

NATIONAL PRESS CLUB LUNCHEON WITH CHRISTINA NORMAN, PRESIDENT, MTV NETWORKS

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MR. SALANT: Good afternoon and welcome to the National Press Club. I'm Jonathan Salant, a reporter for Bloomberg News and president of the press club. I'd like to welcome club members and their guests in the audience today as well as those of you watching on C-SPAN. The video archive of today's luncheon is provided by ConnectLive, and is available to club members through the press club's website at [www.press.org](http://www.press.org). Press club members may get free transcripts of our luncheons at our website. Nonmembers may buy videotapes, audiotapes and transcripts by calling 1-888-343-1940. For more information about joining the press club, please call us at area code 202-662-7511.

I'd like to welcome club members and their guests in the audience today as well as those watching on C-SPAN.

Before introducing our head table, I would like to remind our audience of future speakers. On May 8th, Senator Russ Feingold, a Wisconsin Democrat. And on May 9th, Dr. I. King Jordan, the president of Gallaudet University.

If you have any questions for our speaker, please write them on the cards provided at your table and pass them up to me. I will ask as many as time permits.

I'd like to now introduce our head table guests and ask them to stand briefly when their names are called. Please hold your applause until all of the head table guests are introduced. From your right -- Nick Johnson, associate editor for McGraw-Hill's (minerals ?) publications; Esther Whieldon, a market reporter for Platts and an active member of the ONE campaign and Beat for Life; Melissa Monk, circulation manager for King Publishing and the vice chair of the National Press Club's health committee; Lori Russo, vice president of Stanton Communications and the vice chair of the club's communications and marketing committee; Valentine Wilber, an attorney, a freelance writer and an EMT; Lauren McCollough, program manager for The Crimes of War Project; Luke Swarthout, Association of State Public Interest Research Groups; Angela Greiling Keane, associate editor of Traffic World and the vice chair of the speaker's committee. Speaking over our speaker for a moment -- Dipka Bhambhani, associate editor of McGraw-Hill and the speaker's committee member who organized today's luncheon -- and Dipka, thank you very much. Dipka also chairs our Events committee. Carlos Marquez, representing MTV's alternative spring break; Serafin Gomez, producer for Fox News Washington bureau; Thomas Burr, Washington reporter for the Salt Lake Tribune; Alicia Bowen (ph), Georgetown University's STAND, which is Students Taking Action Now on Darfur; and Mark Wojno, Keane Federal Systems and the Vice Chair of the club's oral history committee.

(Applause.)

Ever since the airing of "Video Killed the Radio Star" by The Buggles in 1981, MTV has changed the way we watch television and listen to music. The channel has helped make stars of groups like the Eurythmics, Bon Jovi and Culture Club. When Michael Jackson released the "Thriller" video, it was touted as a major event. Today, the Video Music Awards remain an MTV staple. The videos are no longer in prime time. You can watch MTV2 for those. But the channel remains extremely popular with its target audience -- 12 to 34-year-olds. MTV was where a Democratic presidential candidate named Bill Clinton was asked if he preferred boxers over briefs. The channels "Rock the Vote" and "Choose or Lose" campaigns were designed to get 18-year-olds to the polls.

Last week, MTV announced a new initiative, Break the Addiction, to encourage young people to fight global warming. Earlier this month, MTV announced it was starting a channel targeted at young Latinos preaching both American and Latin music.

MTV has made its mark in other ways as well. The quick cutaways that are the mainstay of TV production today has their origins at MTV. "The Real World," "Punk'd," "Beavis and Butthead," "The Osbournes" all were MTV productions. So, too, was the half-time show at the 2004 Super Bowl, in which Justin Timberlake and Janet Jackson experienced a wardrobe malfunction. That led to congressional calls for higher indecency fines and a \$550,000 fine leveled by the Federal Communications Commission against MTV's parent company Viacom.

The person responsible for MTV is Christina Norman, who began her career with the network in 1991, and went on to run sister channel VH1 before returning to head MTV last year. She grew

up in the South Bronx watching 1970 to 1980s television. At VH1, she reversed the channel's declining fortunes with programs such as "I Love the 70s" and "I Love the 80s" featuring the same pop culture she grew up with. As she told Multichannel News, "who knew that spending so much time in front of the television would actually pay off?" Under Ms. Norman's leadership, VH1 in 2004 recorded the highest prime time viewership in its history.

Today, Ms. Norman lives in Brooklyn with her family and describes herself as a fierce ice skater. The musician Sting begins Dire Straits' "Money for Nothing" with a refrain that could be an anthem for a generation of teenagers "I want my MTV." Well, we want the president of MTV. Let's welcome Christina Norman to the National Press Club. (Applause.)

MS. NORMAN: Thank you so much, Jonathan, for that great introduction. We found out earlier that we both have Bronx roots -- this is for the boogie down Bronx. It really is a pleasure to be here today speaking with all of you. You know, it's obvious that for almost a century, the National Press Club has been a forum to discuss the most pressing issues that our country faces, and I'm really honored to be here today. But I have to tell you, when I first started working at MTV, I never thought I would end up on C-SPAN.

Most of all, I'm excited to have the opportunity to share one of my passions with you, and one that's been at the heart of MTV for nearly 25 years -- youth activism. Now, you know, young people get a bad rap in this country. Most recently, they've been criticized for spending too much time on the Internet, playing video games and not enough time actively engaged with the world. According to this view, the Y in Gen Y isn't just the letter, it's the apathetic question "why bother?" But that's really a superficial view. Scratch below the surface and you're going to find a generation that's inspired to make a difference and have their voices heard.

