



Ditmas Educational Complex I.S.62
September 2023

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Marielena Santiago,
Principal

David Pretto, *Supt. of Dist. 20*
Gina Lynch, *AP*
Michelle Buitrago, *AP*
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United Nations Junior Ambassadors at Ditmas 62 2023



Junior Ambassadors

Abdullah Saeed
Arifin MST Zeni
Charlene Wu

Fiza Kamran
Humayra Bhuiyan
Kaylyn Clark

Preet Kochar
Shariat Sultan
Zhilin Liang



WRITING INSTITUTE PUBLICATIONS

Dr. Rose Reissman: *Publisher, Writing Institute Director*

United Nations Junior Ambassadors at Ditmas 62

Ditmas Team



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Principal



Michelle Buitrago
Assistant Principal



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Assistant Principal



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Writing Institute Founder



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Grade 7 Guidance Counselor



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Social Worker



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Coordinator/Package
Logistics*



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Videographer



Serena Moy
*Parent Association
Leader*



Evangeline Sell
*Junior Ambassador Mentor
and Writing Institute
Publications Associate*



United Nations Junior Ambassadors at Ditmas 62

Special Thanks To:



Christie Saint-Vil
*NYC Mayor's Office for
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Jennifer Williams
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Brian Wallace
*Jamaican Ambassador
to the UN*



Linda Thomas Greenfield
*US Ambassador
to the UN*

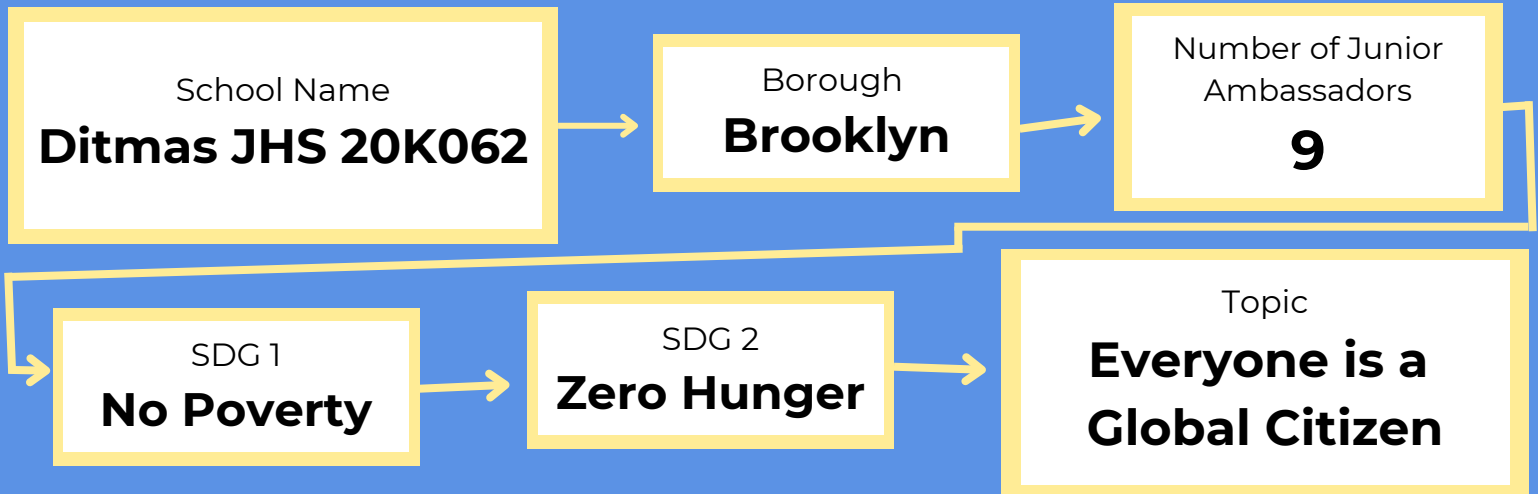
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United Nations Junior Ambassadors at Ditmas 62

United Nations Junior Ambassadors at Ditmas: Program Summary



The Junior Ambassador Capstone Project

1. The Fundaisers

The capstone project for the Junior Ambassadors at Ditmas JHS 62 was two-folded: it included a podcast and two fundraisers for organizations that are working to end poverty (UNICEF) and hunger (The World Food Program). The junior ambassadors created an online fundraising opportunity for UNICEF and promoted the 'Share a Meal' app to raise money for The World Food Program USA. The fundraising efforts were shared with the school community in June 2023 including in the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) flier and throughout conversations in the community.

