

# Engaging People of Color in Policy Advocacy

**Brandicus Coleman**  
**Parent Advocate**  
**Arizona**



**Steve Freeman**  
**Parent Advocate**  
**Arizona**



# Introduction

## Who am I?

Steven C. Freeman (Dominique's dad)

- Past board member of the National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS)
- Past president of the Southern Arizona Network for Down Syndrome (SANDS)
- Past Director of Communications for the Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (ADDPC)
- Vice President of the Arc of Tucson
- Currently, Community Liaison for Tucson Unified School District (TUSD)

# Dominique and Steve Freeman



# Introduction

## Who Am I?

- Brandicus T. Coleman, Sr.
- Bellamy's Dad (and 6 more)
- Parent advocate
- Member of Rockin'Dads Retreat Team
- Black Dad Advocate for black families

# Brandicus and Bellamy



## Where should we begin?

First, learn about the community you would like to engage

Are there any self-advocates or community advocates that you can recruit to assist

Ask them what is important to them about their loved one who has Down syndrome.

# Identify groups and or organizations



- Local Down syndrome organizations
- School districts
- Black churches
- Black chambers of commerce
- Barber shops/hair salons
- Masonic lodges
- Military organizations
- NAACP/Urban League



February,  
2014



Pictured: Steve Freeman, Tucson, U.S. Representative, Ron Barber, Camille Stanbery, Tucson, Liz Perez, Tempe visit to Capitol Hill



# April, 2016



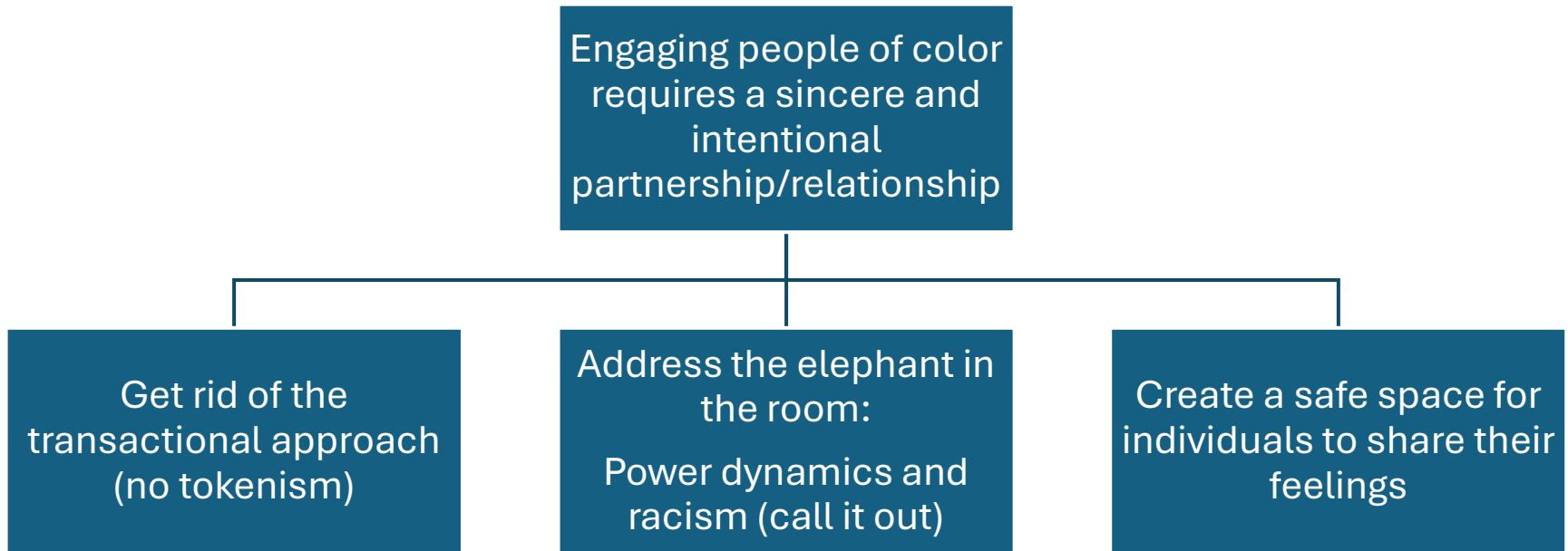
Families from Arizona, Illinois and New York preparing for a visit to Capitol Hill.

Develop a  
marketing  
strategy

## What is your budget?

- Digital campaign
- Social media campaign
- Electronic media campaign
- Print media campaign
- Message must be consistent across all platforms

# Sincere and Intentional



## Understanding the culture and cultural etiquette

In order to engage people of color, first you must understand the culture and cultural etiquette of these communities

- Everyone is “Invited to the Cookout”
- You are welcome to immerse yourself in these cultures, in order to facilitate relationships and build trust
- Include community members directly affected



# Ideas

- Host meet & greets in both communities
- Add a sociocultural element and community members to presentations, symposiums, etc.
- Consider team building activities
- Engagement should go beyond education & outreach
- Work with trusted local media











# Engaging People of Color in Policy Advocacy

Incentivize participation:

- Swag & giveaways
- Scholarships & discounts
- Mentor young people (pay them!)
- Leave spots available for people of color on panels, teams, boards and committees

Engaging people of color is not a one-time thing, it will take time, and should be a long-term commitment

# Engaging People of Color in Policy Advocacy

- Be open to listening to personal stories of the affected communities
- Ask for feedback
- Listen to implement change
  - People of color need their voices heard, needs met and concerns allayed
- Step outside of the proverbial box and become an ally
- Do the hard work to support people of color

# Black Dads Matter in Policy Advocacy

Black dads matter and are, in fact, needed for our community to be the safest, healthiest, and most brilliant it can be.

# Personal Story- Healthcare.....

















# Black Dads Advocating in Education

**What can classroom teachers, school administrators, and other educators do to:**

**1) Narrow achievement gaps between Black students and other students and**

**2) Ensure that more Black fathers are at the table in the schools**

- Invite African-American fathers to be engaged [and] involved.
- Value the voice of African-American fathers and value the experiential knowledge that African-American fathers have
- Acknowledge the contributions that African-American fathers make in their children's education, and in the lives of their children and families

























**A HUGE THANK YOU TO THESE TWO!!!!**

My Amazing wife, Brandy Coleman and Mr. Steve Freeman