At MTV, we have been pulling out the latent activist inside of our audience since we blasted onto the scene 25 years ago beginning with, as Jonathan said, "I want my MTV." The spirit of rebellion is part of our rock and roll DNA. That's what I meant by permanent youth revolution. You know, every generation of young people has chafed against the world they've inherited and they've wanted to remake it in their own image. They're the innovators who won't settle for the status quo and challenge everything. They've made us confront apartheid in South Africa, pushed women into positions of leadership and woke us up to the digital revolution.

It's our mission at MTV and our privilege to focus that revolutionary energy and to build tomorrow's leaders. Now, we do it all through a three-step mantra: engage, educate and empower. Engage young people on the issues they care about. Educate them about those issues. And empower them to take action that's going to make a difference. When we've spoken to our audience in this way, the response has been nothing short of overwhelming. Hundreds of thousands of young people taking action and millions doing what politicians, the media, their teachers and parents said they never would. Today, I want to share with you how we elicit that response.

At MTV, we've always believed that it's our responsibility not only to entertain, but to engage young people on the issues that they care about. So, how is it that we learn what it is that they do care about? Well, we do it through a dedication and constant dialogue. We do it through a ton of

research. I'm going to show you how we get inside of their heads to the point that sometimes we understand them better than they understand themselves. It's guided every single one of our pro-social campaigns, and it's led to remarkable results.

I'm also excited to share with you today an example of just that type of research. After 25 years of addressing our audience on issues like discrimination, sexual health and school violence, we decided it was time to take a comprehensive look at our audience today and what activism means for them right now. I'll be unveiling for the first time the results of a new study called Just Cause. Now, the future leaders of Gen Y, they're finding their voices right now and this study shines a light on their lives, and what anybody who hopes to speak to them, to mobilize them and reach them, what they need to know.

Next, I'm going to tell you about how we're using some of what we've learned to develop our newest pro-social campaign, and engage the leaders of tomorrow on the causes that they care about now.

And finally, what does it all mean for the rest of us -- the leaders and media today? How can we really speak to and motivate this hard-to-reach, insular audience? How do you engage, educate and empower them? What specific steps can we all take to build tomorrow's activist leaders?

At MTV, we're lucky to have a unique relationship with young people. Ever since the channel was founded, young people have been our obsession and our passion. Now, if you're cynical, you might say it's because they're also our business, but for most of us, it's actually the other way around. We are in constant conversation with them. They let us into their lives because they trust us, because we show them their favorite stars and play them the music that they love. We entertain them every single day and we never talk down to them. That also gives us a chance to speak to them about the issues that they care about. And believe me, they do care about issues. Celebrity glossies to the contrary, young people today care about a lot more than just style, glamour and Angelina and Brad's baby. I know this may come as a surprise to some of you, but sex sells and the flashy stuff grabs headlines.

Yes, young people like to be entertained, but like every generation, they're also struggling with questions of identity and purpose. They are developing their opinions on faith and spirituality and reexamining their views on every issue. For us to truly speak to them, we have to engage them on these concerns. That's the only way we can maintain our unique relationship with them, which in turn feeds the success that we've had as a company. Sometimes, that's organic through the entertainment that we provide.

Now our show, "The Real World," which is the original reality TV series, follows seven young people living in a house and coming face to face with many of the same issues that the audience deals with. They seem themselves or people they know and it's that relatability that keeps it popular 15 years after those first seven strangers moved into a loft in New York City. Young people on "The Real World" have struggled with the loss of a parent, anorexia, suicide, HIV, binge drinking. And when we do select a serious topic in the show's story lines, we point young people toward resources via our website, toll-free numbers and lots more that can educate them on issues and empower them to take action.

Sometimes, issues raised in our entertainment programs have been the spark to launch a channel-wide pro-social campaign. In 1994, on "The Real World - San Francisco" 22-year-old Pedro Zamora became the first openly gay, HIV positive main character on television. His story led to our channel more aggressively addressing sexual health, which ultimately evolved, as I'll show you later, into our multi-tiered Protect Yourself campaign. Of course, for any of these campaigns to have an impact, they need to speak to our audience about the concerns they really have.

So as much as some of us might care about welfare reform, it's typically not a hot button issue with youth. We get inside their heads through constant dialogue. MTV spends more time on lifestyle research than any other media brand in the world. We've been monitoring youth taste and trends ever since the channel launched almost 25 years ago. And it's not just the quantity of the research -- which is, you know, vast -- it's the insanity. Our research team hangs out in coffee shops and videotapes young people in their homes. They throw around terms like audience dynamic behavior mapping and in-situ perspective. You practically need a translator to know what they're talking about sometimes.

Now that specific knowledge about what our audience thinks, feels and believes has led us to create pro-social campaigns that educate, engage and empower them on the issues that they care about. Typically, the point of engagement is a global or national event, from an election to, unfortunately, a hurricane. We then educate them about the issues with great shows, public service announcements, online support materials and a wide variety of multi-platform content. Finally, we give them grassroots activities and empower them to take action.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, we organized a relief concert that aired on MTV with performances available for a whole month afterwards on MTV Overdrive, which is our broadband channel. We dispatched our news correspondents to the Gulf Coast to see how young people were coping, and we produced a series of PSAs featuring artists encouraging young people to stay involved in this issue.

Of course, we also work with experts. These campaigns would be useless without a backend of accurate, relevant information. We've worked with organizations from the Ford Foundation the Department of Education to youth empowerment groups to make sure that when we do engage young people, we have the best materials with which to educate them and useful actions we can empower them to undertake.

