



Write or Wong?

Are You Donating to Relieve Natural Disasters?

Ignominious Campaign

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In order to lower teenage pregnancy rates in New York, anti-pregnancy posters and billboards were recently unveiled by Mayor Michael Bloomberg and the Human Resource Administration (HRA). With posters plastered all over the city's subways, they advertise the message of abstinence and the dire consequences of being a teen parent.

At first glance, this seems like an effective campaign. With featured images of crying toddlers directly speaking to their teen parents, it indicates the difficulty of parenthood. However, the posters are receiving attention for what's on them, not for "stopping" teen pregnancy. It captions one little girl asking, "Honestly, Mom... chances are he won't stay with you. What happens to me?" Another reads, "I'm twice as likely to not graduate high school because you had me as a teen."

What lessons are we being taught by reading those captions? None. They hurt more than they help. Unless we believe in relying on guilt and fear to change behaviors, these ads are not effective at all.

Their dismissive tone unfairly conveys negative stereotypes about teen parents and children. The posters bear more of a negative connotation than anything else. Bloomberg and the HRA have missed the right approach by a long shot.

They should be proactive instead of reactive, such as providing alternative aspirations to teens and giving helpful hotlines or places to go for teens who are pregnant. Its focus should not be to heap shame on being a teenage parent. We all know that sometimes teenagers don't make the best decisions. There is a fine line between sending the right message and being offensive.

MOOR graphics by SIMON ZHAO

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Typhoon Haiyan—the most powerful storm that has hit the Philippines in recent history—has wreaked havoc on the country, and various relief organizations are relying on Americans to help fund their efforts. Many Americans are willing to donate to the cause, but some unknowingly donate to the wrong groups of people who take advantage of the disaster as a way to pocket the money.

Fraud charities are not as uncommon as one may presume, especially after the occurrence of natural disasters. These organizations scam good-hearted individuals, using others' suffering as an opportunity to selfishly gain money for their own profit. These fraud charities cause the rate of disaster relief to be much slower than what it could have been had it not been for the facades. Those who have discovered these increasingly prevalent false charities now refuse to donate to any major charities, according to James Altucher, a featured writer

on Business Insider. Sadly, because of these selfish individuals, there will be less money donated to the allocated agencies, causing

more economic stress on the foundations trying to relieve destruction



caused by natural disasters.

There are many forms which these false agencies take to make donating easier for donors. Calling the agency by telephone is a popular method of these fraud charities, where donations could go anywhere if given the donor's credit card information needed for money transactions. Most of

these facades take the form of a text, in which you respond to a number with a code to donate. According to Charity Navigator,

most donations came from individuals, roughly around \$233 billion. The 72% of Americans who wish to contribute a small amount to the cause are usually attracted to these organizations due to the simplicity of the organization. Most feel accomplished knowing that they donated to the cause, but are sadly unaware that they have given the money toward a false charity.

Donating money seems to be aiding the cause, and it is evi-

dent that money is more easily given than our time and energy. One way many Americans can avoid donating to phony organizations is to physically volunteer to help the relief efforts. According to National Philanthropic Trust, 64.3 million adults volunteered 15.2 billion hours of service, worth an estimated value of \$296.2 billion. Physically helping the cause is easier said than done, but it is a more secured way of knowing that the hard work and effort put into the cause will actually provide for the survivors, whereas donations may not guarantee aid for the survivors.

However, not all charity organizations are self-serving. Organizations such as American Red Cross, Americares, Catholic Relief Services and UNICEF are among the charities recommended by Charity Navigator for the Philippines relief effort. These charities can be reached online through their individual official websites. Through a simple click of a button, we can all lend support in order to mobilize and deploy major disaster-relief efforts.

Hypersensitive Audience Offended by 'Kids' Table'

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On Oct. 16, "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" aired their recurring "Kids' Table" sketch, centering on the United States' \$1.3 trillion debt to China.

At one point in the unscripted segment, an energetic child eagerly remarked that the issue could be resolved by "kill[ing] everyone in China." At that moment, thousands of viewers were outraged at Kimmel and the ABC Network for allowing such hateful crude comments to be broadcasted, some later demanding that the show be cut or that the host be fired.

When I saw all those agitated protests and petitions defaming Kimmel in the name of Asian-American equality, my heart dropped in dismay.

Was it really necessary to get so riled up over what was clearly meant to be a facetious sketch? Sure, the comment was somewhat tasteless, but we should remember that it came from the mouth of a tiny hyperactive boy who probably did not realize what he was saying. He obviously does not represent the beliefs of anyone else involved in the show. Some criticized Kimmel for not shooting down the idea immediately, but a scolding

would have been out of place in a light-hearted comedy show.

