

Using the November 2024 election to move your agenda forward

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“By using elections strategically and cleverly, advocates can accomplish more, while expending fewer resources, than at any other time.”

WHY

- Politicians are hungry for support.
- The media is paying attention.
- The public is engaged in politics.
- Social media allows you to spread the word quickly and cheaply.

GOALS

- Garner political support from local candidates for your agenda.
- Strengthen your coalition – deepen relationships, build political skills and capital.
- Inform voters about your issues - influence their votes.



Top 10 Ideas

Never let an election season pass you by without capturing this unique opportunity to get commitments from candidates, attention from the media, and a better-informed public about the unmet needs of kids.

1. Create and disseminate bumper stickers and signs.
2. Get involved in November 2024 campaigns.
3. Create a Children and Youth Agenda for the campaign season.
4. Organize meetings with candidates.
5. Meet with media to prep them for their election interviews.
6. Attend candidate forums and ask questions.
7. Request candidate platforms for children and youth.
8. Mount a public education campaign: Urge voters to vote with kids in mind.
9. Create and publish a candidate questionnaire.
10. Have the biggest and best candidate forum of the election season.

HINT: Let others do the work and spend the money – piggyback on other election activities.

HINT 2: Have fun. This is infectious.



1

Bumper stickers and signs

WHY: Simple, Visible, Cheap

IDEA: Spend more and do bus shelter signs.



Get involved in November 2024 campaigns.

- Take a position on an issue (or issues) related to kids. This could be campaigns related to schools, housing, health, the environment, parks, etc.
- Get your coalition name on slate cards, political mailings, websites, ballot handbooks.
- Do your own slate card – on issues you support. Mail it or put on social media.
- Work on campaigns – as individuals or as a coalition. Individuals can work on candidate campaigns – that wins allies down the road. You can phone bank, walk precincts, table, do social media, enlist endorsers, attend events, help fundraise.

HINT - Be visible. This wins allies and political capital.

IDEA – Make sure your coalition members are seen in many campaigns. Wear T-shirts like “We care about kids.”

THIS IS GREAT PRACTICE FOR YOUR FUTURE MEASURE.



3

Create a Children and Youth Agenda for the campaign.

- Bring together allies to create list of demands for candidates.
- Creating the agenda can be a powerful organizing tool – including using as a pledge.
- Use throughout election season.
- Can be general or specific, long-term or for immediate implementation.

IDEA – Do a quick survey of youth or parents to identify issues and increase engagement in the process.

- ✓ *Create Youth Commission*
- ✓ *Expand recreation programs*
- ✓ *Train police in youth development*
- ✓ *Initiate internships in city government*
- ✓ *Create 500 summer jobs*
- ✓ *Conduct a special budget hearing on youth issues*
- ✓ *Support a ballot measure to fund children services.*

The Philadelphia Kids' Agenda

If elected mayor, will you lead Philadelphia according to the following beliefs?

I believe first and foremost that Philadelphia must be a great place to raise your family.

I believe that Philadelphia can be a city with the courage to heal systemic rifts that disproportionately harm children of color.

I believe that no child in Philadelphia should go hungry or live in poverty.

I believe that every neighborhood should have a quality District school.

I believe that Philadelphia must be the prime destination for the best teachers in the country.

I believe that every child deserves a safe and stable home and access to healthcare.

I believe every neighborhood must have great rec centers, parks, libraries, safe places, afterschool and summer programs.

I believe that every child should have access to high-quality, early learning opportunities.

I believe that every teenager should have a meaningful summer job and a job on graduation.

I believe that youth who make mistakes should have restorative options.

I believe that Philadelphia must contribute to solving the climate crisis to ensure a thriving planet for our kids.

I believe that youth should have a voice in all levels of city government.

4

Organize meetings with candidates.

- In person or Zoom – size of meetings can vary.
- Can be powerful to bring diverse, multi-generational group – including some community “influencers.”
- Share your agenda. Ask questions. Get commitments and put them on record.

IDEA – Have youth make regular visits to campaign candidate headquarters with messages and gifts reflecting their work.

5

Meet with media, e.g., editorial boards, to identify kids' issues.

