

THE STORY GOES | H. DREW GALLOWAY | MOVE TEXAS

MOLLY: (enthusiastically) Hey, it's Molly! Here with SA2020 for The Story Goes, that felt like a *real* intro on that one. This is a collaborative podcast between SA2020 and KLRN to sort of give you the full story of a complex city such as San Antonio. We are doing that where by inviting people in that we believe who are quietly, and sometimes loudly, disrupting the way our city operates. Today, I have Drew Galloway, H. Drew Galloway--

DREW: I do abbreviate my first name, it's Hilliard. [\(0:38\)](#)

MOLLY: (inquisitive) *Is it?*

DREW: My first name is Hilliard, but I go by H. Drew professionally.

MOLLY: Okay, I like it. Um, so Drew is here with us. Drew runs an organization called MOVE Texas, and we are going to get into what MOVE Texas does, but before that, I wanted to sort of set the table with what we hear all the time. The story goes young people don't vote, young people don't care about voting, and young people don't care about the state of our world—they only care about social media. And what we know is that this is absolutely not what we are seeing, particularly locally. In fact, in our last mayoral election in 2017, we doubled our millennial voters. We have also more than doubled the number of voters in our municipal elections. When we started tracking voter turnout in 2011, we saw about a 6% voter turnout. We are now over 13%, cracked 100,000 voters for the first time since 2005 in 2017. And many people would say, I'm saying it out loud, many people would say that MOVE Texas had a lot to do with that. Then in 2017, it was MOVE San Antonio.

DREW: We were MOVE San Antonio in 2017, so only one city.

MOLLY: That's right. That was it, it was *just here*.

DREW: It was just here.

MOLLY: And then, you've gone statewide. [\(1:53\)](#)

DREW: We have. So in 2018, we added Laredo, Seguin, San Marcos and Austin. Dallas started two weeks ago, and Houston starts in July.

MOLLY: My goodness, so what you're basically saying to me that not only do you not like sleeping, you believe voter turnout should go up everywhere across the state.

DREW: Exactly.



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MOLLY: I love it! Drew, like tell me, what is MOVE Texas? What do you do? [\(2:18\)](#)

DREW: Sure, MOVE stands for mobilize, organize, vote and empower. Um, we are a grassroots nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, and we build power in underrepresented youth communities through civic engagement, leadership development and issue advocacy. We are an organization for young people by young people. I am by far the oldest person in the organization--

MOLLY: At 72, (DREW laughs) you're much older than most. It's fine.

DREW: All of our staff is under the age 25. Our fellows and interns are somewhere between 16 and 23. Um, so we put young people in charge, and tell them go listen to the people in your classes, go listen to your neighborhood and find out, you know, what matters to them. If we can do that, we can link those issues or those concerns through civic education and voter registration and cause civic action. [\(3:18\)](#)

MOLLY: Amazing. We've talked a lot about this off the air, cause we are pals, it's fine.

DREW: Super pals!

MOLLY: Super pals, and we find generally when we talk about young people, or what we see written about or discussed is always that young people are uninterested or uninvested in their community. It is clear in the work that you do, they are not. You've expanded statewide because there is such a hunger for the work you're doing with young people by young people. But we've also seen, like I would say right, in the national elections we consistently see, sort of, young people using their voice on social media. We have obviously seen, um, young people start advocating for policy. Then, in 2017, when there was such a-- it's always so interesting to me when people are like, "It doubled, and it wasn't that big, it's still not that big." And it's like we should be celebrating incremental change of *doubling* millennial voter turnout. I think the push in 2019, right, we are in the middle of a mayoral election, a municipal election, right now. All of our city council reps, school board and our mayor are up for election. I realize that you are doing this statewide now, but because we are San Antonio specific and focused, can you tell me what MOVE Texas does in San Antonio to help young people, not only get out to vote, get registered to vote, but then also sort of understand the issues that they are bringing up linking that back to local policy? [\(4:51\)](#)

DREW: Yeah, San Antonio is our home, and also our headquarters. So this will always be like home base for us.

MOLLY: Amazing.



