

Vance Jackson Neighborhood, Inc.

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Checkout Lanes at HEB



Family Friendly Checkout Lane at a Giant grocery in Virginia



Pilot Family Friendly Checkout Lane at Wurzbach & I-10 HEB (Sep 08)

Problem Statement:

"Do you ever look for purified water at HEB? Have you noticed the minimally and/or very suggestively dressed pictures of men and women on the magazine covers on the racks at the checkout lanes at HEB? Would you also like a purified experience at the checkout lanes?"

"My husband and I have a 6 year old son. We try to teach and model purity to him in what we choose to listen to, wear, and see, but since the beginning of the year as a gift from parenting, my senses have been increasingly awakened to this task. The grocery store checkout lanes became a sad place, and at the same time, a teaching opportunity to pray for conversions of hearts and minds. For months this was all we thought we were called to do."

"In early May, my son and I were at a grocery store in Chantilly, VA, named Giant. We saw a large sign hanging from the ceiling over a checkout lane that read 'This lane designated no magazines or candy per customer request'. We were so happy to see this!"

[Full Problem Statement](#)

Why VJNI is involved:

At our June meeting, VJNI directors decided that this was an obviously good issue for the association to support and gave permission to Melly Trakas to solicit petitions. At this time, the association's only resource commitments are for web and mailbox uses. Since we pay for these services on a time basis, our support activities have zero incremental costs. In the past, VJNI has sponsored other worth causes, such as holding

money for repair of the Summit sign at Tioga and Wurzbach.

What an individual can do:

1. Print out the [Individual & Family Petition](#)
2. Sign the petition.
3. Mail your signed petition to the VJNI mailbox*.

What an activist can do:

1. Please print out [Multiple-Signature Petition](#) or [Kids Petition](#). Copy as needed.
2. Get signatures.
3. Contact HEB directly and/or work through VJNI*.

* See VJNI contact information at the bottom of page

Sep 22-27, 2008

Sep 21 - As of this date, I have received signatures from people living in (or visiting from) the following zip codes:

63031 78202 78240 78630
76006 78207 78242 78640
77406 78209 78244 78659
78003 78210 78245 78666
78006 78211 78247 78703
78009 78212 78248 78727
78015 78213 78249 78729
78017 78216 78250 78745
78023 78217 78251 78746
78052 78218 78253 78748
78056 78219 78254 78840
78064 78222 78255 78850
78101 78223 78257 78861
78108 78224 78258 79924
78109 78226 78260
78124 78227 78261
78130 78228 78266
78132 78229 78274
78146 78230 78374
78147 78231 78410
78154 78232 78504
78160 78233 78526
78163 78237 78552
78201 78238 78613

78239 78617

TOTAL 88

98% of the petitioners live in Texas and are from the cities of: San Antonio, Adkins, Austin, Boerne, Brownsville, Bulverde, Carriage Hills, Castroville, Cedar Park, Charlotte, Cibolo, Converse, Corpus Christi, Devine, D'Hanis, Dilley, El Paso, Gillett, Harlingen, Helotes, Hondo, Kyle, Lytle, Mico, New Braunfels, Paige, Portland, Richmond, San Marcos, Schertz, Selma, Stockdale, Universal City, Uvalde, and Windcrest (35 cities).

Sep 23 - Reviewed checkout lanes, pulled a copy of each magazine cover with indecent pictures and words, made a list and reviewed it with Mr. Jesse Garza, Grocery Manager at Wurzbach / I-10 HEB. I asked him to make a list a review with Directors and then send it in to Corporate. I sent in my list and pictures of the pulled magazine covers – attn Victor Rodriguez.

Sep 23 - Spoke to Victor Rodriguez, Customer Relations, Corporate. I expressed some frustration in not getting answers about more Family Friendly Checkout Lanes (FFL) and other questions. He apologized and stated he would speak with Public Affairs again.

Sep 23 - I received a letter at my home at 5pm from Dya Campos, Public Affairs Director, Corporate (click on correspondence) via a courier service.

Sep 24 – I spoke to Ms. Campos, PA, she apologized for not writing me sooner. My questions had 'fallen thru the cracks' in the process of hurricane relief efforts. The following answers were given to my questions:

a. Are there other Family Friendly Checkout Lanes opened or being opened at other stores? Ms. Campos said, "No. Wurzbach / I-10 is the only store with a 'non-traditional lane' at this time. It is in a pilot testing phase. It is being monitored for usage/sales and customer feedback to help determine whether or not it makes sense to forward and expand on the idea."

b. Have the publishers been put on notice regarding the offensive material on the magazine covers? Ms. Campos said, "The vendors have been spoken to about the magazine covers regarding customer concerns/complaints."

c. What will become of the indecent magazines that remain at other checkout stands? Ms Campos said, "At present, they will remain, they will not be relocated. One thing at issue is customers varying definitions of what is acceptable and what is not. And also balancing customer requests for such material against those that ask for something different."

An appointment was set up for Friday a.m. on Sep 26 to submit the petitions.

Sep 26 - A pleasant meeting was held with Ms. Dya Campos, Public Affairs Director, Ted Trakas, husband of Melly Trakas and President of Vance Jackson Neighborhood Association, Kathleen Ramirez, 17 years old – my niece and teenager (she is who originally asked for the Kids Petition so that they could voice their opposition to the indecent magazines at the checkout stands too), and myself.

The petitions were submitted with a breakdown of the 88 different zip codes represented and 35 cities. The total number of signatures submitted was 1953. 321 of which were from children ages 5-17. Please see attached.

The answers to my questions were reviewed and the answers were confirmed as noted above. One of the most significant pieces of information I received in this meeting is that each HEB is tailored to the customers of that store. Having heard this, it was realized that future petitions need to include

which HEB the petitioners use so that their HEB might be given more specific attention/direction from HEB Corporate!

Sep 26 - I submit to HEB Corporate a grand total of 1953 signatures collected thus far, since June 2008. These signatures represent Customers asking for Family Friendly Checkout Lanes at their HEB's because of the numerous inappropriate magazine covers at the checkout stands.

Of great importance is the fact that 321 of the signatures are from children 5-17 years old. They requested a petition form for them because the magazines are upsetting to them too. They are our future, please don't let them down.

I implore you to make Family Friendly Lanes available at other HEB's, not just at the Wurzbach and I-10 location. Honor the voices/signatures of these petitioners.

Melly Trakas

[All Status Reports](#)

References

Correspondence:

- Jul 02, 2008 - Victor Rodriguez, HEB Customer Relations Manager - [Email](#)
- Jul 25, 2008 - Melly Trakas - [Letter to HEB](#)
- Jul 29, 2008 - Melly Trakas - [Comment to HEB \(1.4 Mb\)](#)
- Aug 21, 2008 - Melly Trakas - [Letter to Victor Rodriguez](#)
- Sep 23, 2008 - Dya Celeste Campos - [Letter to Melly Trakas](#)

Why we need petitions:

- *Magazines are an important revenue source for HEB and so HEB needs strong customer input to justify a change*
- Marketing Magazines & Books Excellence Awards - EXCELLENCE IN CHECKOUT MARKETING - [Magazine Publishers Magazine](#)
- H-E-B, Kroger, Meijer Honored for Magazine Merchandising Excellence - [AllBusines](#)

Links to other similar efforts:

- How to Create family-friendly checkout aisles - [CitizenLink.org](#)
- Speaking out for a Family Friendly Checkout - [Sudbury Christian Messenger](#)

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