

UC San Diego

UC San Diego News Center

By Jade Griffin

May 03, 2018



Michael Zamost speaks to students

Preuss School Students Organize “A Call for Change”

“When change comes—and it will come—it will be because of young people like you.”

These were words from Michael Zamost, a representative from Rep. Scott Peters’ office, to a group of nearly 200 students at The Preuss School—a charter middle and high school on the UC San Diego campus for low-income students who strive to become the first in their families to graduate from college.

While high school students across the nation held walkouts on April 20 in honor of the 19th anniversary of the Columbine High School shooting, student changemakers at The Preuss School channeled their efforts into a day dedicated to “A Call for Change.” Organizers created a slate of activities to encourage their fellow students to get involved in driving change for a better future.



Nina Do, ASB President, registers to vote

Students invited community leaders, elected officials and candidates for the District 4 County Supervisor seat to attend. Nina Do, one of the event organizers and the school’s ASB president welcomed students and guests to the auditorium.

“We want to ensure that students are heard on topics that are important to us,” Do said. “I know every one of you in this room is passionate about an issue. We are excited to have you all here today to discuss how we can become part of the democratic process and speak out on the issues that we care so deeply about.”

As part of the program, District 4 County Supervisor candidate Omar Passons discussed with students the importance of making themselves heard.

Passons recounted his challenges growing up in foster care. He encouraged the students to dream big, as he shared his journey to overcome adversity, become an attorney and now run for public office.



Omar Passons speaking to Preuss students

“I’m here to tell you that it gets better, there are options,” Passons said. “And you can drive change. In fact, this entire room could influence a policy issue or an election. But you have to vote to make change.”

Zamost added, “We see young people like you raising important issues like gun violence and it is truly inspiring to see.”

Following the community leader presentations, Preuss School teachers guided students on how to contact their legislators. College student volunteers from Next Gen

America—a non-partisan organization working to help Americans raise their voices—were also on hand to help students over the age of 18 register to vote. Students who are 16 and over were encouraged to pre-register.

Ermias, an 18-year-old Preuss senior, was one of many students to register to vote. "I am registering to show my voice," he said. "I believe this is the only way to be heard."

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