

Creating an Inclusive Community One Word at a Time

Deanna Kay Rice, UCEDD, Louisiana State University Health Science Center

Looking to the Future 2015

LSU Senate Pledges
Unanimous Support
for STW
September 3, 2014

Students fight against use of offensive slang

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0 comments

"Spread the Word to End the Word" encourages people to think before they say the "r-word," and some at the University are pushing the national campaign on campus.

Posted on Sep 11, 2014
By Savannah Dickinson

Youth with and without intellectual disabilities established the "Spread the Word to End the Word" movement at the 2009 Special Olympics Global Youth Activation Summit. Since then, the movement has spread to universities nationwide.

Deanna Rice, University doctoral candidate and event coordinator for the University's branch of the campaign, said the movement hopes to eliminate the word "retarded" and replace it with respect.

"This is hurtful to people with intellectual disabilities and other developmental delays," Rice said. "It not only hurts them but the family members who love them and also people like me that work with them in education and other support in the community."

Graduate student Catherine Haugh presented a bill before Student Government Senate on Sept. 3 for "Spread the Word to End the Word." Haugh encouraged each senator to take the pledge and pass along the message.

The bill passed unanimously.

Rice encourages students to take the pledge to stop using the "r-word" at www.r-word.org. The movement also utilizes social media — @EndTheWordLSU on Twitter — to reach more students.

In March, "Spread the Word to End the Word" will hold a table-ait outside the Student Union to spread awareness with the hope that more students will take the pledge.

"We would like to see LSU be a nationwide leader as far as building an inclusive community," Rice said.

Assistant Director of the Office of Orientation and Adviser for LSU Ambassadors Kelli Webber said she hopes her son will be able to attend an inclusive university where the word "retarded" is no longer used so freely. Webber's son, Parish, has Down syndrome.

"Whenever [Parish] was born, we did not know he was going to have Down syndrome," Webber said. "It was a little bit of a shock to us."

Webber said she was not worried about having a son with Down syndrome. Instead, she was concerned about how people would treat him.

Webber recalled the first time she heard the word "retarded" after having Parish. A friend of the family said the word without any intention of hurting Webber or her son.

"It made my blood run cold when I heard it," Webber said. "I thought if someone that I loved and someone that loves me and loves my son can say it, I know other people in my life are going to be saying this word."

Webber said the LSU Ambassadors have taken on the cause and volunteered at events like the Buddy Walk to raise awareness and promote acceptance of those with Down syndrome.

Webber said her duty as a part of the "Spread the Word to End the Word" movement is to share her story.

"I'm basically just a mama who has a son and is fighting to be sure that he always feels important, that he feels respected and that he feels worth and self esteem," Webber said.

Retrieved on September 12, 2014 from
http://www.dailyreveille.com/news/students-fight-against-use-of-offensive-slang/article_4eacc55a-3a06-11e4-99a4-001a4c6d878.html

Facebook Data

Spread the Word to End the Word at Louisiana State University

- 286 Likes
- March 9-15, 2014: Largest weekly reach 2605
- March 16-22, 2014: Weekly reach 1517
- TigerTV video post: 24 shares with a reach of 7052

