

## **Counter Recruitment**

### **Parent Teacher Conference Night Opt Out Action**

‘Leave my kid alone.’ This phrase echoed throughout the City on October 29, 2009.

Counter recruitment volunteer teams traveled to 10 NYC high schools to distribute Opt Out forms to parents who were attending meetings with their children’s teachers. Volunteers found that few parents were familiar with the Opt Out form and wanted to learn more about protecting their child’s private information from military recruiters. Some parents had already received calls from a recruiter, and they were worried and concerned. ‘No military for my child – she is going to school.’ Many parents took an extra minute to speak with a volunteer, and volunteers had an opportunity to provide the information they needed. The NCLB Act mandates that high schools send the name, address, and telephone number of junior and senior students to a military recruitment database for future outreach to students unless an Opt Out has been returned to the school. We say no, and parents say no!

Along with the Opt Out forms, the Options for Life After High School flyer was distributed. It lists several programs and websites to help parents get started in researching CUNY programs, technical and trade programs, financial aid and scholarship opportunities. Students appreciated receiving this flyer as well – including some students who specifically asked for one.

Volunteers received expressions of appreciation, grateful smiles, a thumbs up or a thank you for being there. Parents and students understood the value of the information and the forms they received.

We are growing in numbers of volunteers, 35 were at this action including 3 new members, but we still need more people for future activities – teens, parents, concerned citizens, Spanish speakers, Vets. We definitely could have used another volunteer at most of the schools we covered in order to reach even more parents. As parents rush into the building to meet the teacher, it’s easy to miss many. At Susan B. Wagner HS, the volunteer noted, ‘We were frantically trying to keep up with the oncoming kids and parents who eagerly took what we had to offer.’ Another volunteer writes, ‘... this action is the best 1 ½ hours you will spend.’ Giving 90 minutes for a rewarding experience to help families and students protect themselves from military recruiter outreach is certainly worth the time. Each volunteer makes a difference.