- Urge media to ask candidates about children and youth issues. Make suggestions about questions. This is an opportunity to educate about importance of kids issues and why child and youth policy should be on the civic agenda. If they won't meet, write letters to editor.



6

Attend candidate forums and ask questions about positions on kids.

- Publish contact info on candidate headquarters and info on candidate forums.
- Coordinate questions and attendance with allies so candidates receive multiple asks and get asked about kids EVERYWHERE.
- Give folks specific questions they can ask. Can request specific commitments.
- Use these opportunities to get candidates on record on your issues.

7

Request Candidate Platforms for Children and Youth.

IDEA – Have network members call each candidate to ask for children's platform or position paper.

If they don't have a platform, (which they won't) offer to help create one. This is a real win!

If candidates want your help developing a platform – great! But make the offer to all.



Mount a Public Education Campaign: Vote with kids in mind.

- Promote Kids' Agenda – presentations to civic groups, social media,
- Publish and disseminate report card or fact sheets on kids' needs.
- Disseminate "Vote for Kids" swag – pins, bumper stickers, shirts, hats.
- Do a poll that demonstrates support for kids.

Keep it non-partisan. Or create PAC, C4, or political club and endorse candidates

[Link to tools created by Philadelphia Kids' Campaign](#)

[Link to Silicon Valley Community Foundation Choose Children poll info, campaign info.](#)



Create and publish a candidate questionnaire.

Who's for kids? And who's just kidding?

- Work with each candidate and their staff to ensure they fill out the questionnaire. Persistence is the key.
- Use competition with other candidates, as well as your plans to publicize answers to maximize participation.
- Frame questions in a neutral way so candidates don't think you are partisan.
- Disseminate results – as widely as possible – mailing, social media.

IDEA: Convince a local newspaper to publish results – could be done as an insert.



What are your 3 most important accomplishments for kids and families?

What are your top goals for children and youth in your first year in office?

What should the city be doing to help the schools?

What are the major challenges facing our youth?

Does the county need more money for childcare? How should we get it?



10 Have the biggest candidate forum of the campaign.

The basics

- Multiple sponsors and with credibility and constituency. Train planning committee.
- Find date early and get candidate commitments – can create competition among candidates. NO STAND-INS. Confirm. Confirm. Confirm.
- Develop criteria for candidate participation – polling, fundraising
- Have location big enough to hold large crowd but won't look empty – central accessible location.
- Have a timekeeper!
- Publicize widely.



The program

- Have diverse planning committee.
- Engage and feature youth and parents.
- Publicize child and youth agenda..
- Skilled moderator.
- Short, snappy format – demand short answers
- Make it fun – balloons, signs, banners.
- Include pledges from candidates – can be on large charts.