Twitter Data

@EndTheWordLSU

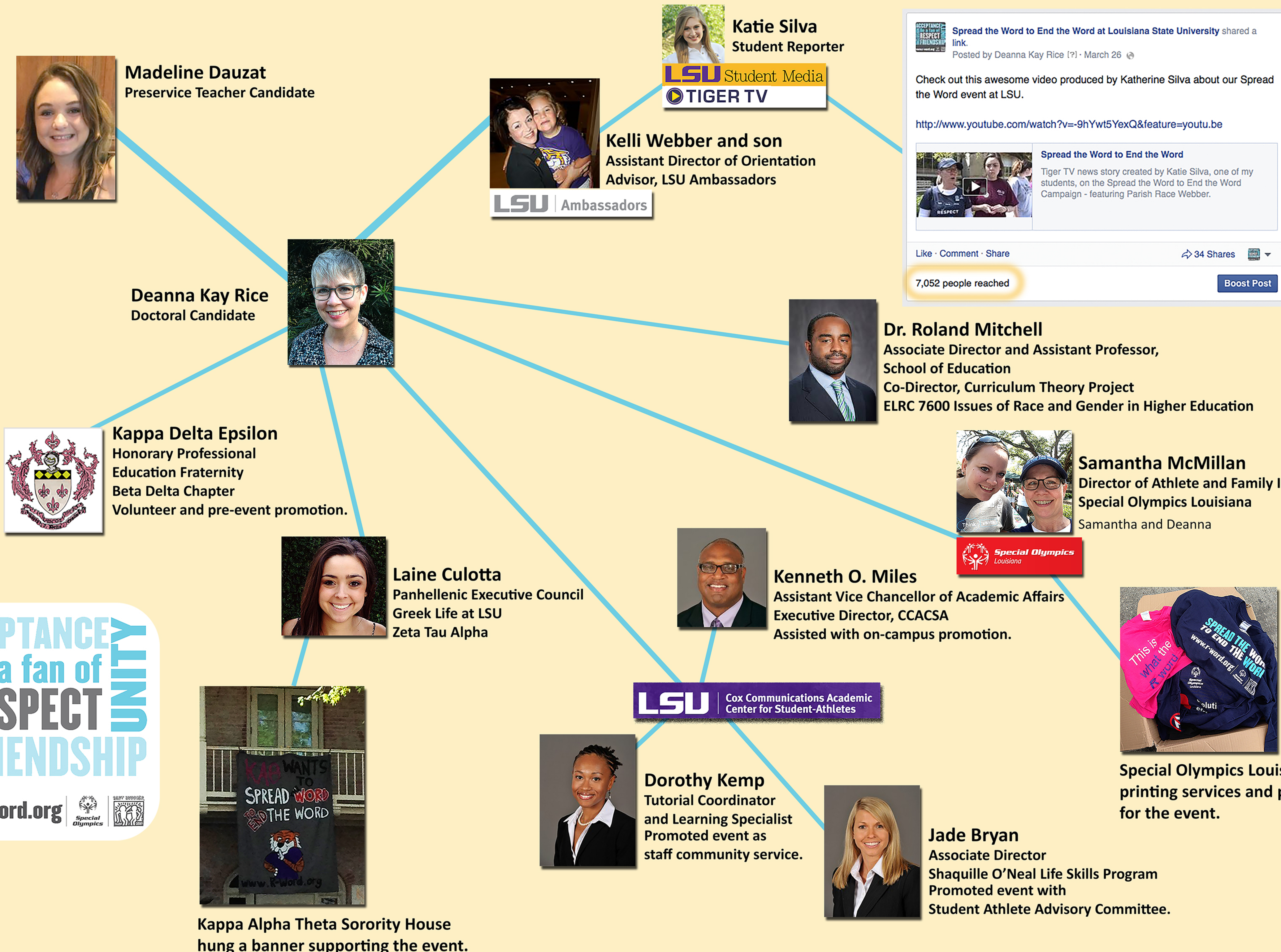
- 19, 114 estimated impressions from 52 Twitter mentions by 21 users
- Mention Type
 - Re-tweets 69% (36 mentions)
 - Regular Tweet 27 % (14 mentions)
 - @reply 4% (2 mentions)
- Engagement Level
 - 1 Tweet 62%
 - 2-4 Tweets 24%
 - 8 or more Tweets 10%
 - 5-7 Tweets 5%

@deannakayrice

- 6,635 estimated impressions from 17 Twitter mentions by 13 users.
- Mention Type
 - Re-tweets 82% (14 mentions)
 - Regular Tweet 18% (3 mentions)
- Engagement Level
 - 1 Tweet 85%
 - 2-4 Tweets 15%