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DREW: We are officed out of Ella Austin Community Center, um so anyone can come swing by and visit us. Um, but we see local elections as our bread and butter. That's how we got started. Like hey, how do we increase youth participation in local elections? Because if young people can see change, um through our city council or a sidewalk or some issue that they're fighting for, then they'll believe in the system. The two reasons young people don't vote in Texas are "my vote doesn't matter" and "voting is too difficult." So we attack those immediately, head on. Um, so ways that we are helping young people get engaged in San Antonio is registering a lot of them. Last year, we registered over 30,000 people-- 17,000 of that came from San Antonio. Um, and this year so far, we have registered 4,900 people. Um, and the majority of that has come from San Antonio as well. And so those young people automatically become eligible voters for this municipal election.

MOLLY: Right. (5:59)

DREW: Um, we are also teaching them the issues that are in this election and important to this election. A lot of young people listen to national news and look at federal policy, so when we look at the local level, we can take some of those issues that they really care about, like maybe public transportation kind of stuff, and really push that down to the local level, and say you should be talking to your city council member or your mayor about what multi-modal or bike lanes look like. And so, teaching them how to take those issues they really care about and pushing them hyper-local. In addition to doing that education and mobilization, whenever early voting comes around, we will not only have a voter guide, which is very popular—we hope to put out 40-50,000 copies of that here in San Antonio. But also, we will throw parties at the polls and parades to the polls of ways to—young people want to vote together. They want to be a part of something. And so, that's the messaging that we use whenever we are mobilizing folks. (7:06)

MOLLY: Tell us what we should know about young voters. This is not you pontificating. You ask questions, you're listening, surveys, you're like getting feedback consistently from young people. What are the issues that are rising to the top? You mentioned public transit.

DREW: That was the top issue in 2017 in the municipal race. We did, together with SA2020, we surveyed 20,000 students, and that was, we found out that public transportation was the top issue. This year, it seems to be, there's a lot of talk around education. Um, there's, I think we are helping link that to school board elections.

MOLLY: Okay.

DREW: We are also hearing a lot about climate change, which has now jumped, nationally, from a number nineteen issue to number three. We are seeing that translate to the local level as well—climate change and climate justice. I think also some economic issues. Whether that is



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affordable housing, paid sick time, all that stuff, we are seeing *way high* on the list as well. (8:11)

MOLLY: You're not just helping register, educate and inform voters, you're getting behind policies or coming out or advocating or discussing things with politicians, specifically as it relates to young voters, right. You also do that as well, correct?

DREW: We do. So, we listen to people. We poll them. We have happy hours where they can come and talk about those issues. Then, when we see the overwhelming majority of folks that we visit with, uh come out on an issue, we then begin to put them out in front of politicians, but also like go to politicians and say, "Young people in San Antonio really want you to understand and back up the climate action plan." So, we help out with that as well.

MOLLY: There is also a component of, you're sort of talking about interns and field organizers and all of your team is very young, so it's this idea of generating our next level leadership. Like, they're already leading, and you're just sort of scaling them for better, and better, amazing things. Was that always part of your model? Like hey, we are going to register young people and we are going to get them to vote, and then we also want to give them training and help sort of build their leadership capacity. (9:31)

DREW: Yeah, absolutely! I think from day 1, it was like we recognize the best way to talk to young people is to put their other young people in front of them.

MOLLY: (sarcastically) It's so weird that they won't listen to someone who's like 75. (mimics) "Mrr, it's important to vote."

DREW: "It's your civic duty." (MOLLY laughs)

MOLLY: (laughing) Right!

DREW: It's the worst messaging possible—that's like telling them to clean their room. And so, yeah. Um, they want to see other young people. The message should be like, "Come help. Come join us. Come volunteer with us. Come be a part of this election." Um, but yeah, it's been part of the model, but we have changed it and evolved it. So when I joined MOVE in 2016, we had two fellows and two interns, and we have grown this program to 24 fellows and 30 interns. Last year, we had 2800 unique volunteers. Um, and cause of those volunteers and folks, we had the largest National Voter Registration Day event in the United States. We registered 5300 people in 10 hours.

MOLLY: This kind of stuff, I think what I'm excited to hear when I hear those types of things is that there is clearly a *movement* around wanting to engage, and you give the tools by which to engage, it's a no-brainer.



