



“Engaging the Disengaged: Bringing Texans off the Political Sidelines”

Facilitator: Dr. Sharon Jarvis

Saturday, November 9, 2013

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- Main ideas from introduction
 - Voter turnout
 - Civic engagement
 - MOVE student
 - Former 3-term Buda mayor
 - Curiosity on how to get young voters engaged
- What do we say to our disengaged neighbors and in our community w/o offending them (and prepare them to vote)?
 - Not sure we want uninformed people to vote if they're only voting on a party ticket, but that person is not the best candidate.
 - You don't have to be informed about everything we have to vote for, but pick one issue, really learn and know – more issues will come to horizon from that perspective.
 - Need to agitate people about something they care about. Get them in a conversation they care about, will get them mobilized and rallied to do something about it. It's about having conversations with people. People don't vote because they don't know the issues.

- People would rather tune out local scene, national stuff “more interesting.”
- People have issues about everything – dog parks, grocery bags, etc. Local government is the most exciting kind because you deal with it every day.
- “Swift democracy” the loudest voices get the voice, it will happen. Not so much about money as you might think.
- Takes a lot fewer people than you think to split the votes.
- What resources do we have that can easily explain what candidates are running on?
 - League of Women voters – people don’t know they put about a useful guide.
 - Vote Smart
 - There is bias in some of these guides – former League of Women Voters worker who helped do a study.
- What can we individually do to create a more active precinct?
 - Problem: many precincts don’t have chairs.
 - People shouldn’t come to us, we need to go to them – what do we bring them?
 - Gerber & Green (two political science) – have some years of mobilization studies. (**NOTE:** Please review their work to the Did You Know? blog.)
 - A “bottom up” approach may be more enduring and sustainable organization.
- Voter registration
 - Not easy – youth vote would be higher (it’s politics – says Bruce).
 - Online voter registration **NEEDS TO HAPPEN.**
 - Kids’ moving causes a problem.
- Where would people look to find information to vote? How to we send out this information?
 - Facebook seems a useful way to get out to many. Social networking in general.
 - Distrust of the man, counter-culture energy makes this hard still.
 - How much do parents influence 18-29 year olds? Research shows it trickles up (kid to child).

- Having a conversation within family, ask why they didn't vote, actually encourages future voting.
- Don't wait till voting day – early voting is available!
- Invoke a social norm – make it sound like everyone else is doing it. Research shows we won't get new voters through guilt.
- Traviscountytax.org can print out precinct and shows where non-registered voters are. We can try a before/after study!