Young Voices for Justice

Parents and Teachers Building Children’s Activism

a collaboration of:

[Logos of Spark Movement, New Moon Girls, and Wee The People]

[Image of children holding signs with messages like "Freedom is a voice," "Wee the People," etc.]
When 8-year-old Michele Threefoot walked into her school on "Superhero Day" dressed as notorious RBG—Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg—she represented the power and the possibilities of growing up girl in the 21st century. Never before have so many powerful women been so visible and so influential.

Female superheroes live among us! Our children have seen the first major party female Presidential candidate; a brilliant lawyer as the most influential First Lady in history; a tenacious Supreme Court judge—in fact, three of them! Feminist icons abound: musicians and Olympic athletes, artists and authors.

Activists, from Malala to the founders of Black Lives Matter, put their lives on the line for justice and human rights. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's We Should All Be Feminists sells like hotcakes. We want to imagine all of these streams flowing into a beautiful river of social change.

The election of Donald Trump reminded us in the crudest possible way that change of this magnitude is never easy. For some, this was a shock. For others, it was life as usual. For all, it was a stark reminder that there are still walls to climb, barriers to break down.

The largest protest march in history was a call to action for the youngest among us. Check out Wee The People's video on Kid Powered Resistance at the Boston Women's March!
We won’t go back!!

Now that the speeches are over, the pink pussy hats put away, the passionate slogans on our colorful signs set aside, what next? How can we continue to nurture hope, inspire action? How do we thoughtfully, deliberately, playfully build our children’s activist muscles?

In her speech at the DC Women’s March, Gloria Steinem said:

“I’m using my torch to light other people’s torches. Because the idea that there’s onetorch-passor is part of the bonkers hierarchical idea—and if we each have a torch, there’s a lot more light.”

The change we want to see happens first in our homes, on our playgrounds, in school hallways, in our neighborhoods and communities. The best thing we can do for our children is affirm their power, encourage their voices, help them recognize and call out injustice, and inspire them to light their torches and those of others.

In this spirit, SPARK Movement, New Moon Girls, and Wee The People offer this activist toolkit. Each action is designed to encourage children to rise up, speak up, fight the good fight, imagine a better world and dare to believe in themselves as powerful enough to bring that world into being.
POSTCARD PROTESTS

Are you concerned about climate change? Women's rights? Immigrant rights? Poverty? As a family or classroom, write postcards to the president and your local, state and federal elected officials to tell them to stand for justice and love.

Decorate and sign with your names and ages. Let them know we're all watching and care about the world. To start, join the Women's March 10 actions/100 days campaign together!

TO ISLAM, WITH LOVE

Gather friends, pull out art materials and join Wee The People in a card-making marathon.

Send messages of love and support to your Muslim community neighbors and Islamic Society or mosque.

Take direct action against Islamophobia by sending one of your cards with a donation to the Muslim Justice League or the Muslim Legal Fund of America.
LIVING ROOM PROTESTS

There are lots of ways to practice activism and political engagement at home together!

Spoken word poet and LGBTQ activist Staceyann Chin and her 3-year old daughter Zuri began their living room protests one night when it was too cold and rainy to go to a public event. They made a video with a smartphone and uploaded it to Youtube. “No justice, no peace!”

The Redfers and their 4-year-old daughter held a Women’s March at home and invited the resident dolls.

Living room protests give parents and children opportunities to talk together about the issues that matter to them.
POST-IT PROTESTS

Listen to four-year-old Riley tell us how frustrating it is to see stereotypes everywhere.

With a packet of post-its and a marker in your backpack or bag, help kids talk back to stereotypes on the cover of a cereal box, in the toy aisle, or in the pages of their favorite magazine.

Write a statement, question, or comment on your post-it and leave it for the next person to ponder. At SPARK Movement, you can find this and other easy-to-do actions called SPARKits.

DREAM THE WORLD

Dream flags are inspired by Buddhist prayer flags, which are meant to remind people of the goodness in the world. This is a great activity to do with your family and friends or in a school or with a community group.

Write a dream for yourself or the world—in a word, a short poem or sentence, a few lines of an inspirational song.

Cut fabric in 8x11 or 11x16 rectangles (old sheets work great). Write your dream in
marker, then decorate with buttons, fabric, glitter, etc. Leave space at the top to fold and stitch or staple each flag over yarn or string.

Hang your flags in a public space—your school, a community building, outside your home.

IMAGINE BEING ELECTED

Imagine meeting Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton in DC in early 2007 and giving her letters from girls about social justice issues. Some lucky members of New Moon Girls did!

It’s de-mystifying to bring kids to meet local, state and federal elected officials in your community. They’ll see these are “regular people” whose work they could do some day.

Prepare by writing down and practicing a couple sentences each kid wants to say if the chance arises. If it doesn't, give the notes to a staffer. For ongoing inspiration, every issue of NMG Magazine introduces readers to girl activists aged 8 to 14 and to activist women both past and present.
GIVE YOUR FEELINGS SOME FRESH AIR

The Clothes Line project started as a way for women who've experienced domestic violence or sexual abuse to express their feelings with art on a t-shirt and then hanging it on a line in public.

People have adapted this idea as a way to protest all kinds of injustices. It's moving and powerful to read so many different thoughts and feelings expressed in words and colorful art. Pick an injustice that you care a lot about. Invite others who care about that issue to get together and make art on cloth or paper shirts. You can create and hang shirts or speech bubbles or stars. The effect is the same: Many Voices Speaking Up!

SPEAK OUT!

Kids' voices are powerful! Just watch Sophie Cruz speak at the DC Women's March.

A Speak Out is an event where a group of people who care about an issue speak their experiences and views. You can speak a poem, a personal story, opinions and facts.
You can hold a Speak Out anywhere, like in front of school or at a community event. You can pick a special day or location, like the UN Day of the Girl or MLK Day or the steps of City Hall. Make signs that announce your issue, so those walking by will know to stop and listen. Create a Facebook event and invite everyone!

**GIVE THEM DRAMA!**

Activist Theater is a fun and powerful way to share your passion and your ideas.

Gather friends or family members who love to write and perform.

Discuss the stories people need to hear that only YOU can express.

Write! Let all your creativity flow. Write poetry, songs, dialogue, monologues. Rehearse! Plan your performance and choreography and rehearse your lines. Make props and fun costumes.

Promote! Make flyers and drop them off at all the places your audience members hang out. Make a Facebook event page and spread the word. Perform! Find a public space—a corner café, public park, library. Be creative! Theater can happen anywhere! Share! Record your performance, upload on YouTube or Vimeo, plan a screening and invite everyone you know to come. Celebrate! You’ve done something amazing! Find more activist theater ideas and info at SPARK Movement!
WE CAN STRENGTHEN HOPE

Hope is a muscle made strong by exercising our right to speak truth to power, challenging unfairness, and standing up for those who cannot stand up for themselves.

It’s our job as those who love and care for children to help build that muscle by creating opportunities for their voices to be heard.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

SPARK Movement
New Moon Girls
Wee The People
Moms As Mentors
We Need Diverse Books

Embrace Race
Teaching Tolerance
Powered by Girl
Our Children’s Trust
Zinn Education Project

We’re adding more resources. Recommend resources here: newmoon.com/contact