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DREW: Make it easy. Make it fun. [\(10:52\)](#)

MOLLY: (laughing) That should just be the mantra of *all the things*. “Make it easy. Make it fun.”

DREW: Yeah. It’s like you can come do an hour and a half to two- hour voter registration shift with us. If you’re not a voter deputy, totally cool. You can hand out stickers and tell people to come talk to us and get registered. If you are a voter deputy, that’s even better-- like, stand behind the table and help folks get registered. Um and you know, also, we need people to put on the banana suits and the robot suits and dance around campus, and that kind of thing. That always attracts young people to our tables and to the conversation—and that makes it so they want to be a part of this, they want to show up, they want to come volunteer with us because it’s fun, and they have a good time. [\(11:37\)](#)

MOLLY: You know, I think you and I subscribe to the same philosophy, which is put a young person at a table, right. Let them see. We are going to be talking to SaySi, Nicole Amri, a little bit later as well. One of the things she says is, “young people are providing new solutions every day,” because they are not bound by, sort of the, it’s like we all grow up and forget the creativity. It’s like now we have a suit on, and we are in a meeting and have to be (silly voice) very serious. Um, but young people sitting around a table consistently come up with creative ways to solve problems. And it seems to me that MOVE Texas is sort of laying the ground work for people to keep joining the conversation. [\(12:18\)](#)

DREW: Yeah, we believe in young people. And so, at no point ever in MOVE history, have I ever been like, (silly voice) “I know all the answers.” (MOLLY laughs) You know, it’s always like, what do you think about this? Or hey, come up with some idea, which is how we get the San Antonio Night Live Candidate Forum.

MOLLY: Right, explain that a little bit for people. [\(12:37\)](#)

DREW: Sure. You were our very first host.

MOLLY: (laughing) You’re right, I was.

DREW: You can go look at that online. (MOLLY laughs) But we just had our second candidate forum this past Saturday night.

MOLLY: Well, let’s talk very specifically. Candidate forums, we know how they work, you put candidates on a stage, you ask them the questions, they answer and pontificate, and then we move to the next question—that’s how candidate forums go.



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DREW: Uh, super, super boring. Um, you know, no. That is not the way they go at MOVE Texas. Um, so we, when we thought about candidate forums, we were like all the attention is on the people on stage. It's about the politicians, and then getting across their answers and their stump speeches, and that kind of thing. We said, the attention should be on the audience. We want to get young people to vote.

MOLLY: (sarcastically) You mean, on the voters?

DREW: Yeah, on the voters.

MOLLY: (laughing) Right. [\(13:30\)](#)

DREW: Um, we designed this candidate forum that is in the theme of Saturday Night Live. There is an opening monologue, and then there's a host and a band. And then there is three sessions. This last Saturday Night Live one, that we did this past week, was the first round is we put everybody on stage from that district, and then we had on one side a check mark and on the other side a "x" mark, and then we asked a series of rapid-fire questions and said choose yes or no. Um, and you could see immediately like the group split between the questions. It gave you like this snapshot, this visual snapshot of where all these candidates stood on the major youth priorities. The second round was we will give you two minutes to do whatever you want to do, but it can't be political. And so--

MOLLY: (laughing) Oh no. What do you do with the people who are like, (mimics) "But, I'm a politician." (BOTH laugh) "My talent is a stump speech."

DREW: You're going to struggle at this. (MOLLY laughs) Um, the ones that embrace the creativity and the innovation that comes with that like Councilman Trevino drew a portrait, actually of me, but it was upside down. Also, Councilwoman Sandoval, uh did another Selena rendition.

MOLLY: Is a singer, let's be very clear. Councilwoman Sandoval is a *singer*. [\(14:54\)](#)

DREW: Amazing. Um, there was a lot of very good performances and a lot of great poems and things like that. The third round was we asked them to submit a picture of their rendition of San Antonio. We put it up on stage, let them talk about it for a minute, but at the same time, we put it on Instagram.

MOLLY: Brilliant.

