

Victory! The End of the Ransom Notes Campaign

Category : Changing Perceptions of Autism and Disability

Published by [Admin](#) on 2007/12/19

Hello everyone,

I am pleased to inform you that this afternoon the NYU Child Study Center announced that they will be ending the "Ransom Notes" ad campaign in response to widespread public pressure from the disability community. You can read [that announcement here](#) (at the NYU Child Study Center's website). The thousands of people with disabilities, family members, professionals and others who have written, called, e-mailed and signed our petition have been heard. Today is a historic day for the disability community. Furthermore, having spoken directly with Dr. Harold Koplewicz, Director of the NYU Child Study Center, I have obtained a commitment to pursue real dialogue in the creation of any further ad campaign depicting individuals with disabilities. We applaud the NYU Child Study Center for hearing the voice of the disability community and withdrawing the "Ransom Notes" ad campaign.

Twenty-two disability rights organizations came together to ensure the withdrawal of this advertising campaign. Our response to this campaign stretched continents, with e-mails, letters and phone calls coming from as far away as Israel, Britain and Australia. The disability community acted with a unity and decisiveness that has rarely been heard before and we are seeing the results of our strength today. Our success sends an inescapable message: if you wish to depict people with disabilities, you must consult us and seek our approval. Anything less will guarantee that we will make our voices heard. We are willing to help anyone and any group that seeks to raise awareness of disability issues, but those efforts must be done with us, not against us. This is a victory for inclusion, for respect and for the strength and unity of people with disabilities across the world. It is that message that has carried the day in our successful response to this campaign. Furthermore, we intend to build on this progress, not only by continuing a dialogue with the NYU Child Study Center and using this momentum to ensure self-advocate representation at other institutions as well, but also by building on the broad and powerful alliance that secured the withdrawal of these ads in the first place. We are strongest when we stand together, as a community, as a culture and as a people.

Thank you to all of you who have made this victory possible. Remember: "Nothing About Us, Without Us!"

Regards,
Ari Ne'eman
The Autistic Self Advocacy Network, President
<http://www.autisticadvocacy.org>
info@autisticadvocacy.org
732.763.5530