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- U.S.
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- TECH
- TRAVEL
- LIVING
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- TIME.COM
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- RSS FEEDS

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International Edition

young people who rock

March 29, 2009

Winnie Phan

Posted: 03:25 PM ET

Winnie Phan grew up in a troubled home. Her parents didn't support her education or give her the opportunities other kids her age enjoyed. By the time she managed to make it through grade school, she was on the road to becoming a statistic.

California has a 25% high school dropout rate, according to the California Board of Education. Nationwide, the dropout rate is about 31%. Winnie, now a junior, is determined to defy the statistic herself and inspire her contemporaries to do the same.

Winnie started Safe Walks in the Tenderloin district of San Francisco, pairing up older kids with younger kids to make sure that everyone gets to and from school safely. "Growing up it was scary to walk home," the now 16-year-old remembers. Taking the fear out of the commute, Winnie hopes, will get more kids staying in school.

Update: [Watch the CNN.com Live interview](#)

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Winnie Phan, 16, educates kids on the importance of staying in school.

About this blog

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Young People Who Rock is a weekly interview series focused on people under 30 — from CEOs to entertainers to athletes to community and political leaders — who are doing remarkable things. **Nicole Lapin** finds them and introduces them here by writing a weekly column that goes out in time for you to chime in before she interviews them Fridays on **CNN.com Live**.

[Watch a video explainer](#)

ADVERTISING

- Xuan Pham** April 1st, 2009 11:13 am ET
Good for you Winnie! Keep up the good work!
- Randy Hill-Texas** April 1st, 2009 12:09 pm ET
Nicole, you doing a great job! Keep up the good work. The "young people who rock" are our future and I hope you will continue the series. Our country is in turmoil and our financial system is in grave danger of being severely damaged.....but we are embarking on the greatest opprotunity for young entrepreneurs in our nations history. Recently I herd Lee Scott say...."We need to tell our story better and more often"
RH
- Rick** April 1st, 2009 12:41 pm ET
Winnie , you Rock!
- tdude** April 1st, 2009 2:07 pm ET
i think that parents should support there childs education for atleast a half of it
- patricia zamora** April 1st, 2009 2:08 pm ET
Hi Winnie,
You rock, thanks for"repping" San Francisco and the Tenderloin Community and

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Get Involved

Know someone who rocks?
Maybe your neighbor or your friend? [Let us know.](#)

Clubhouse. We are proud of you and the contributions you have made to the club and community to help keep our kids safe! Have fun at the National B&GCA Conference. You and all the Keystoneers worked hard to make it happen. Live, Learn and Love.

Pat Zamora
Tenderloin Clubhouse Director

Ray Charles

April 1st, 2009 3:49 pm ET
Winnie,

that is terrific what you are doing for younger children. It is scary walking home from school especially in such a large city such as San Fransico. I am also proud, even though I am not your parent, that you stayed in school and did not succumb to the statistic of being a dropout. Keep up the good work.

guy

April 1st, 2009 9:04 pm ET
there are still some good kids out there...good karma to you, young lady.

needsnname

April 1st, 2009 11:36 pm ET
If you are afraid to go to school, then you should just stay home and wait until you actually grow up a bit.... what is this world coming to.... I guess this is the generation of tis sucking babies that forgot to cut the cord when they were born.

Jennifer Weiss

April 3rd, 2009 6:55 pm ET
Thanks for having the courage to be your best and sharing yourself as a role model.

TL Boys And Girls Club

April 3rd, 2009 7:18 pm ET
hey hey winnieaaaa you rock girl....we lovvvvvvveeeeeee you and miss ya

Sara Segura

April 3rd, 2009 7:21 pm ET
Hey Winnie, keep up the good work, we love what you doing for your community and what your doing for yourself and becoming a young and strong women....I love ya and can't wait until you come back to the clubhouse, "YOU ROCK"

vanessa

April 3rd, 2009 7:21 pm ET
Winnie you are my hero

vanessa

April 3rd, 2009 7:58 pm ET
Winnie we are proud of you, don't pay attention to haters like needsnname, obviously some people just don't get it.

Rivers

April 6th, 2009 11:33 am ET
nice story...

Meri

April 7th, 2009 11:37 am ET
Winnie,

What you are doing is great! I absolutely support you and wish you success in all of your future endeavors!

[Обучения по свалки](#)

Olivia H

April 13th, 2009 3:48 pm ET
Winnie - I am SOOOOOOOOOO PROUD of ya!!!

Henree

April 13th, 2009 4:38 pm ET
You are brave, determined and full of guts! You deserve the success coming your way. Never let anybody tell you, you can't, because you have and will for the rest of your life. Never forget to pray for continued support, strength and guidance all the way.

GOD BLESS YOU!

Got a question for the interview?

Fire up your camera and [send it in](#), then look for your video on [CNN.com Live](#).

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- [Under 20](#) (23)
- [Community contributors](#) (21)
- [Amazing talents](#) (12)
- [Entrepreneurs](#) (11)
- [Political activists](#) (10)

Archive

- [April 2009](#)
- [March 2009](#)
- [February 2009](#)
- [January 2009](#)
- [December 2008](#)
- [November 2008](#)
- [October 2008](#)
- [September 2008](#)
- [August 2008](#)
- [July 2008](#)
- [June 2008](#)
- [May 2008](#)
- [April 2008](#)
- [March 2008](#)
- [February 2008](#)
- [January 2008](#)
- [December 2007](#)
- [November 2007](#)
- [October 2007](#)
- [September 2007](#)
- [August 2007](#)
- [July 2007](#)
- [June 2007](#)
- [May 2007](#)
- [April 2007](#)

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