MTV's most recognized pro-social campaign is our Choose or Lose election effort. Every presidential year since 1992, we've tried to make the political personal for young people and bring the candidates and the issues to them. We engage them everywhere they are, and in 2004 that meant going beyond what we typically had done on air. We scheduled local meet ups through meetup.com. We produced a music video urging them to vote that starred characters from their favorite video games. We even staged contests with both the RNC and the DNC to have a youth speaker at each of the presidential conventions. And then, we educated them. We had interviews with the candidates and shows that unpacked the issues that mattered most to young people's lives, from the war in Iraq to the economy. And we, of course, empowered them to take action by registering them to vote and encouraging them to get to the polls and make

themselves heard on election day. In 2004, our goal was to get 20 million young people to vote. Now, that's a hugely ambitious number and we were blown away when we exceeded that goal by over 10 percent. More than 22 million young people showed up at the polls.

In 1999, Columbine had just happened. Our audience was scared about school violence, and they didn't have the tools to combat it, and they were asking for us to help. Eighty-two percent of young people were saying there's no one better to address the issue of violence and guns in the schools than MTV, and that's how our massive channel-wide initiative Fight for Your Rights: Take a Stand Against Violence was born. We educated them through programming like "Warning Signs," an investigation of the psychological factors that can drive a young person to violence. We produced that with the American Psychological Association, and it showed our audience how to recognize those signs in themselves and in their friends and how to get some help. The American Psychological Association took that program into the schools and used it as a tool to reach over 150,000 kids.

In 2001, we heard that 90 percent of our audience felt that discrimination was a major issue, but only 4 percent thought they were part of the problem. We felt it was time to expand our Fight for Your Rights initiative. Working with advocacy groups from the Anti-Discrimination League to GLAAD to the National Council of La Raza, we started our Take a Stand Against Discrimination campaign. To really engage our audience on this issue, we marked the campaign by going completely dark. I mean, we pulled the plug on the channel for over 17 hours so we could scroll the names of victims of hate crimes. We educated them by devoting over 200 hours of airtime to the issue, including an original movie that we produced "Anatomy of a Hate Crime" about the death of Matthew Shepherd. And an episode of our show "Flipped" where the lives of a young African American and a young white person were switched.

After September 11th, we focused the campaign on combating the discrimination that arose against Arab and Muslim Americans, and also exploring the murderous hate that drove the terrorist attackers. And we were most proud that our campaign empowered thousands of young people to join anti-discrimination organizations in their own communities, taking their activism from their armchairs into the streets.

In 2002, people under 25 constituted a majority of the new HIV infections and two-thirds of all STDs occurring annually in the U.S. Every hour, two Americans under 25 were becoming infected with HIV. Young people were telling us that sexual health was their number one concern. That cry for information led to our Fight for Your Rights: Protect Yourself sexual health initiative. MTV's actually been addressing the AIDS crisis for nearly 20 years. In 1988, we were the first network to air the AIDS PSAs from Musicians for Life. And as I mentioned, Pedro Zamora's story on "The Real World - San Francisco" in 1984 led us to really escalate our commitment to AIDS and sexual health information. For a lot of our audience, Pedro Zamora was the first person that they knew who contracted AIDS and died from it. We engaged our audience on both the basic facts of sexual health and also the subtle emotional ones. We had on-air programming and PSAs, a comprehensive website, a sexual health guide and local community forums. We even took the campaign on the road, making it part of our Campus Invasion Tour that hit college campuses across the country. Most importantly, we changed behavior. Among people who saw the campaign, 66 percent said they were more likely to wait to

become sexually active, and almost three-fourths said they were more likely to use protection, to talk to a partner and to get testing.

These campaigns were successful because we engaged young people about the issues that they had concerns about. We never talked down to them. We educated them on the issues that were relevant to their lives. And we empowered them with tools and actions.

However, young people today are significantly different than their older brothers and sisters. Over the past two years, when you've opened a newspaper or a magazine, you've read that nobody is being affected by the digital revolution as much as MTV's audience. They're checking their e-mail, texting their friends, chatting on the Internet and downloading music all while they're still doing their homework. Now, young people don't see entertainment as just TV shows anymore. If they love a 30-minute program, they also want to see the outtakes over broadband, they want to buy the DVD and they want to download the ringtone. We know Generation Y views activism in much the same way. The world is flat for them and they're seeing live video of crises 1,000 miles away unfolding on their computer screens.

To really understand them, we launched Just Cause, a comprehensive research study that explored how youths perceive activism and how they become active in social causes today. We wanted to learn the best way to engage, educate and empower this new generation of young people. We've been in this game for a while, and on the eve of our 25th anniversary, it felt like the right time for a study like this. And to see how successful we are at acting on what we learn, we've already scheduled a follow up on Just Cause for next year.

Our research team conducted 98 in-person interviews, interviews with activist experts, had over a thousand online survey respondents and even asked young people to create a virtual journal of their time volunteering, complete with pictures and their own commentary. I'm excited to reveal the results here today for the first time.

Now, the first thing we learned was that young people's idea of community is changing.

As you might expect, in a world where a young person can share music with one friend down the street and another one across the globe, community isn't limited anymore by geography. Technology draws the lines differently. Young people are in constant contact, whether they're IMing from home or texting from a concert.

The term "community" encompasses all the people and places to which they feel connected. In a trend that we're calling "potting," young people create a virtual community around themselves of people who share their own interests and passions. The heart of that is still local, of course, and 85 percent -- the family and friends -- form the core of their community. But while those friends could be people in their neighborhoods, they could also be from other states or even foreign countries who they've met with and corresponded with online.

As one of our resource respondents, a 22-year-old named Ahmal (ph) said, "I think it's intangible. I don't think a zip code is a community. I think it's more when people share interests and thoughts and can nurture each other and feed off of each other." Those interests could be

music, hobbies or even the cause of activism itself. As I'll show you shortly, that sort of activist group has helped us issue calls to action on some of their greatest concerns.