2. The Podcast

At Ditmas on cultural day (Friday May 26th 2023), a podcast was released to the school community, about the Junior Ambassadors Program and their activities, with a guidance document for teachers. The staff and students of the Junior Ambassadors' club partnered with the cultural day committee and an English Language Arts (ELA) teacher to produce the podcast. The teachers were encouraged to have their students listen to the podcast and explore the two selected global issues through suggested activities. The podcast will be shared on the school's website and social media platforms.



United Nations Junior Ambassadors at Ditmas 62

Podcast and Fundraiser



"A WORLD FREE OF HUNGER AND POVERTY
EQUALS A WORLD FULL OF POSSIBILITIES"
7TH GRADE JUNIOR AMBASSADOR HB

**A FUNDRAISER
FOR UNICEF**




JOIN DITMAS JUNIOR AMBASSADOR CLUB IN HELPING
UNICEF ADDRESS SDG 1: NO POVERTY AND
SDG 2 ZERO HUNGER.
MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD AND COUNTED. CONTRIBUTE.
EVERY DOLLAR DONATION ADDS UP AND REDUCES POVERTY
AND HUNGER FOR CHILDREN AROUND THE WORLD

GOFUNDME LINK: 

[HTTPS://GOFUND.ME/ACC197A7](https://gofund.me/acc197a7)

Arifin
Zeni



United Nations Junior Ambassadors at Ditmas 62

Doing and Voicing Leadership with Podcasting

By Dr. Rose Reissman

Culturally responsive practices encourage us to "create learning experiences that have the 'Power of Doing' (Gholdy Mohammad, 2020). This theory is lofty and positive, but how do educators implement these needed principles in a day-to-day curriculum of project? How can learning tasks build literacy, reflect our focused topics, themes, and research, as well as highlight student voice, identity, and critical choice?

The Junior Ambassadors' afterschool club at Ditmas IS 62 is designed for seventh- and eighth-grade students who have an interest in world affairs and being a global citizen. While exploring the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this year's junior ambassadors voted to focus on:

SDG 1: No poverty - ending poverty in all its forms everywhere.

SDG 2: Zero hunger - achieving food security, improved nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture for all.

As a result of their subsequent work, each of the junior ambassadors had a particular personal and international take on these two global goals.

At Ditmas IS 62, Social Worker Keitha Rhoden, Guidance Counselor Michelle Myers and Writing Institute Director Dr. Rose Reissman wanted to give club members a chance to share their reflections as student leaders. Specifically, they wanted them to weigh in with the almost 1000 students at Ditmas IS 62 at an upcoming Culture Day. How could we assure that during a busy school-wide celebration of culture, these critical comments and interactions by the student leaders would be heard and reacted to by students? Podcasting provided an immediate and accessible possibility to enable the "power of doing" with each comment, discussion, and reaction from the audience.

Marissa Silverman, an ELA teacher who had successfully done podcasts with her own classes, stepped up graciously to produce and record a podcast which would stream into all classrooms and be available on PCSS leadership podium. While the students had experience speaking to class groups and to larger audiences, they were still self-conscious about being recorded for peers to hear.

Ms. Silverman was given a list of questions about student's individual cultural and personal research on hunger and poverty to merge into a flowing podcast. She introduced the requisite sound checks and process and assured students that verbal blunders and long pauses could be edited out. Ms. Silverman also worked to relax the novice podcasters so they could authentically discuss both their experiences as Junior Ambassadors and their mission going forward as young leaders.

After editing and inserting transitions recorded by one of the student leaders, the final podcast was shared with the entire school, class-by-class. Podcasting allowed students to literally create a peer SDG mission awareness experience for their peers at Ditmas and Starr leaders in the Pennsylvania Council for Social Studies STARR leaders group.



United Nations Junior Ambassadors at Ditmas 62

Doing and Voicing Leadership with PodcastingBy **Dr. Rose Reissman**

How did the experienced IS 62 Middle School Junior Ambassadors react to their novice use of the podcast format to make their leadership mission happen?

