CONSENT FORM

Dear Parent or Guardian,

We are writing to ask you to allow your teenager to participate in a research project studying the ways in which youth use MySpace and how they express their political voice and try to improve their community. We also want to learn more about how people that have less power or resources use MySpace and their political voices. The research will consist of a survey questionnaire conducted by Anne C. Deepak and Amy Russell, PhD – two Texas State University Assistant Professors in the School of Social Work. Dr. Deepak can be reached at: 512.245.8837 and Dr. Russell can be reached at 512.245.4563.

**This study[[1]](#footnote-2) will seek the opinions of teens to better understand** how they and their friends use MySpace and how they express their political voices and try to improve their community. We also want to learn more about how people that have less power or resources use MySpace and their political voices.

Representatives of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (organization’s title) have given us permission to recruit potential participants and to conduct surveys on site at the program. Since your child has identified themselves as a MySpace user we believe that they are an ideal participant for this research. Even though we are working with the Principal/School Administrator, he/she may not be present at the time of the interview.

We would like to include your teenager in our research study, but we need your written permission for your child to participate. Your child will also provide his or her own permission to participate. *Your child’s participation in and throughout this study is voluntary*. If they choose not to participate or to withdraw from this research at any time, there will be no penalty. Withdrawing or refusal to participate in the study will not impact their status in any organization in which they are a participant, or in any future affiliation with Texas State University.

Although there is a possibility that there may be no direct benefit to your child, the larger benefit of participation is the potential contribution to better understanding of the ways in which MySpace usage affects young people’s interest and activities related to using their political voice and improving their communities. Further, the study may give your child the opportunity to think constructively and critically about the ways in which they might be using MySpace. There are no foreseeable risks, neither physical nor emotional, for your child in this research project.

# Participation

Your child will be asked to complete a survey of about 100 short questions that lasts about 45 minutes. We will ask all participating young people to tell us about themselves, their use of MySpace, the activities they are involved in that may improve their communities, and how they express their political voice. For example, we ask statements like this one: “I use MySpace to discuss issues of importance with my friends.”

Your child may choose to not answer all or part of any questions for any reason or withdraw from the study. No one will be upset with your child if he/she chooses not to participate or even if he/she changes their mind later and want to withdraw from the study. Participation in this study is voluntary and there is no penalty for choosing not to participate.

The interviews will take place **on site at the program.** The surveys will be administered to a group of teenagers in a private room to allow for personal privacy from non-participants and for limited distractions. If you agree to allow your child to participate in the interview, please sign the attached permission slip and have your child return it to the program. If you do not provide written permission through this form, your child will not be able to participate.

To protect the confidentiality of your son/daughter, nobody at the program will be allowed to see our notes or the questionnaire responses. In addition, the research data collection process will include reassigning your child’s name with an identifying number that will be stored in a “password protected” file that will only be accessible by Drs. Deepak and Russell. Finally, the analysis of the data will be completed in another “password protected” computer program that is solely accessed by the research team. Neither the computer program nor our final reports will provide any information that will allow the linking of names to specific comments. The survey data will be maintained for a period of three years following the completion of the initial data analysis, at which time the data will be destroyed.

Finally, although we will be unable to provide you with specific responses from your child, we will be able to provide a summary of study findings to both you and your child. To obtain a summary you may contact us by phone or email. We will also post the summary of the findings on our MySpace page (<http://www.myspace.com/myspacemyfriendsmyworld>).If you consent to your child’s participation, please keep this letter and return the attached consent form with your signature and your child’s name and age.

Any further questions you may have about the research or research participants' rights should be directed to the IRB chair, Dr. Jon Lasser 512.245.3413 ([lasser@txstate.edu](mailto:lasser@txstate.edu)), or to Ms. Becky Northcut, Compliance Specialist at 512.245.2102. Institutional Review Board Approval Number: 2009J7241.

*We appreciate your help. If you have any questions about the research or the interviews, please feel free to contact Anne Deepak at 512.245.8837 or Amy Russell at 512.245.4563.*

Respectfully,

Anne C. Deepak, PhD. LMSW Amy Russell, PhD. LMSW

[ad21@txstate.edu](mailto:ad21@txstate.edu) [ar41@txstate.edu](mailto:ar41@txstate.edu)

**If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, please contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through Becky Northcut, at 512.245.2102 (reference/approval number: 2009J7241)**

PARENT CONSENT FORM (TO BE RETURNED TO DRS. DEEPAK AND RUSSELL)

YES, my son or daughter can take part in the survey questionnaire for the research on “Social Capital, Civic Engagement and Marginalized Youth on MySpace”.

I understand that my child’s participation in this research project may involve answering questions about different topics related to their MySpace usage, their participation in activities aimed at improving their community and expressing their political voice. The surveys will be administered on-campus at Texas State University-San Marcos.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent’s Name (print) Parent’s Signature

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Student’s Name (print full name) Date

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student’s Age:

Please give this permission form to your son or daughter to take to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Permission forms must be returned before surveys can take place.

If you choose to provide an email address below, we will provide you a confirmation of the receipt of this parent consent form.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Email address

1. The Social Capital, Civic Engagement of Marginalized Youth on MySpace study is funded by the Research Enhancement Program of Texas State University – San Marcos [↑](#footnote-ref-2)