Furthermore, when it comes to activism, they have an innate desire to help. Even if change is slow and incremental, they believe that helping even one life is worthwhile -- both for the life they aid and for the example that they set. Seventy-five percent of involved youth say that wanting to help others is what drives them to get involved. And the young people we spoke to strongly agree that making even a small difference in someone's life is worth the effort.

Dylan (sp), who's 13 and from Texas, put it like this: "You don't have to do something big, just do something. Every little bit helps." Maybe it's no surprise, but in the world of blogs and text and constant communication, that premium is put on doing something rather than just speaking out. Leadership, it seems, has come to mean action.

They feel particularly strongly about contributing in their communities. Issues that hit close to home are most likely to drive young people to action. Sixty-two percent say that the issues that really matter to them are the ones that have touched them directly or someone that they know. Fourteen-year-old Michelle (sp) said, "I donate money for cancer because I have a really good friend that died from cancer."

Family members, they're also huge motivators. Seventy percent of middle schoolers say that their parents' encouragement played a big role in getting them to volunteer. A 24-year-old named Jennifer (sp) told us, "My parents always instilled us to be grateful and to not take anything for granted. In a loving, encouraging way, they gave us the drive to want to be better people. It's just that -- it just kind of developed over the years. And I saw them doing service and they would lead by example."

I'm sure some of you have seen that in your own lives, as I have. Seeing how activism is important to me has inspired my own kids. My younger daughter, Asha (sp), who's here today -- it's Take Your Kids to Work Day -- (laughter) -- she's made a donation to her favorite charity the only gift she will accept at her birthday parties. She's collected food for the homeless, appealed to the mayor to save our local zoo and raised money for AIDS orphans in Africa. Now, her older sister, she's not quite ready to give up the presents just yet, but she's working with her school to go green because the environment is the cause that really means something to her.

The good news: My children aren't the only ones and they're not unique in their dedication. Their entire generation is already taking action. Sixty-eight percent report doing something in the last month, and 82 percent describe themselves as at least somewhat involved. However, there is significant room for growth. Less than a third do something on a weekly basis, and interest levels are notably higher than involvement levels. Twice as many young people are very interested as are very involved, and over four times as many are not involved -- not at all involved -- as are not at all interested. What that translates to is there's a lot of young people who'd get involved, but they just don't know how. We call this the activation gap.

So we needed to know, how do we move these young people from the interested but not involved camp to the interested and involved camp? It's not just a question of stressing the importance of

giving back or getting involved. They already know that it's the right thing to do and they know that they should be active.

For example, a lot of young people have enthusiasm, but after agreeing wholeheartedly to be part of a volunteer project, many of them are never heard from again. How do we actually get them out onto the streets? While they believe in helping their communities, something stops them from taking action on this belief. We found that there are three main barriers to their involvement.

First, young people are eager to participate, but they haven't always been offered the guidance or the mentoring that showed them how. We heard from a 17-year-old who said, "A lot of people don't join programs because they just don't know about them."

Second, there's been a lack of encouragement to get them more involved. Some youth think it's just not in them to volunteer.

And third, they find it difficult to fit volunteer activities into their busy, mobile lives. They feel they just don't have the time to volunteer.

So what can be done to increase their level of activity? Our research shows that young people will be more active, one, if they're encouraged in just the right way to give back; two, if they have a clear understanding of how an issue or cause has touched their lives; and three, if they have flexible, fun volunteer activities that they can join -- particularly activities that they can do with their friends. In fact, young people mentioned volunteering with friends more often than any other factor when asked what could help get them -- could spur them to be involved.

Churches and organized religion are already doing an amazing job of motivating them. Faith moves our audience, and young people feel that being true to their spiritual beliefs inspires them towards being good people and helping others. As Michelle, who's 20 years old, told us, all the gods -- whatever god of your choosing -- they all say you should help others.

We also learned that strategies for increasing their involvement should focus on the new ways that young people are interacting and experiencing community. They should leverage the technologies that young people are using to make sense of the world around them; or seen through the lens of our first social mantra, we need to engage them through the multiplatform tools that they use everyday to structure their lives, educate them on how these issues are relevant to their lives, and empower them with clear, turnkey steps they can take to get involved -- especially ways they can be involved with their friends.

With our most recent pro-social campaigns, MTV is acting on what our audience is telling us. We're providing the guidance and direction that young people are demanding and generating amazing results. I want to go back to our work around Hurricane Katrina because I actually did that a bit of a disservice.

As I mentioned, we first held "React Now," a live concert, and it aired not only on MTV, but across CMT and VH1 as well. And that offered support to the those whose lives were devastated

by the hurricane and encouraged donations from the audience. Now, in the past, that might have just been enough, but we heard from the audience that they wanted to do more. They literally wanted to rebuild homes in the Gulf region, but nobody was telling them how. We wanted to give these young people and others eager to get involved the means to do so.

In response, we launched a multiplatform campaign, encouraging our audience to take an alternative spring break. The devastation of Hurricane Katrina had already engaged them. We educated them about how they could help out, and then we empowered them with the tools they would need to spend their time off doing something meaningful, whether it was across the world or their backyard.

Because they want simple, specific actions, we connected them to groups like Break Away and Ahmezade (sp) that provided resources and volunteer opportunities that they can do in groups. Because we know they want to get involved in their local communities, we had a zip code search function where they could find local organizations where they could participate. And because we want to find a way to involve those who feel like they don't have the time, we have a list of top 10 things to do -- top 10 tips to volunteer for those who might not want to dedicate their entire time to activism.