Humayra

"Before doing the podcast, I was pretty excited. I had never been in a podcast before. But the reason I was excited, was also the reason I was nervous. I felt self-conscious about the sound of my own voice. Yet listening to myself speak was also kind of fun. Student leadership has many sides to it. I also noticed that many on my Junior Ambassador team were also self-conscious about the sound of their own voices. This experience, though scary at the beginning, ended with a nice product."

Fiza

"At first the idea of doing a podcast honestly made me very nervous. But as we thought about what we each had to say, I found myself getting excited. The podcast meant that my personal voice would be heard by the students. I listened to how my voice sounded with a mix of humor and a sense that how it sounded, did not matter. What mattered was what I said. I came to feel that what I said was important and our audience cared about each of our statements and discussion on hunger and poverty. The notion that the podcast audience would hear and understand what I said was terrific. I felt proud of the finished podcast."

Abdullah

"I was immediately excited by the concept of the podcast. I have already listened to celebrity podcasts, so I associated it with those. However, I was nervous because my voice on a mic sounds completely different from my speaking voice. I so worried that I would mess up the podcast as it was recorded and ruin it for everyone, but as a student leader, I took a deep breath and went for my shot to speak my mission. Listening to the podcast, a week later, I was proud and happy we all communicated."

Arifin

"I was honestly scared and nervous. But when I joined the Junior Ambassador Program, I got practice in public speaking. I had lost my confidence in public speaking because of the lockdown and of the lack of public anything, including making videos or podcasts. Yet as we recorded the podcast, it got easier because I knew the questions beforehand and I had my opinions and perspectives on the issues to share. I forgot about the process of recording. I just went with the flow of our discussion and feel that the podcast came out really well."

The published podcast provided a podium for the UN Junior Ambassadors to exercise their ambassadorial powers without leaving the building, while reaching their peers and invited listeners in Pennsylvania, across the nation, and globally. As teachers seek to educate for content and historically responsive cultural literacy, the solution is only a simple podcast away.

References

Muhammad, Gholdy (2020). *Cultivating Genius*. New York. Scholastic.



United Nations Junior Ambassadors at Ditmas 62

Junior Ambassadors' Program: The Bigger Picture

Local to Global

The junior ambassadors are sharing with the 900 students of Ditmas through awareness tools, their own artifacts, SDG 1 and SDG 2, art, jamboard, padlet and other research on a community bulletin board.

The Junior Ambassadors' podcast was available to 6-8 grade students at Ditmas JHS on the school's Cultural Day.

Junior Ambassadors participated in a peer Leadership session with 19-year-old Evangeline Sell, a Pennsylvania Council for the Social Studies (PCSS) and Pennsylvania Bar Association Intern who shared insights into her student leadership work in her state. She also shared tips for successful student leadership networking and college preparedness.

The Junior ambassador video of their experience in the program and the podcast will be presented virtually at the PCSS conference in Pittsburgh on October 20, 2023. The Junior ambassadors, Dr. Reissman, Ms. Rhoden, and Ms. Myers will share their perspectives, showcase their products and interact with Pennsylvania STARR student leaders at this event.

Junior Ambassadors' digital products will be posted and highlighted on the PCSS website.

Program Legacy

A publication edited by Dr. Reissman, which includes the ambassadors' writings, art, jamboard, pictures, reflections, and outreach is to be printed and posted on the PCSS and Ditmas websites.

Junior Ambassadors will present to sixth and seventh grade classes to spread the word about the podcast and their experiences in the afterschool club.

At Ditmas on cultural day, countries and cultures are celebrated with a fashion show and musical acts from different parts of the world. After the event, teachers were encouraged to bring the information to students and join the ambassadors in spreading the word about SDG 1 and SDG 2.

Collaborations and Partnerships

The **Pennsylvania Council for the Social Studies** (PCSS) has a continued partnership with Ditmas JHS 62 since 2014.

Student Training in Advocacy, Rights, and Responsibilities (STARR), is sponsored by Dr. Reissman.

The **Rendell Center for Civics and Civic Engagement** has a continued partnership with Ditmas JHS62.

The **Student Leadership Council** (SLC) at Ditmas has partnered with the Junior Ambassadors since 2022..

