

Boulder Creek Students to DVUSD: Let Us Show the Video!

Students mobilize to get controversial screening rescheduled

By Rebecca I. Allen

The Boulder Creek High School student body was in an uproar last week after the district administration canceled an assembly on the Invisible Children project the day before it was to take place.

Students quickly mobilized, sending calls, emails, text messages, and planned a sit-in to protest the decision. By nightfall, Principal Kevin Imes announced the assembly was back on.

Many students have been involved with the project for two years and were among the 1,000 area residents who participated in the project's Global Night Commute last March. The assembly, part of Invisible Children, Inc.'s campaign to inform and update the world on the struggles in Uganda, includes video footage depicting graphic images of the country's suffering children, some forced to kill and die for their kidnappers.

"We're trying to show how real it is, how real the violence is," said Sarah Glagovich, the Boulder Creek Student



In@Out Staff Photo

Body President who serves on the Invisible Children subcommittee. "And how kids our age are being taken from their homes at night and forced to fight against the government."

A Deer Valley Unified School District spokesperson said the assembly was cancelled because district policy mandates parent notification of the video due to its content.

"The school dropped the ball," Hicks said. "They didn't

comply with board policy."

However, Imes said complaints from Barry Goldwater High School parents the morning of Jan. 25th—the day Goldwater students were screening the video—prompted the district to cancel Boulder Creek's screenings.

"They (district administration) originally said it's definitely not on," Imes said. "Cancel this and it's history,"

Passionate students at Boulder Creek go the word out quickly.

"Tell everyone you know our Invisible Children project is in trouble," one text message read. Ironically, some students at Goldwater received those messages while viewing the "Invisible Children from Uganda" video.

By 1 p.m. Boulder Creek students had planned an all-day sit-in for Jan. 26 to protest the cancellation.

"To show we are an organization that stands for something, we stand for what we believe in," said Bree Pearson, a senior at Boulder Creek. "For the district to deny this, to us, is a blow to our whole message and the time and effort we've put into it."

Hicks said the school district supports the project.

"We stand behind the organization, the assembly and the video they use 100 percent," she said. "Not every family has the same values and beliefs."

Within hours after the video began screening at Goldwater, the district received five complaints.

"It defeats me that parents would go and complain, but at same time, they'll let their kids go home and play video games and watch movies that are fake and just as violent," said Glagovich.

"Their 14- through 18-year-old children are mature enough to see this. Children the same age (in Uganda) are being killed and beaten" Glagovich said.

Hicks maintained the postponement of Boulder Creek's screenings had nothing to do with the grievances.

"We always allow parents, no matter what it is, if it's something of a political nature, to opt out so the kids can do another activity," Hicks said.

Imes said a notice was to go home January 26 notifying

parents the assembly would take place Monday, Jan. 29, and a link to the project's Web site, www.invisiblechildren.com, would be placed on the school's Web page.

"We worked it out and it's back on," Imes said. "This whole process has delayed us a day."

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*Sarah Glagovich
Student Body President,
Boulder Creek High School*

Several Goldwater students and parents said they never received a screening notification letter.

A call to Goldwater Principal Michael Andersen, was not returned by press time. Hicks said a letter was sent home with students.

"We were told, 'If you don't want to watch you can go to room 211,'" said Lisa Dodge, a sophomore at Goldwater.

Dodge chose to watch the video. She called it "amazing," and said it united many students. "People said, 'We have to do something,'" Dodge said. "It was the best thing to happen to Goldwater. We're not known for school spirit. Now people want to start our own chapter."

Dodge's mother Bobby said she never saw a notification letter. Her daughter told her about the video and Dodge said she did not have a problem with her seeing it.

When the video was screened last year at Boulder Creek many students and parents said no notification went home to parents. Hicks said she could not confirm whether notice was sent.

Students report the video was shown on the school's closed-circuit video system following the morning announcements.

"No one complained, no one called district," Glagovich said. "The response was very positive. We would walk down the halls and people were in tears because of what they saw." **io**

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