The outpouring of energy from our audience was tremendous. Students volunteered everywhere, from a homeless shelter in Florida to an orphanage to Africa. We also partnered with the United Way, the largest nonprofit in the country, to launch our Storm Corps. We sent almost 100 young people, out of thousands of applicants from every part of the country, to the Gulf Coast. From March 11th through 17th, the Storm Corps descended on Biloxi, Mississippi and Foley, Alabama. We gave them simple, fun ways to get involved in a large group, and they spent the week clearing fields, gutting houses and building fences. Sixteen houses were gutted for mold problems; 10 new roofs were installed; a battered women's shelter and a center for the deaf were repaired and landscaped; clothes and food were delivered to those in need; animals were rescued; and 60 bags of pet food were delivered. And as Carl (sp) has told me, they also walked a few dogs.

Most important to us, we made activism direct and personal and attainable for 100 young people who will take what they learned on the Gulf Coast out into the world with them as future activist leaders and models for their peers.

I have with me here today one of those young people. Carlos Marquez (sp) was inspired by watching Coretta Scott King and Condoleezza Rice speak about the nation's continuing fight for equality. When Katrina hit, he saw the very real devastation that racial inequality can cause and knew that he had to take action. By broadcasting Carlos' (sp) story of engagement and response, we gave our audience a clear model of how they too could go out into their communities and affect positive change.

Last year, MTV's college channel, mtvU, launched its Sudan campaign. Without a strong national response, it's been local, community-based activism that has really raised the profile of the crisis in Darfur. For example, I was walking through downtown Brooklyn where I live and there's a parking lot for a company called Park Fast (sp) -- I have a picture on my cell phone --

and they took over their LED monitor to write, "Stop Darfur," encouraging people to come down to D.C. to the march, which I thought was such a great way to mobilize people locally. And seeing that the guys who run my parking lot are one of the prime activists in my community now. (Laughter.)

Similarly, there was an interconnected community of college students around the country who for months have been protesting against this crisis, but nobody was listening to them. We took this virtual activist community and broadcast their voices around the nation through our airwaves. Through programming, PSAs and a website, we engaged our audience on this crisis. We educated them with the facts of what was happening in Darfur and why it was relevant to them. We flew three students to the Sudan to witness firsthand the atrocities that were occurring and to capture their experiences for the mtvU college audience in our documentary, "Translating Genocide."

The mtvU audience saw other young people, students like themselves whose lives have been destroyed. We also wanted to empower our audience with specific actions they could take to help raise awareness. To that end, last year we called around students -- we called upon students nationwide to stand fast and sacrifice one small daily luxury, like coffee or bagels, and donate the money they saved for the crisis in Darfur. This was a simple, fun thing that students could easily share with their friends and it fit into their hectic lives, but enacted across the country at over 200 campuses, now it had a huge national impact.

We also profiled some of the young people who are leading the charge to serve as both models and inspirations to their peers. It's my honor to have here today Alicia Bowen (sp). In her freshman year at Georgetown, she joined STAND -- Students Taking Action Now Darfur. Since then, she's helped coordinate a national conference of student activists and raised money for a secondary school that STAND opened in Darfur last year. As the chief liaison between STAND and other organizations, Alicia (sp) is one of those young people who is directly motivating her peers. I'm really happy that she's here with us today.

I'm also excited to announce that this Sunday we're unveiling a new part of our Sudan campaign. We wanted to bring the campaign fully into the digital realm, to really engage college students through the media that they use most. We all know how much young people love video games, so we launched a context challenging them to create a viral computer game to raise awareness about genocide in the Sudan. Now, I know that at first blush this sounds like a crazy idea, to use a video game to teach people about genocide. One of the things we also found out is that hate groups have been using video games to advance their cause. So there are games out there like, "Ethnic Cleansing" and "Concentration Camp Rat Hunt," and there are hate groups, like Neo-Nazi National Alliance, that are trying to co-op that space. And that's what makes these activist games all the more important. In this contested space, they're a kind of megaphone -- a clarion call to action on a vital issue that builds and strengthens a community dedicated to standing up for the right ideals.

This Sunday at the Save Darfur rally at the Washington Mall, we're having Olympic gold medalist Joey Cheek -- those are heavy gold medals -- unveil the winner. Through kiosks at the

mall, young people will be able to start sending it to their friends, beginning its spread across the web and, hopefully, into the consciousness of a new generation.

And Nicholas Kristof at The New York Times challenged the country when he wrote, "We should take a look at MTV," writing that mtvU is doing more than any other network or cable channel to raise awareness about the crisis in Sudan. He felt so strongly about our campaign that he joined it. And together, we launched an initiative to find one student who will travel with him on a fact-finding mission in Africa.

MTV's newest pro-social campaign is, "Break the Addiction," a response to the president's State of the Union address warning about our country's addiction to oil and an increasing national debate on global warming. In the past two months, Vanity Fair, El and Time have all had cover stories on the subject. It's also an issue that the evangelical community has adopted. And as I mentioned before, we know that faith is one of our audience's prime motivators.

But while our audience is concerned about the environment, most of them don't feel like there's anything they can do. For a lot of them, it's global and it's vague. They hear their leaders talking about polar icecaps and wonder what it has to do with their backyard. We're going to engage them through a 12-step program to help break their addiction that we'll be broadcasting on air, online and over wireless.

We're going to educate them about how this issue is relevant to their communities -- how global warming affects they confront every day, like high gas prices, Katrina and the Iraq War; and its impact on health issues like asthma and obesity, which are particularly alarming in the African-American community. And we're going to empower them by giving them simple, fun actions they can take to help the environment and, in the course, save themselves some money -- a new tip for every day of the year of something they can do to help the environment, delivered wherever they are: on air, online and on their cell phones. Move your thermostat here down two degrees in winter and up two degrees in the summer and save yourselves 100 bucks a year. So remember that come June when your kids are fiddling with the controls.

We'll supplement those tips with an online carbon calculator that will enable our audience to actually measure their carbon and cost savings as they take these daily actions and track their progress over time. The goal is to get them to understand the impact environmental issues have for each and every one of them, and in the process to save a ton of carbon over the course of the campaign -- a realistic goal that they can achieve through these individual steps.