The Junior Ambassadors have also collaborated with the **cultural day planning committee** at Ditmas JHS 62; and the **Parent Teacher Association** (PTA) at Ditmas JHS 62



United Nations Junior Ambassadors at Ditmas 62

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The SDGs are 17 priorities adopted by member states of the UN. They include: eradicating poverty, protecting the planet, and ensuring prosperity for ALL people. The students who attend this Junior Ambassador club are empowered and motivated to bring attention to one or two SDGs. Students voted to focus on SDG 1: No poverty - Ending poverty in ALL its forms, and SDG 2: Zero hunger- achieving food security, improved nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture for all people.

The mission of the Junior ambassadors' club is to research and bring attention to the chosen SDGs through a project. The goal of the project is to encourage and empower the Junior Ambassadors to motivate persons in their community to care about the SDGs, as they affect us all. Students enrolled in this program believe that we all should strive to be Global Citizens!

1 NO
POVERTY



2 ZERO
HUNGER



Abdullah Saeed, 703

SDG1 and SDG2,
Goals to help renew,
No one should suffer from poverty,
Nor go to bed with an empty belly.

SDG1 seeks to end poverty's grip,
And help those in need to have a better trip,
SDG2 aims to ensure it all,
Have access to food, both big and small.

Together they form a powerful force,
To make the world a better place, of course,
So, let's work towards these goals each day,
To make sure everyone has a better way.



United Nations Junior Ambassadors at Ditmas 62

The Junior Ambassadors' Sustainable Development Goals Represented Through Art



Zhilin Liang



Fiza Kamran



Arifin MST Zeni

Artist's Response to SDGs represented in Art

Zhilin Liang (850)

Originally, I was inspired by the glass windows for the imperial era and the knighting ceremony for a knight in training to become an official knight under the imperial family. My thoughts when I saw the glass window was how each piece was a different shade and shape but when put together the shards of glass made a beautiful glass window, representing an important time in their history. Each shard of color was to make out a difference in every being but how it symbolized the number of countries in the United Nation and the colors representing the SDGs goals.

I think what makes this piece of art unique was how it was created because of the scene in the book Romeo and Juliet, after the death of the two children who were so in love with one another that they would end their lives if either of them had to meet an end, their families decided to rule in harmony instead of sacrificing the peace of the people because of their childish quarrel. The quarrel between the two families can represent the countries that took part in World War II and when the families came together to bring peace to all, that can be the exact showcase of how the united nation came to be. Romeo and Juliet can be shown as the sacrifices made for the realization of how the world won't change if they sit idly without trying to make a change.



United Nations Junior Ambassadors at Ditmas 62

The Junior Ambassadors' Sustainable Development Goals Represented Through Art

Abdullah Saeed (703)

The art piece is stunning. It has one of every color that represents the 17 Sustainable Goals. I think each of the different colors represents a different Sustainable Goal. The heart is lighting up because if we do the sustainable goals we could light up the world and make it a better place. There is a hand on top and at the bottom of the heart because it shows us that together we could achieve anything. I also had a favorite quote which was "Hunger is the world's most solvable problem; it's up to you." This is what I think about the stunning and informative illustration.

Shariat Sultan (850)

This piece of artwork could connect to the 17 SDGs and the goals, seeing the two different arms holding up the heart of many different bursting colors. The two different hands could represent teamwork and companionship, working together to make the world's problems slowly dissolve. The crystal heart of many different colors could represent the SDGs and different goals to solve the world's problems. A quote that this piece of artwork could relate to is the quote by Ernest Hemingway, "For what are we born, if not to aid one another?" This all ties together because it shows helping one another through vulnerability and distress.

Artist's Response to SDGs represented in Art

Arifin MST Zeni

The design is illustrating the two main goals and problems, the world has, hunger and poverty. I used the heart so it can show how much we can help people even with seemingly small things.

I depicted NO Poverty because that is one of the problems that our Ditmas Middle School Ambassadors picked. I used the water drop with house to represent water in every house. Plus this art communicates that everyone should have a house to live in. I used a doctor symbol to represent good health. The book symbol paired with the graduation cap, says that everyone should have access to education and to the opportunity to graduate that education program.

On the other side of the heart, I wrote "No Hunger," I drew hands with food and with money. These hands are reaching out to distribute food and money to all. These hands must take action so that we can begin to achieve this goal. Next I inserted the motivating statements- "Let's make this happen" and "Let's work together." "World Peace" was inserted because if we can tackle these SDG problems.



