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April 2016

**Michael Jacoby Brown**  
training & coaching

*Helping organizations achieve their goals  
through recruiting and motivating others*

## Organizer's Edge

### Action Gets Results

Kurt Lewin, the founder of group dynamics, said, "There is nothing so practical as a good theory." Successful organizing relies on sound theories. This month we highlight the theory that direct public action can get results when traditional lobbying fails. Public action can alert and inspire the public and allies to a support campaign. To illustrate this, we highlight a 19 day around the clock vigil that the Student Immigrant Movement (SIM) held about 6 years ago on the steps of the Massachusetts State House to stop several anti-immigrant amendments from being included in the state budget. Several conclusions can be drawn from this action:



- Public action that includes personal physical sacrifice (In this case, sleeping outside on a hard stone surface with no protection from the rain) can inspire broad support
- Direct action, even when there is a specific commitment to NOT being arrested can be effective. (The undocumented youth made an agreement to not be arrested since arrest could result in their deportation)
- When traditional lobbying is not getting results and the consequences of legislation threaten basic human rights, direct action can be effective.

**Jose Palma**, now the Organizing Director at [Neighbor to Neighbor Massachusetts](#), was the Lead Organizer



**Jose Palma and his son**

at the Massachusetts [Student Immigrant Movement](#) at the time. He describes this action.

Jose said, "In Massachusetts we faced a situation where the State Legislature was about to pass many anti-immigrant policies as part of the state budget. The amendments t would prohibit companies from hiring undocumented immigrants. It would create an 800 number for people to report anyone who "looked like an undocumented immigrant." It would prohibit Universities from enrolling undocumented students, stop health care for immigrants and establish other anti-immigrant policies. All these items were tied to the state budget which was

already in committee.

The idea of a vigil came up when we were meeting -- not about the budget amendments -- but about the Dream Act and In-State Tuition. Maria Peniche, one of our members, told us that her father would lose his medical coverage if this budget passed and he would have to go back to Mexico. So we decided we had to do something...

[Read on...](#)

### **Great New Film About the Student Immigrant Movement**

To learn more about the Student Immigrant Movement, organize a showing of a great new film, [Indivisible](#), a documentary about the fight to reunite families separated by deportation.

### **Feedback Welcome**

We want to hear from you, your reactions, ideas, what is at the edge YOUR "envelope." Just go to...

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**Michael Jacoby Brown Story**

## Who else you will hear from.....

We are just starting, but so far you can expect to hear what the following people are thinking:

**Jessica Tang**: Boston Teachers Union, AFT

**George Luse** of the Mass Teachers Assn,

**Scott Reed** with the PICO Network, ,

**Cathy Howell**, in Oregon and El Salvador, formerly with the AFL-CIO,

**Caesar McDowell** of the Interaction Institute for Social Justice,

**Diana Bell** of Community and Labor United,

**David Hernandez** of the California Education Assn,

**Attica Scott**, running for State Rep in in Louisville,

**Bob Van Meter** with the Local Initiative Support Corporation in Boston,

**Walter Davis**, of the Tennessee, Health Care Coalition.

**Debra Askenase**, of Community Organizing 2.0,

**Deb Fastino**, of the Coalition for Social Justice in New Bedford, MA,

**Rebecca Gutman**, with SEIU-1199,

**Tim Dean**, of SEIU-1199,

**Mary Ochs**, long time organizer in Los Angeles

and others, hopefully, including YOU

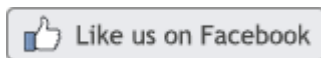
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<http://michaeljacobybrown.com/>

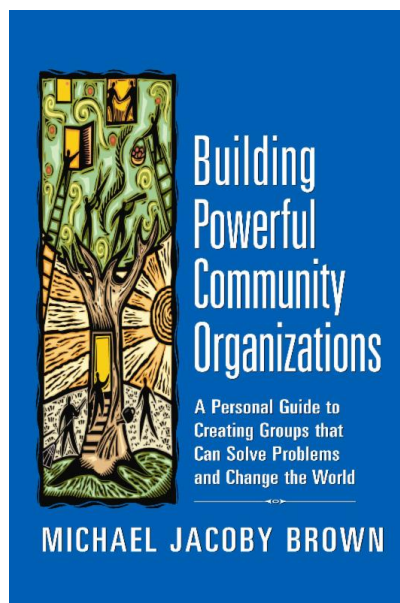
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