

All Access

REPAIR THE WORLD

Why can't teens make good music *and* a difference?

ALLISON NOVACK

For generations, my family has been extremely active in the Miami music scene. My aunt sings and produces music; my grandfather wrote, taught and played music as a bandleader; and my brother plays guitar, bass and piano. I truly enjoy music, and I love seeing my favorite artists perform live. But what I love even *more* is combining my passion for music with my interests in writing, speaking and communications to organize and produce concerts.

Most local bands perform at small, beat-up, 21-plus bars. The admission prices are high and the venues are inconvenient and inaccessible. When my brother was in high school, he started organizing concerts for local bands at trendy waterfront venues that were open for younger audiences to enjoy at an affordable cost. My family has been very supportive of the concept, and together we created a non-profit organization called 1308 Productions. When I started my freshman year, the torch was passed to me, and I decided to give the concerts a fresh, new spin.

The shows became known as "Rock the Vote" concerts—officially

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endorsed by MTV's Rock the Vote organization—to encourage teens to get



Allison presents a band to the crowd.

involved with politics and register to vote. Our shows are unique because they're put on for teens by

teens, featuring ... teens! I recently planned, managed and produced two of these shows, where we had great turnouts of 250 people at each.

Not only have these shows earned a reputation as being fun and exciting events for young people to attend, but they've also provided fantastic exposure for cool, emerging bands. When I first started booking bands for gigs, *I* had to contact *them*. Now I have *them* calling *me*, trying to get in the lineup for the next event!

These concerts benefit everyone and combine various aspects of public service. Students who help promote the shows and help the night of the show receive community service credits, bands gain great opportunities to perform at awesome venues and attract new fans, and every person who registers is left with the satisfying possibility of making a difference.

The Rock the Vote events have received lots of press coverage from local television programs, and I'm looking forward to continuing to organize concerts for local students

and getting the word out. The 1308 Productions shows have enabled me to do something positive for the community—and I'm having the absolute time of my life! ★

ALLISON is a junior in the Scholars Academy at Miami Beach Senior High School. She serves as the vice president of her school chapter of Junior Statesmen of America and has been active in many community service programs.

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