

In chilly Milwaukee, young canvassers go door to door.



Amira Randolph, left, and Meri Mazang canvassing in Milwaukee on Sunday.
[Credit...Chang W. Lee/The New York Times](#)

By Kay Nolan

Nov. 1, 2020

Amira Randolph, 15, and about 25 other young people braved strong wind and near-freezing temperatures on Sunday to encourage people in Milwaukee's Near South Side to turn out and vote. Wearing masks, the canvassers stepped back six feet after ringing doorbells.

One resident, Maribel Piña, accepted information on voting from Ms. Randolph, but then deferred to her son, Rodolfo Geron, 19, who is more fluent in English.

Mr. Geron, a student at Carroll University in Waukesha, was glad for the reminder. “I was planning to vote today, yeah,” he said, adding that he would cast a ballot for Joseph R. Biden Jr. “I watched the debates and Biden aligns with what I believe in, too, along with the change I want in this country.”

The canvassing effort is led by Youth Empowered in the Struggle, or YES, a multicultural group that is part of Voces de la Frontera Action, a Milwaukee nonprofit that advocates immigrant, student and workers’ rights.

Many of the students who were canvassing were Hispanic, like Katherine Villanueva, 16, who said her year-round involvement in the teenage group helped her overcome the anxiety she felt growing up in a family with mixed immigration status.

Other teenagers, like Fatoumata Guisse, 15, whose parents are Muslim and immigrated to Milwaukee from Senegal, joined the effort recently. “It’s important to vote and for youth, this vote is for our future,” Ms. Guisse said. “So why not go out and encourage people to vote?”

One voter, Mike Allen, 48, quickly donned a hoodie as he stepped onto his porch. Mr. Allen, who is African-American, said he had already voted by mail and had been encouraging younger family members to also vote.

“I’m almost 50,” he said, “but I told them, ‘This is for your future.’” As if on cue, a car pulled up and a young woman called to him through a rolled-down window, asking if he knew where she could still vote today. “That’s my niece,” Mr. Allen said with a smile.