



## MEDIA ADVISORY

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### **Hundreds of Low-Income Youth Gather in Washington April 1 To Raise Their Voices and Offer Solutions to Ending Poverty in America**

- What:** “Our America” town hall, in which low-income young people share their recommendations for ending poverty in America
- When:** 7 – 8:30 p.m., April 1
- Where:** Lincoln Theatre, 1215 U St., NW, Washington, DC

***Editors’ note: Young leaders participating in Our America are available for interviews prior to the event. To contact them, please call Olivia Doherty at 301-656-0348.***

**WASHINGTON, DC**, -- Nearly 500 low-income young leaders will gather for the first-of-its-kind “Our America” youth town hall on April 1 to ensure their voices are part of the national political debate on ending poverty in America and related key issues affecting low-income young people, including public education, family, crime and the economy. Young leaders will also present their “Declaration of Interdependence,” a youth-written document detailing comprehensive policy recommendations on key issues.

The “Our America” gathering is being sponsored by YouthBuild USA and Think.MTV.com and is supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Hosted by MTV news correspondents Sway Calloway and Kim Stolz, the event will feature testimonies from young adult leaders about their lives growing up in low-income communities and a discussion about needed policy changes. Attendees will also hear from Poem-cees, a DC poetry and hip-hop performance group. More than 40 national organizations in 25 states are co-sponsoring the event.

“This is a unique gathering in which hundreds of low-income young people are sharing their experiences and solutions for ending poverty in America,” said Dorothy Stoneman, president and founder of YouthBuild USA, a national nonprofit in which low-income youth work toward their GEDs or high school diplomas while rebuilding affordable housing for poor people. “Our goal is to mobilize a national community of low-income young people who will take action to transform America’s most pressing problems.”

Participants in “Our America” include young people who have dropped out of high school, experienced homelessness, teen pregnancy, incarceration but are rising above such difficult challenges. On April 2, the day after the town hall gathering, young leaders from YouthBuild will spend the day meeting with members of Congress, talking about how YouthBuild helped them transform their lives and rebuild their communities.

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***YouthBuild*** is a youth and community development program that addresses core issues facing low-income communities including: housing, education, employment, crime prevention, and leadership

development. In YouthBuild programs, low-income young people ages 16-24 work toward their GED or high school diploma while learning job skills by building affordable housing for homeless and low-income people and participating in leadership development activities in their communities. For more information, visit [www.youthbuild.org](http://www.youthbuild.org).

**Think.MTV.com** is an online community where the biggest names in pop culture, as well as top non-profits and civic organizations, can join forces with young people to address pressing social issues. For more information, visit [www.think.mtv.com](http://www.think.mtv.com)

Co-sponsoring organizations for the “Our America” town hall include:

Afterschool Alliance	Learning Work Connection
Alternatives Schools Network	MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership
America Forward	National Association of Street Schools
America's Promise	National Collaborative for Youth
Association for Career and Technical Education	National Youth Employment Coalition
American Youth Policy Forum	Organized Youth for Educational Alternatives
Campaign for Youth	Public Allies
Chi Upsilon Sigma National Latin Sorority	Rebuilding Together
Citizens Schools	Risk Metrics Group
City Year	Sar Levitan Center, JHU
Coalition on Human Needs	Share Our Strengths
Communities in Schools	The Big Picture Company
Community Action Partnership	The Center for Community Change
Diploma Plus	The Corps Network
First Focus	The Young Peoples Project
Forum for Youth Investment	Wave Inc.
Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network	Year UP
I Have a Dream Foundation	Youth Advocate Program
Jobs for America's Graduates	Youth Service America
Jobs for the Future	