We're also going to introduce them to young people who are leading the charge. Our audience wants to learn how they can get involved, and so we'll profile leaders who can help them do just that. I actually have one of those leaders here with me today. Luke Schwarzah (sp) spent his four years at Amherst organizing on state and federal energy policy, wilderness issues and youth voting. He helped create a statewide campaign urging Governor Mitt Romney to commit Massachusetts to strong reductions in global warming pollution. And in the spring of 2004, he helped bring together more than 300 student leaders in a climate conference to build the student movement to stop global warming.

Throughout all of his work, he's focused on engaging other young people. He's been quoted in papers, including The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Chicago Tribune and USA Today as a youth leader and advocate for students. By focusing the campaign spotlight on him and his peers, we're giving our audience models of how they, too, can get involved in their communities.

That's our approach to activating young people. But what can the media, including MTV, and national leaders do to speak to them? First, the best way to engage the digital generation is to speak their language, and believe me, it doesn't always mean saying, "fo' shizzle." It's about encouraging their individual activism across the platforms that they inhabit. Young people grab information in small bites from numerous sources: use the web, use blogs, use online video. All those things can reinforce your message.

Second, it's vital to educate them about how national issues affect their lives. By creating an interactive website, we can show the relationship between global issues and local results.

Third, and most vitally, empower them with fun, simple actions they can take to have an impact. They're looking for a way in and the media really have the ability to show them the door.

In the media, though, we have another "E," and that's "encourage." We need to celebrate their contributions and not label them as the actions of just some kid, I mean, because you know what? Some 17-year-old kid is going to be sitting in the White House in 30 years. Young people are craving examples to model their behavior on, guiding lights who've managed to make a difference in their communities.

We can profile the young person who volunteers monthly alongside with the ones who put in time every day and show that there's no right or wrong way to get involved. Of course, we'll never stop celebrating people like Carlos (sp) and Alicia (sp) and Luke (sp), but we need to make some room for the Storm Corps volunteers, the ones who might have been passive sort of watchers until they were engaged by an issue that moved them. All of these examples show young people that they really can have an impact.

MTV's been engaging young people for 25 years. We've worked with everyone from the government to foundations to local activist groups to speak to them about their concerns. Right now, in addition to our campaign partnerships, we have a growing relationship with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to address education and the high school dropout crisis.

And we don't limit our focus to the United States. MTV has 50 channels in 168 countries or territories, reaching over 440 million households. We think the MTV mission, while it starts here in America, ultimately means speaking to every young person in the world.

We're always looking to work with you to accomplish that -- like mtvU's upcoming trip with Nicholas Kristof -- and we'd like to work with you to find some others.

We know that these opportunities can open the eyes of young people to the world and give them hope. And we also know that once they get started, they'll get hooked and spend their lifetime knowing that they can make a difference every day.

Young people today face a daunting world of terrorism, war, genocide, HIV, new viral diseases that threaten to create global pandemics and the prospect of environmental meltdown. The global problems of tomorrow seem limitless and beyond the scope of individual actions.

But they also face a world rich with the promise of technology, cures, peace, creativity and sustainability. That's our job, to believe in that promise, foster that activist impulse and give them the confidence to lead us to tomorrow.

I'll never believe that we can't save the world. But maybe it's time for me to realize that I need to pass the torch to the next generation, to educate, empower and engage them. That's the true spirit of rebellion. That's at the heart of rock and roll. That's the real permanent youth revolution.

So I leave you today with these words, written by a poet and passed down in a time-honored tradition: "Rock on." (Laughter, applause.)

MR. SALANT: We have a lot of questions for you.

We begin -- you stated that your youthful audience likes to be engaged in issues. But how does MTV avoid divisive, hot political issues such as marriage of gays and lesbians, immigration and the war in Iraq?

MS. NORMAN: Do you want me to get up here?

MR. SALANT: Yes, please.

MS. NORMAN: I don't think we ever set out to avoid political issues. I think we set out to educate our audience on the totality of that issue and let them form their own opinions and let them decide what action they need to take that's appropriate for them.

So as we've done with the election, as we've done with the war -- and I was mentioning this yesterday -- that we're in the midst of trying to plan some sort of event that we'd like to do around Veterans Day this year. You know, it does not escape us that the people that are fighting and dying in Iraq are our audience members, and you know, our audience knows people who are fighting there. And I don't know that that's a political issue, but it's important for us to put that out there and to find a way to celebrate that sacrifice.

So I don't think it's about avoiding issues. I think it's about making sure that we can present a complete view.

MR. SALANT: Your series "Made," a self-improvement program that follows participants as they receive expert advice in how to achieve a goal, has been around for four seasons. The webpage that accompanies the series encourages young people to seek mentors. Do you have any

statistics, or at least a strong impression, on how much influence the series actually has had in getting teens and young adults to seek mentors?

MS. NORMAN: I know that young people believe that mentors are hugely important in their life, and I know that a lot of them look to their parents and the other adults in their life as mentors.

So while they may not always be able to get a coach to help them win a beauty contest, I think that they look in their own communities for people who they admire and who they want to emulate in order to find those mentors.

MR. SALANT: This questioner wants to know: Why is it television's role to be an activist? Why not just focus on entertainment?

MS. NORMAN: I don't know about television's role. I'm here to talk about MTV's role. And we believe that our role is to educate and inspire a generation. You know, I think that that's been, again, the spirit of youth, the spirit of music, and it's something that we definitely take seriously.

You know, we are talking about the leadership of tomorrow, and I think that we do have a responsibility to make sure that they're as informed and entertained and well-rounded as they can be.

MR. SALANT: Will MTV age as its target demographic age? Are you just going to let the current viewers leave and engage new 18- to 34- year-olds?