DREW: And so, all of the people who weren't there, who follow our Instagram, could see their vision and all that kind of stuff. And then, after every single round, we asked the audience vote



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for your favorite and give the winner the “best of the bunch” award. And then we are like, “If you can vote three times at this event, you can vote one time on May 4th.”

MOLLY: Then you’re like *Boom!* Drop the mic. Then everybody leaves and you’re like--

DREW: See you later. But we had 300 people for a three- hour long candidate forum, and they stayed the entire time because it was fun and engaging and people laughed. It was a really fun time, and you can go to our website and see the NowCast recording of that.

MOLLY: Perfect. And of course, everything we talk about today will be on KLRN.org/thestorygoes. Um, we like to end everything, every podcast with like a call to action. We know like one call to action is like just go vote. But as somebody who works with young people all the time and is listening to what young people need and want and expect, um what is your call to action to somebody listening today? [\(16:24\)](#)

DREW: Hmm, um---

MOLLY: That’s my stump question. I don’t normally have a stump question. That’s the only one I get.

DREW: Yeah. Um, I am going to phrase it towards, if you are an adult listener--

MOLLY: Okay, and you’re saying somebody older than--?

DREW: Thirty years old. Find somebody at your work, your household, your niece or nephew, like find somebody young and actually sit down and talk with them. A lot of the time what we see from the media and what we see from news reports is that young people don’t care and just sleep on their parent’s couches and are on Instagram.

MOLLY: (laughing) Right.

DREW: And uh, that is totally not the case. Young people are innovating the way that we participate civically, not only in voting, but look at the way like you know, Direct Action is run, like Citizens To Be Heard is evolving. So, they do care about issues. They really care about things happening in their local community, and it’s a great time to connect with somebody in their local community and to have that conversation about what they care about. The young people that are listening, um--

MOLLY: ‘Cause you’re on it. We are going to have younger people listening. That’s my intention. [\(17:39\)](#)

DREW: Yes.



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MOLLY: We are expanding our growth, and our movement here.

DREW: Awesome. (MOLLY laughs) So for all the young people listening, um, double check your voter registration, like go to the website and check that you're registered to the right address and stuff. And then, look for our voter guide in the San Antonio Current and your school newspapers, because they are coming out in three or four school newspapers in San Antonio. That will give you a phenomenal snapshot of the candidates and the issues, and you can go to our website which is movetexas.org and see the full questionnaire. So if you see a couple questions on the voter guide that really perk your attention, then you can go back to our full voter guide on movetexas.org and see handwritten questionnaire by the candidate. (18:28)

MOLLY: Brilliant. I, the fact that you're doing with this young people, in a space that is decidedly for old people. I say old people, and I put myself in that space too, right, like the idea that government moves slowly, that it's not fun at all, it's hard to understand, I'm not exactly sure what "B- Session" is, an "A-session," and why did we take a vote here, why did this end up on a ballot, is incredibly important. This is, I get to host this, so I get to say things in their edicts and its done, right. What you're doing is important, the end and then the gavel. And then it's done. The end. But like, um, a piece for me as I'm listening to what you're saying, this idea of "make it easy, make it fun," and we don't do that at all when it comes to government. Bureaucracy is absolutely is not easy and is not fun. And I'm interested, perhaps, if you have, like how do we make bureaucracy easy and fun? (19:30)

DREW: Hmm, that's a good question. Um, I think there is a couple different ways. One of the things, well two things come to mind. Um, participatory budgeting is a really cool way.

MOLLY: (loud and excited) I'm *obsessed* with participatory budgeting! Yeah, explain that.

DREW: So that would be, normally the way the budget is done is all the city departments talk with the Assistant City Managers and the City Manager, and they write the budget in part and then they smoosh it all together, and then it goes to City Council with some, there's some opportunities for the public to chime in, uh SASpeaks--

MOLLY: SASpeakUp, sure.

DREW: Uh, but for the most part it is driven internally by the city staff, and it presented to the Council, and some small amendments, and then it passes. Participatory budgeting, which is now in District 8 and District 9, allows the community to come together and say, "we have this pot of money, and how should we split it up? Do we want to fix these park benches? Or do we want to fix these sidewalks over here?" And it not only gets community members talking to each other, but it also allows them to feel like they control the process.