Questions

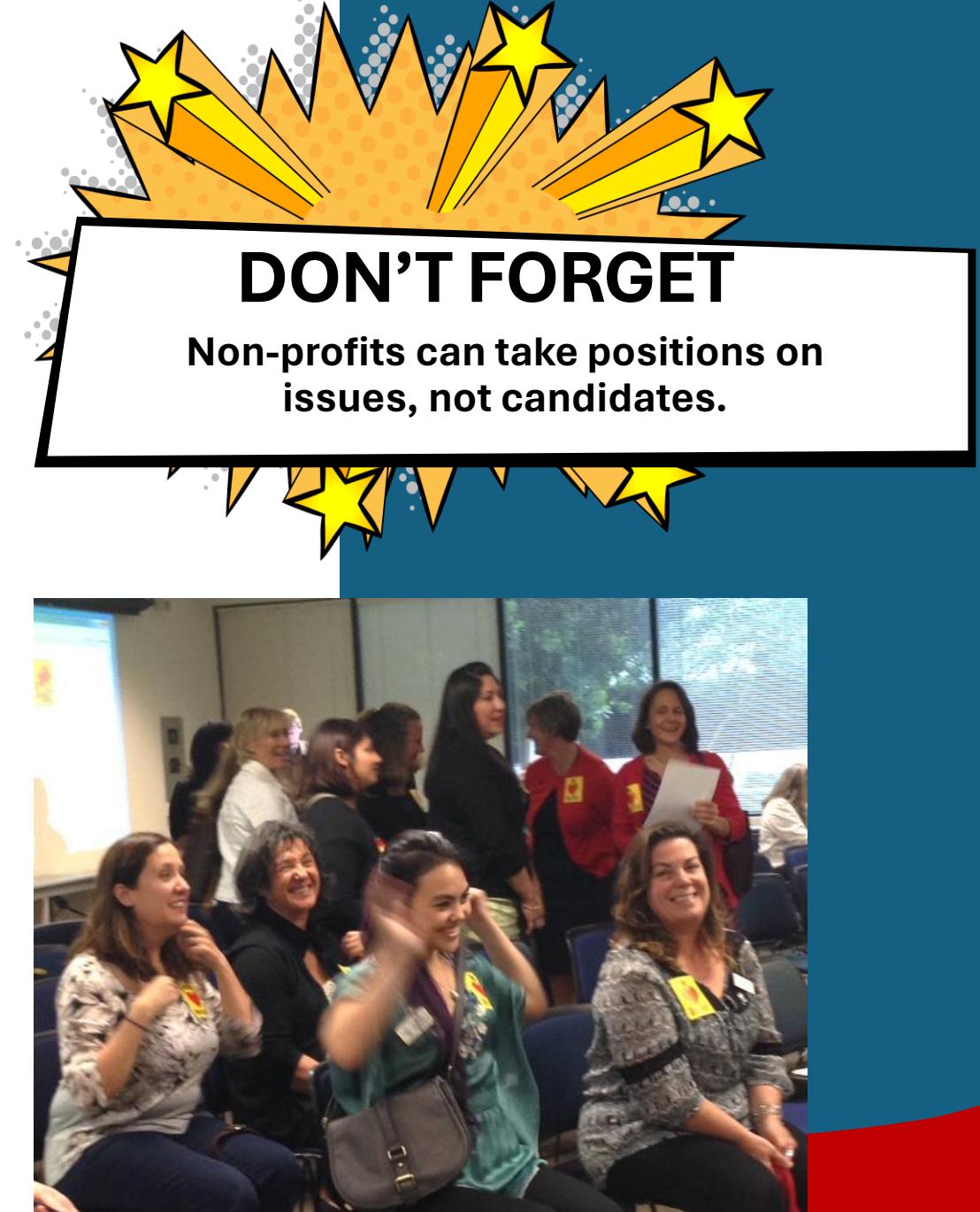
- Opening statements – short
- Same question for all and some individual questions
- Yes/No questions – put up cards for answers
- Candidates question each other
- Can include factual question – kid population?

Outreach

- Build a crowd – can have agencies make commitments for attendance. Should be predominantly voters.
- Publicize widely – social media, posters, phone banks
- If true, advertise as FIRST EVER candidate forum on kids, or run by youth.....

Follow-up

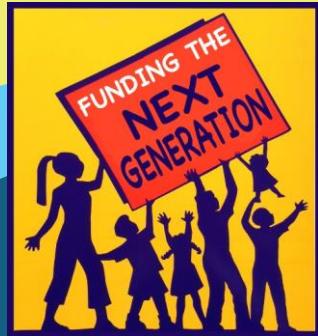
- Make video – publicize on social media
- Promote to print and electronic media, letter to editor
- Thank you letters to candidates – include commitments.
- Publicize candidate responses and promises.



PUTTING ALL THE PIECES TOGETHER: The 2023 Philadelphia Kids Campaign



- Campaign started in February with letter to candidates announcing campaign.
- 40 non-profits sponsored campaign.
- Included Kids' Agenda, pledges for candidates, partnership with tv station (pbs), questionnaires, final candidate debate.
- **link to article with videos and documents:**
- <https://whyy.org/articles/philadelphia-advocates-kids-campaign-mayoral-race-2023/>



Thank you

Contact

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**DON'T YOU WISH POLITICIANS
CARED AS MUCH ABOUT CHILDREN
AFTER THEY'RE ELECTED?**



YOU CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN.