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Constitutional Rights Foundation Changes its Name to Teach Democracy and Celebrates 60 Years of Empowering Youth Through Civic Education

LOS ANGELES, October 24, 2023 –The Constitutional Rights Foundation (CRF), a Los Angeles non-profit that provides nonpartisan civic education, has changed its name to [Teach Democracy](#). This year, Teach Democracy celebrates 60 years of providing civic engagement programming and school curricula for students across the nation.

“Our materials, approach, and vision to empower young people with civic education has not changed for six decades,” says Teach Democracy President Amanda Susskind. “But the scope of our work has expanded beyond teaching about the Constitution to include engaging students in all facets of civic learning.”

Well- known for its Mock Trial program, which engages 8,000 California students through a realistic trial process about law, the criminal justice system and the U.S. Constitution, Teach Democracy has transformed the lives of thousands of youths throughout California and across the nation. Its Civic Action Project (CAP) is an interactive middle and high school program that engages young people to choose a societal issue that matters to them and learn how to effect change in their community through civic participation. CAP is taught in all 50 states and reaches well over 100,000 students annually.

Teach Democracy has many success stories. Jairo Martell, 18, a Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) student is an excellent example of what it means to be an informed and civically engaged member of society. He was shocked to learn more than 50,000 LAUSD students and families are unhoused. With guidance from his teacher Canek Peña-Vargas, Martell’s CAP project focused on a policy that asked LAUSD to follow through with the United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA) [original contract proposal](#) to use empty lots for affordable housing for unhoused students and families in the LAUSD school district.

Diana Peña, a junior at Downtown Magnets High School in Los Angeles, will be the first in her family to attend college thanks to Teach Democracy's Expanding Horizons Institute (EHI). A high achiever in her class, Diana was one of 27 students accepted into this year's free four-month program that mentors students and prepares them for college admission.

"I'm so proud to be the first person in my family to attend college and serve as an example to my younger siblings," says Peña. "The Expanding Horizons Institute by Teach Democracy gave me the confidence to believe in myself and the knowledge and resources to apply to college and secure an internship at a prominent law firm in Los Angeles."

Graduates from Teach Democracy programs have become judges, attorneys, community, and business leaders. As funding for civics courses in schools has been on the decline, there has never been a better time for Teach Democracy's programs. Scores in U.S. history and civics for students are down across the U.S., according to recent results from the assessment known as the "Nation's Report Card." This year's scores are the lowest recorded since the assessment began in 1994, and the new data marks the first-ever drop in civics.

"Investing in the civic education of our nation's youth means investing in the future of our country," said Susskind. "Being an informed citizen and having an understanding of our political system empowers young people to influence the change they want to see in their communities."

To learn more about Teach Democracy, visit: www.TeachDemocracy.org.

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About Teach Democracy, formerly known as the Constitutional Rights Foundation

Teach Democracy, formerly known as the Constitutional Rights Foundation, was established in 1963 as a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization. The organization's mission is to inspire lifelong civic engagement through interactive programs and resources for teachers and youth because our democracy depends on informed participation by all. For more information, visit: www.teachdemocracy.org.