

January 22, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

I am contacting you on behalf of *ACTIONS!*, a service organization through the Center for Leadership and Service (CLS) at the University of Florida. Since February 2004 we have celebrated a national campaign titled *Raise Your Voice Month*. This campaign is designed to increase, celebrate, and deepen the student civic engagement efforts on college campuses around the country. This year, *Raise Your Voice Month* will take place from February 22 - March 31, 2009.

During this month, students, faculty and community partners all over the country will come together to host special events and dialogues in an effort to educate and inspire their campus and community to act on pressing local, state, and global issues. In accordance with UF's 2009 *Raise Your Voice Month* theme "Breaking the Silence," we will be focusing on four core issues that have been "silenced" not only in our community, but around the world. These issues include Sickle Cell Disease, domestic violence, global poverty, and human rights and genocide.

The success of this campaign relies greatly on the participation of students. From February 22 - 28, 2009, we will be focusing on raising awareness and increasing the understanding of the Sickle Cell Disease, which primarily affects the African-American community, as well as other ethnic groups. There is no cure for this painful, inherited blood disorder that affects the blood tissues, joints, and major organs. In Sickle Cell patients, blood flow can be restricted through vessels due to the sickle shape of their blood cells, therefore causing painful episodes that we call a "crises". Their pain is silent. With that said, we need your help!

Our vision is for students of the University of Florida to participate in an art competition entitled "Picture the Change." Change must start with our generation. If we can come to a better understand of this disease, then those living with sickle cell would no longer have to suffer in silence with their pain. Understanding will lead to support in the school, in the work place, and in the family.

Students will be provided with a brief description of the Sickle Cell Disease and then be responsible for researching the topic in order to illustrate "silent pain." All artwork must be submitted to the Center for Leadership and Service no later than February 20, 2009. Three grand prize winners will be chosen and recognized at the closing ceremony for *Raise Your Voice Month* on Tuesday, March 31, 2009. I really hope you will become involved with this initiative. The involvement of Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc. can significantly influence the success of our campaign. Should you have any further questions please feel free to contact me at (352)-846-5677. Thanks in advance, and I look forward to hearing from you by January 31, 2009.

Sincerely,
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ACTIONS!
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