Online Pledges

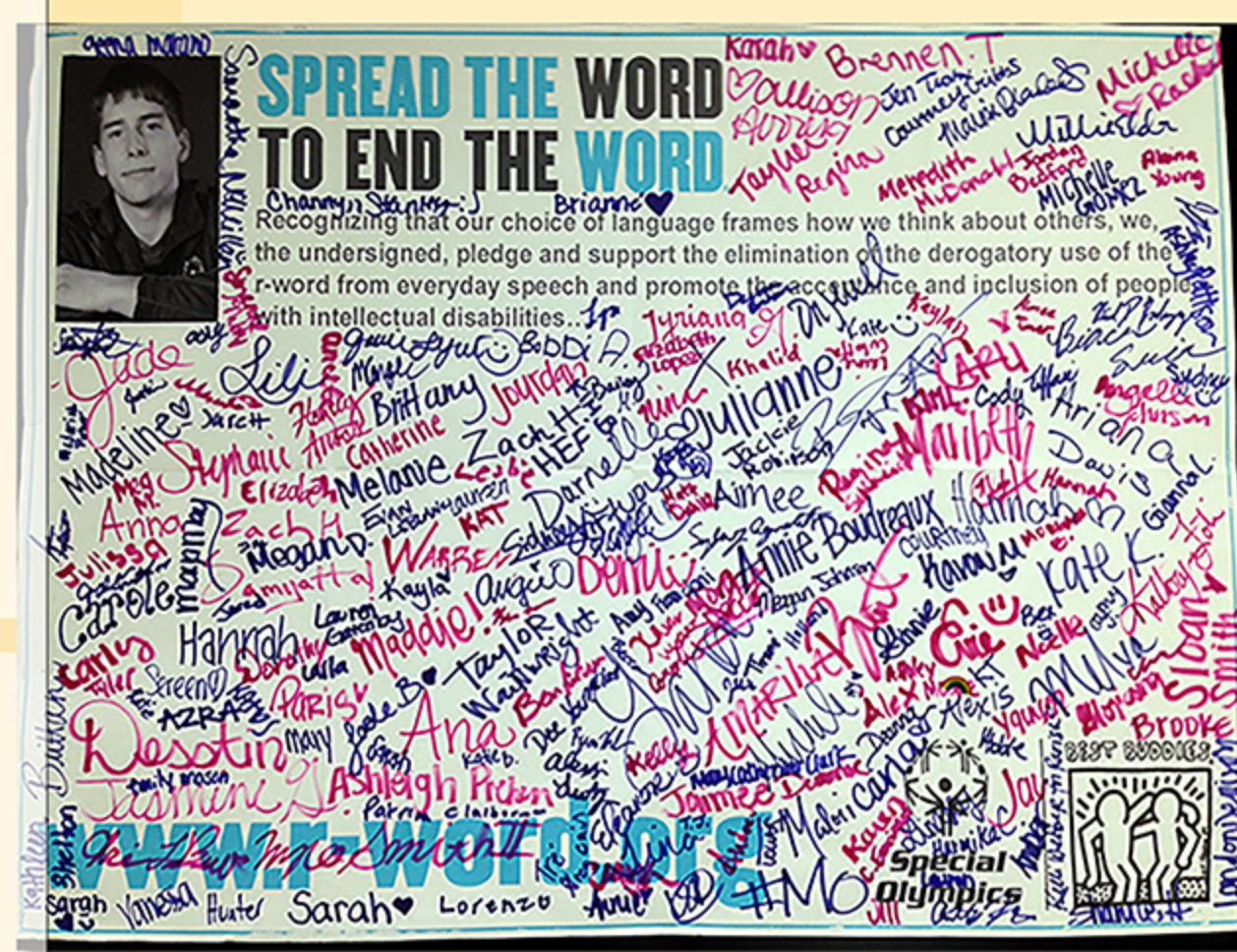
www.r-word.org - 468 pledges



Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority House hung a banner supporting the event.



Special Olympics Louisiana provided printing services and premium items for the event.



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Rally Day 2015
Wednesday, March 11
Free Speech Plaza

Purpose

The purpose of this LEND Leadership Project was to create a network of influence by engaging diverse groups on a university campus to promote person-first language and end derogatory speech regarding people with disabilities. The nation-wide movement of Spread the Word to End the Word was the foundation for the initiative.

One of my responsibilities as a graduate assistant is to teach an introductory course in special education for pre-service teachers. My LEND leadership project extended classroom learning by promoting student engagement with the larger LSU community. The undergraduate students were empowered to speak out regarding the value of inclusion and respect by promoting person-first language. Their passion for activism grew as their personal engagement increased in the project. The poster illustrates the development of participation across campus from the initial planning to the culminating rally day in Free Speech Plaza.

The purpose of the presentation is to share how an idea can grow to community activism.

Spread the Word to End the Word

Spread the Word to End the Word is a grassroots youth movement founded by Soeren Palumbo and Timbo Shriver in 2009 to end the derogatory use of the words retard and retarded from everyday speech and promote inclusive language.

Individuals are encouraged to take the online pledge at www.r-word.org

Pledge

I pledge and support the elimination of the derogatory use of the r-word from everyday speech and promote the acceptance and inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities.

Acknowledgements

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References

Spread the Word to End the R-word. (2014, March 4). Retrieved April 23, 2014 at <http://live.huffingtonpost.com/r/segment/spread-the-word-to-end-the-word/5315f5e478c90a1a640007b0>

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Kelli Webber, (2014, March 26). Spread the Word to End the Word. Retrieved April 24, 2014 from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-9hYwt5YexQ&feature=youtu.be>