MS. NORMAN: Is that talking about me personally? Because I know I am aging, okay? (Laughter.) No need to point that out. I want to meet that questioner.

MTV's target demographic is 18- to 24-year-olds. You know, it's a rite of passage, I think, for young people. There's always a new crop of young people who are ready to find something where they can connect with MTV. There's always new music, there's always new issues. So I think that we will continue to serve the young people in this country and the world.

MR. SALANT: Having headed both MTV and VH-1, do you see the stations as competitors, even though they're both part of Viacom? Or do they focus on different markets?

MS. NORMAN: MTV and VH-1 focus on different demographics. The VH-1 demographic is older -- the demo that I was in at one point, too. And MTV's demographic is younger. I mean, we are collaborative, we are supportive of each other. They sit four floors below us. So we have a lot in common and a lot to share and learn from each other.

MR. SALANT: This questioner says, "When we were growing up, MTV separated the liberal rebellion kids from the studious, more conservative types. With the development of the company, are you attempting to close that gap?"

MS. NORMAN: I don't know about separating people as much as I think what music has always done is joined people, is bring them together. So I think that that was what was so exciting for me about MTV was that, you know, you were able to see and share in this community of music and of ideas and of entertainment that mirrored the experiences of my peers and other young people. So I think that that's still what we achieve (sic) to do.

MR. SALANT: When advocacy groups, such as the Family Research Council, campaign for allowing consumers to buy individual cable channels rather than packages, they single out MTV as one of the channels they don't want in their homes because they say the channel glorifies sex, drugs and violence.

What is your reaction to this?

MS. NORMAN: I think it's unfortunate that there are people who have based an opinion on MTV despite having never really watched MTV. And I think that that's one of the things that we've seen a lot in the past. And the MTV of today is very different than the one that they might remember. And again, it is a mix of music and shows and ideas. And I think that it's our responsibility to reach out to young people and to offer them that alternative.

The other alternative, of course, is that there are parental controls and that people who don't want MTV in their homes don't have to have it.

But I think ultimately we believe that the choice of cable is a good thing and that's one that we support.

MR. SALANT: What are your thoughts about the way -- according to this questioner -- young women are being sexually subjugated in music videos and reality programs? And does that conflict with your efforts to promote social campaigns to help young people's self-image?

MS. NORMAN: Well, we don't make the music videos and we don't censor artists. We do have a rigorous standards and practice department and we do make sure that everything that goes on MTV is screened by our own standards and practices department, and there's nothing that goes on MTV that does not pass through our standards. You know, that said, I also think that the audience has been smart about voting with their remotes. And artists whose images that they don't appreciate and shows whose images they don't appreciate, they don't watch, and then those things are soon no longer on the air of any network.

MR. SALANT: This questioner takes exception to MTV's Real World, wants to know how is MTV's Real World, which makes celebrities of young people dedicated by and large to partying and their sexuality, influence the values of America's teens and young adults?

MS. NORMAN: You know, as I said in my remarks before, I think that there are generations of young people who have been exposed to things through "The Real World," be it AIDS, be it discrimination. You know, those are all things that I think happen when those seven strangers live in a house and different viewpoints come together. So I don't necessarily believe that "The

Real World" glorifies anything. And I do think that it is an entertainment program that also has an ability to teach people something about other folks that they don't necessarily know.

MR. SALANT: As a follow-up, this questioner writes, "Will we ever see a Real World Salt Lake City? (Laughter.)

MS. NORMAN: Who knows? If that's a pitch, I mean, you know, we'll talk afterwards.

MR. SALANT: You made "Beavis and Butt-Head" a success. How did you do that? (Laughter.)

MS. NORMAN: Trade secrets. You know, Beavis and Butt-Head are great characters who are actually enjoying an incredible renaissance on MTV right now. The home videos are available. They've been a huge hit in wireless. And a whole new generation of young people are discovering the joys of Beavis and Butt-Head. (Laughter.) My parents are very proud.

MR. SALANT: One more question about programming. MTV in Germany aired "Popetown," which press reports say is a satirical cartoon series lampooning the Vatican that shows a -- quoting now -- "a crazy pope as a pogo stick-riding brat." An MTV ad showed a smiling Jesus and an empty cross, with the slogan, "Laugh instead of hanging around." Does MTV plan to lampoon other religions? And how did MTV choose to lampoon the pope?

MS. NORMAN: MTV Germany made a decision to acquire that program, and it's one that they feel comfortable airing in their territory. We have no intentions of airing it in the U.S. And each channel is allowed to make its own programming decisions. But again, we have a Standards and Practices Department, and we take care to not air anything that would be considered disrespectful or offensive and have, in fact, taken some things off that have proven to be that.

MR. SALANT: Will MTV ever live up to the "M" in its name once again and focus primarily on music on its flagship channel?

MS. NORMAN: You know, I was talking about technology before, too. And the great thing about technology is that it's enabled all of these other outlets at which the "M" on MTV continues to thrive. So, of course, music videos are still on MTV, although not as prominently as they may have once been. MTV2 is a huge outlet for music videos. MTV Tres (3), which is the Latin channel that was mentioned before, is going to be a music video channel. We have MTV Desi, which celebrates South Asian music; MTV Chi, Chinese music; MTVK, which is launching soon, Korean music. So clearly there is far more music out there in the world than one MTV can sustain. Also through MTV Overdrive viewers can access and watch thousands of music videos whenever they want to. And I think that that, again, is the beauty of the Internet, is the ability to be able to dive deep into that selection that you want, but also to be able to go into our broader channels and see the wider mix of music as well.

MR. SALANT: Speaking of MTV Tres, is that going to be a channel where you would engage the Latino community on issues like immigration?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Absolutely.