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MOLLY: Yeah. [\(20:43\)](#)

DREW: And that they have a say-so in it. And then, you can make it really fun by doing it at cool places downtown, or in the district, and getting young people together and including them. The other way, I think Austin is moving in this direction, is called Democracy Dollars, and Portland has this already. But basically, it is a campaign finance reform action that the city sends out a certain dollar amount, like in Portland it is \$100 per person I believe, in the mail. You get \$100 worth of Democracy Dollars, and then what it does, it makes the candidates—the candidates can get those dollars from anywhere, cash them in and use them as campaign resources. Um, but they have to go talk to that person or have an event where that person would bring their Democracy Dollars. So every, you know eligible voter gets those Democracy Dollars, and then they would show up at events, uh go door-to-door and collect as many of those dollars as they can. It's a great way to like you know really, *really* encourage the candidates to talk. Cause one of the, you know while we are educating young people, we are also educating candidates to show up to college campuses. You know, this event in this cool trendy restaurant, instead of the library. [\(21:59\)](#)

MOLLY: Yes.

DREW: You know, we love the library.

MOLLY: No, of course!

DREW: But also, meet young people where they are at.

MOLLY: Yeah, of course. And what I think is really interesting to me about both of those ideas is that it puts the people that are elected back into the room with the people that elected them. And that is something that has become very difficult, right. And that comes back to, particularly when we talk about municipal elections or local election, you know, I can actually *meet* the Mayor. I can actually sit in a room with him in a meeting. He talks to me. You know, there is not necessarily going to be a place where I get to *meet* nationally elected folks. I think that there are interesting spaces around that. Being able to say we are opening up more spaces around that for you to speak to the people who are really impacting the things that you do every day. Um, your sidewalks, your streets, the homes that you live in—those are your local people that you are electing. [\(22:53\)](#)

DREW: Yeah, and doing that not only from a young person to an elected official, but also going to the elected official and saying, “Listen to *us*.” Listen, like they've got great ideas, and they're thinking outside the box. They're innovating in their community through technology and through caring about historic neighborhoods and reinventing the ways we come together in civic spaces. Just listen to us.



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MOLLY: Well, also in a smart way, deputizing our next round of leaders. Um, so the idea that you engage a young person in something embarrassingly boring as infrastructure, right, and they get excited about it, and then it's like—"Oh, wait a minute, that's the street I drive on, and that street takes me to my job, my school, my volunteer spaces, to vote." So the idea I think is always in having politicians, who aren't always used to speaking to the "typical voter," I'm putting that in air quotes that not everyone can see, but the "typical voter," is really important. And now you can create ambassadors who can help you be re-elected or hold you accountable and put your feet to the fire.

DREW: Absolutely, absolutely. And we are seeing, even in our program through our volunteers, our interns, our fellows, our alumni, that they care so much about this work that they're going into it. So out of the eleven offices at City Hall, eight of them have MOVE alumni in them. You know, so we are building the next generation of leadership that might look like City staff, or the next City Manager, or the next City Councilmember or Mayor, or Congress person.

MOLLY: And I think that is what you're saying to, right, that if we close our eyes and think about who we see at City Hall, it's always somebody in a suit and somebody that feels older and established. I'm like what if we closed our eyes and saw our nieces, our nephews, our kid-brother, our kid-sister, our high school senior down the street. That to me feels exciting.

DREW: Yeah, totally. [\(25:05\)](#)

MOLLY: Alright, everything we talked about today is going to be on [KLRN.org/thestorygoes](https://www.klrn.org/thestorygoes). Um, we will make sure all the links are available. And of course, when you get your voter guide out, we will add that as well. Thank you for coming out here and doing a podcast.

DREW: You're the best, Molly. Thank you for everything that you're doing, and we are glad to work beside you.

MOLLY: That's so silly. We just do podcasts. Um, I feel like the mantra of the day is "make it easy, make it fun."

DREW: It is. Make it easy, make it fun.

MOLLY: Yeah, let's get it on t-shirts with like a banana and a robot.

DREW: Yeah, perfect.

MOLLY: Boom.



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