los Angeles County spends more than \$50,000 a year per incarcerated inmate, while only \$35 per youth is spent on after school programs, job training, and other youth development opportunities.

These conflicting statistics are heartbreaking and we need to take action.

Our Approach:

Utilizing the acting techniques that are proven to create strong public speakers, we can teach young children

- Grounding Public Voice
- Articulate Speech Writing
- Body Language Control

Through theatre games, character creating, and scene studies, we can instill confidence, build personal character, and have fun while working at the craft.

"What the trained experts who are so creative are always revealing is that it was practice—a lot of effort and practice—that gave them the creative edge, rather than the genius, talent or aptitude they were born with." Dr. Charles Limb

EMPOWER THE YOUTH

They will become more comfortable with themselves when they continue to participate. Repetition and deliberate practice is the key to reducing fear of public speech

By being encouraged to speak, working with other students, and sharing common goals, they will be less anxious and gain experience. Through repetition, the students are afforded the opportunity to overcome shyness and self-consciousness, and by achieving small goals every class, they will achieve the high efficacy that leads to resiliency for greater tasks.

With this increase in communication skills and confidence, we believe students will participate in school activities more, be comfortable at job interviews, speak out against bullies, and increase their problem solving skills.

It is our collective responsibility to value their voice and give them the skills to speak up.

Intelligent disagreement is the lifeblood of any thriving society. Yet we in the United States are raising a younger generation who have never been taught either the how or the why of disagreement, and who seem to think that free speech is a one-way right: Namely, their right to disinvite, shout down or abuse anyone they dislike, lest they run the risk of listening to that person — or even allowing someone else to listen. Bret Stephens

Why us, the Stella Adler Academy?

We all feel self-conscious about speaking in front of people. The simple task of getting up in front of a group and announcing your name can be nerve wracking.

It has been estimated that 75% of the population experiences some degree of anxiety/nervousness when speaking publicly.⁺¹ Overcoming fear of public speech is always Task #1 in the \$11 billion Self Improvement industry in the US.

We are bringing this needed training to the youth of Los Angeles County, FOR FREE.

Stella Adler Academy of Acting has produced outspoken activists for decades. They include Marlon Brando, Robert DeNiro, and most recently Mark Ruffalo, who is currently on our Board of Directors.

Our outreach program is called “Social ACTion.” Our goals include engaging and interactive programs that will improve school attendance and decrease chances of dropping out.

As part of “Social ACTion,” we would like to introduce you to our latest project, “SPEAK UP, PEOPLE!,” a more comprehensive Toastmaster-like program for young people.

Today, there are many reasons to be concerned over the state of free speech, from the growing chill on university campuses to the increased policing of art forms such as literature and film. But there is also cause for optimism, as long as we stand up for the principle that no one has the right to police our opinions.

Timeline

June 2018

- Budget and Sponsorship Proposal approval
- Web Presence from our homepage www.StellaAdler.org
- Letters to Schools
- Logo - and Postcards

July & August 2018

- Individual Workshops at our campus in Hollywood

September 2018

- Submission Opens (via email and YouTube / IG)
- Group Workshops at Schools and other locations Start

On Sun. Nov. 4th -

- The Final Contest - Live Feed from the Adler Theatre

"Children cannot be fooled by empty praise and condescending encouragement. They may have to accept artificial bolstering of their self-esteem in lieu of something better, but what I call their accruing ego identity gains real strength only from **wholehearted and consistent recognition of real accomplishment**, that is, achievement that has meaning in their culture." – Erik Erikson

<http://losangeles.cbslocal.com/2017/05/30/afterschool-programs-funding/>

<http://www.latimes.com/local/countygovernment/la-me-probation-sticker-shock-20160223-story.html>

+1 Hamilton, C. (2008) [2005]. *Communicating for Results, a Guide for Business and the Professions* (eighth edition). Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

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