MS. NORMAN: Well, I mean, you know, it's up to us to talk to the audience and find out what are the issues that are concerning them right now. And those are the issues that will find their way onto MTV Tres.

MR. SALANT: Last May MTV announced that initiative with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which you alluded to earlier, to close the ambition gap, which is described as the gap between young people's desire for a college education and the reality of actually getting one. Could you update us on the progress of the initiative?

MS. NORMAN: We're having great discussions with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and are really trying to put together a comprehensive plan that will allow every student in this country to achieve their goals. Ian Rowe is here; he's the head of Public Affairs with MTV, and he's been front-line in those discussions. And we should have something further to announce later this year.

MR. SALANT: Since you applauded MTV's market research and its effort to get over 20 million young people to the polls, did your research also reveal what percentage of the audience voted for President Bush and Senator Kerry in 2004?

MS. NORMAN: Our goal was 20 million strong, and 22 million people showed up at the polls. I think that that's the most important and impactful stat that we could have. They voted, and they voted with their hearts. Matt Catapano is also here; he heads MTV's Research Division, and you can talk to him afterwards for more research-specific questions.

MR. SALANT: Why is it such a struggle to get young people to the polls?

MS. NORMAN: You know, I think that was -- you know, we've been talking about this for years -- I think that young people don't always feel connected to the issues, and I think that's why Choose or Lose is such an important initiative.

And what we've continued to do with that is show young people the issues that are important to them; show them how to register to vote, in some places; show them how to, you know, get online.

We were talking yesterday about, you know, New Orleans and how the young people know that they can fill out absentee ballots right now -- those who are displaced and who are eligible to vote.

So I think that there are a lot of hurdles to getting young people to vote, and I think that that's why our commitment to Choose or Lose is so strong.

MR. SALANT: Since you talk to young people so much, perhaps you can help those of us in the print business. How do we get young people to read newspapers? (Laughter.)

MS. NORMAN: Put them online. (Laughter.)

MR. SALANT: Many networks today are trying to figure out how to make their content mobile or portable. What is MTV doing on that? And as you can trace people who look into it, are you going to be taking -- find out what people are listening to be able to tailor your programming accordingly?

MS. NORMAN: We have so much going on, on this front. I mean, this is one of the most exciting times for us right now. As I said, this audience is leading the digital revolution, and we are making sure that they can access whatever MTV they love, wherever they are.

So we've got a huge initiative on wireless, where you can watch clips of our shows, where you can download other features, where you can get previews of upcoming episodes of things.

MTV Overdrive, as I mentioned as well, is our broadband channel. And on that you can watch hours and hours of all sorts of MTV stuff. We do these great things called "After Shows." So let's say you loved an episode of "Made," and you want to know what happened to that kid who got made over into being a soccer star. Their whole online journal lives on MTV Overdrive, and you can watch those episodes as well.

As I said, also you can watch music videos, you can watch news briefs and news stories. News is also available wirelessly. So we've got tons of ways to reach the audience, wherever they are, and are continuing to create specifically for those platforms.

You know, I think it's more than just getting the stuff that was on the cutting room floor, because there's a reason why that stuff was there. This audience demands unique content created for those platforms, and that's what we've been able to do.

MR. SALANT: As subscribers sign up for those services, how much personal information will they need to share, and how will their usage be tracked?

MS. NORMAN: Right now you can go on to MTV Overdrive and click "watch" and you can watch it. And you know, I think that that's the way that it is for wireless as well. So it's not our intention to track that information right now.

MR. SALANT: Remember back in the early -- the Clinton campaign, you had Tabitha Soren of MTV News, and she was there with all the big television/radio reporters and the newspaper reporters. Are you going to be doing that again in the future and have your people out on the campaign trail along with the regular Washington press corps?

MS. NORMAN: The MTV News team is always out on the road, not just around Choose or Lose. Gideon Yago, one of our correspondents, was in Pakistan. We sent our news team's SuChin Pak and Gideon and Sway into the Gulf Coast region right after Hurricane Katrina. So our news team follows the stories that are important to our audience, whether they be on the political trail, social issues, entertainment issues. So you -- you know, look to your left and your right; you might see an MTV mike cube.

MR. SALANT: The news media has struggled with making a profit through online outlets.

Does MTV see the Internet as a profit center, or is online content subsidized by other revenue?

MS. NORMAN: You know, we're fortunate enough to have a giant production operation in which we can devote resources to online as well. I mean, clearly there are revenue opportunities there, but for us it's more important to make sure that we have our audience access the information wherever they are. Right now that means online and on wireless as well as on air.

MR. SALANT: Before I ask our final question, I wanted to give you the official National Press Club coffee mug. (Laughter.) Suitable for having your favorite beverage while watching videos.

MS. NORMAN: Okay. Sure. Or surfing the 'Net.

MR. SALANT: And also our Certificate of Appreciation --

MS. NORMAN: Wow!

MR. SALANT: -- for speaking today.

MS. NORMAN: Thanks very much.

MR. SALANT: Thank you very much.

MS. NORMAN: Thanks, Jonathan. (Applause.)

MR. SALANT: Well, final question.

Wardrobe malfunction? What was MTV's real plan on this? Tell us the naked truth. (Laughter.)

MS. NORMAN: I got no naked truth. You know, we're sorry about what happened, obviously, and, you know, we're -- we've moved on. And I think that it's probably time for the rest of the country to, as well. (Laughter.)

MR. SALANT: Thank you. (Applause.)

I'd like to thank everyone for coming today. I'd also like to thank National Press Club staff members Melinda Cooke, Pat Nelson, Jo Anne Booze and Howard Rothman for organizing today's lunch. And thanks to the Eric Friedheim Library at the National Press Club for its research.

We're adjourned. (Applause.)

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