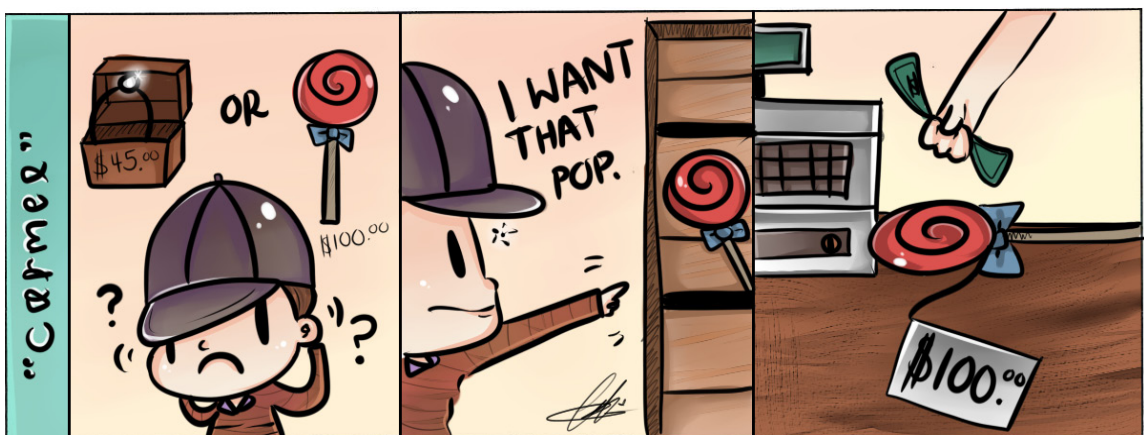
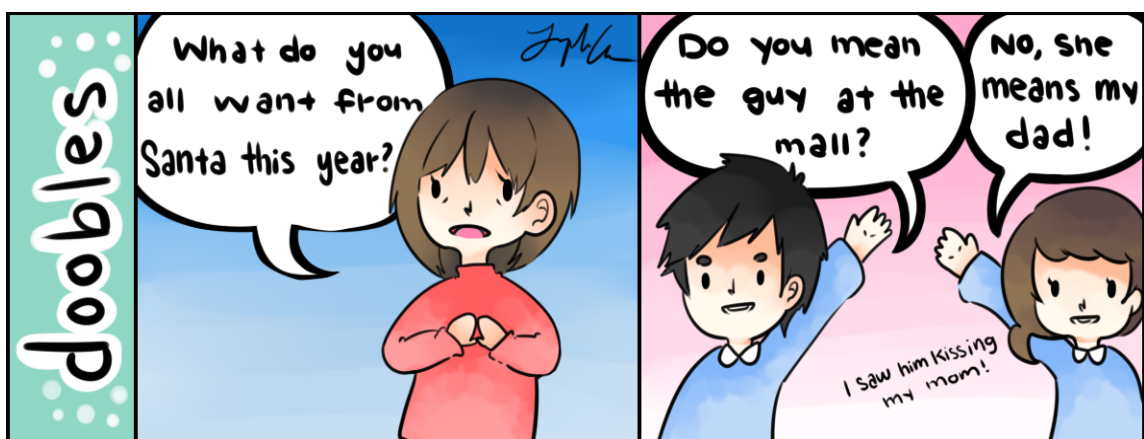
In addition, Kimmel later apologized personally to offended viewers, explaining that he thought everyone would take it as a joke but did not realize the challenges that Asian-Americans must go through. He seemed sincerely sorry, yet many protesters still refused to forgive him.

As a Chinese-American myself, I was worried that unwavering protests would be counter-productive, misrepresenting the demographic as overly-defensive. They had the right to express their opinion, but in this occasion, it should

not have been such a big deal.

However, not all potentially objectionable material in comedy should be dismissed under the pretense that it is "just a joke." When there is malice behind an author's intent, a line is crossed. While our own interpretations also matter, we need to have valid reasons when we accuse someone of being offensive.

Whenever we feel remotely slighted by another's attempt to be funny, we have to understand that not everybody is trying to hurt us or poke fun of us. Besides, maybe it's important to lighten up and laugh at ourselves every once in a while.



Attending College is a Choice

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As most high-paying jobs require a college degree, going to college seems to be a necessity and not a choice. Getting a higher education is an investment in that it is a way to have a better life in the future, but college is not the only route to take after finishing high school.

After high school, opportunities increase and become more possible. People can travel, take an entry-level job, find an internship or even volunteer. These alternatives can not only benefit those who have decided to forgo college, but can also help those who are indecisive to discover what they want to do in the future.

Although college can be great, it can also harm those who do not wish to attend. Since college is expensive, those who take out loans

would be in debt for many years even after finding a stable job. According to the Pew Research Center, 19% of the nation's households owed student debts in 2010.

With the expenses of college, individuals must weigh the decision carefully. People should not be pressured into going to college whether the coercion is from friends, family or teachers. It would be a waste to do something that they do not wish to do or show interest in, especially something as expensive as higher education.

In the end, it is the individual's duty to choose their own route and live with their choices. If attending college is not a particular matter that may benefit them as a person, then do not follow peer pressure. Instead, try out the other opportunities the world has. Everyone has the right to choose what they want to do, so do not let others control those choices.