United Nations Junior Ambassadors at Ditmas 62

The Junior Ambassadors' Sustainable Development Goals Represented Through Art

Humayra Bhuiyan

This illustration makes me think of how people are sharing their hearts with one another. The illustrator used her art to show us the power of sharing with the heart and the arrows surrounding it.

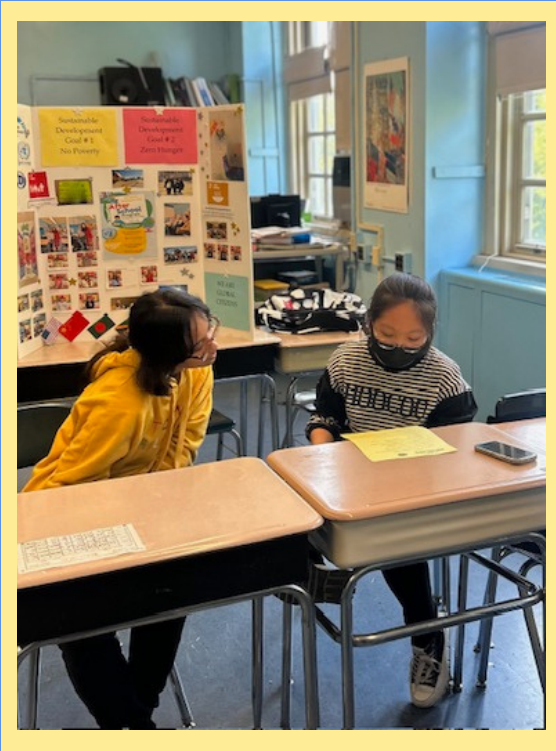
Kaylyn Clark

I am so impressed by this emblem. I like that the heart image connects all the SDGs and flows through it. This heart image is essential because it shows how people have love for these goals. People care. I think use of the hands shows that people are try to take action and to achieve the goals of the SDGs. My first reaction to this emblem was one of surprise. I saw a color match up with the SDGs inserted. I like the visual concept of a heart in the middle with human hands connecting. To me, it says that if we work as a team, we can solve all issues. As Mother Theresa says, "Do the thing that's in front of you." This art also represents Roger Thurow's quote "Hunger is the world's most solvable problem, it's up to you." To me this heart with its colors over spreading the emblem, shows how we as people of the world are being encouraged to care for one another.



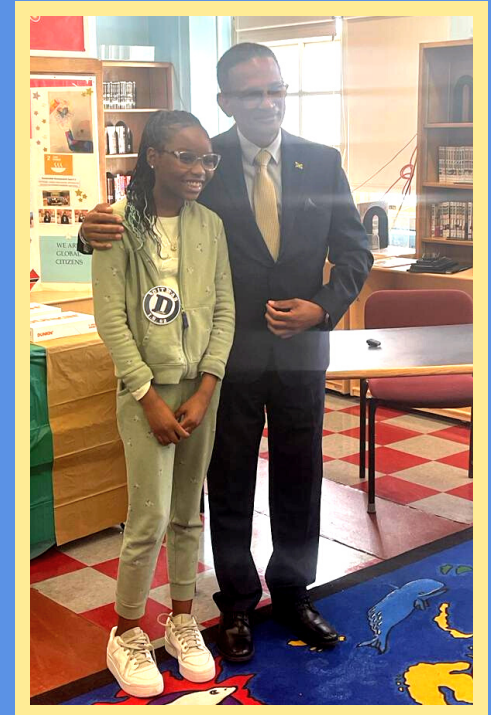
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Preparing for Ambassador Wallace's Visit



United Nations Junior Ambassadors at Ditmas 62

Ambassador Wallace Brings His Mission to Ditmas IS 62 Jamaican Ambassador to the United Nations



United Nations Junior Ambassadors at Ditmas 62

Junior Ambassadors Reflect on Ambassador Wallace's Visit**Abdullah Saeed (703)**

One thing that Ambassador Wallace said that stood out to me is the reason he became ambassador to Jamaica. He said my president asked me to be the ambassador and of course, I can't say no to my president. I thought that was really nice and it showed that he respected his president and if that was me I would probably do the same thing. Another thing he said that stood out was that his family wasn't originally from just Jamaica, they came from different places and when to Jamaica for economic and academic purposes and he choose to study in two different places England and Jamaica. Ambassador Wallace mentioned that he hoped that we share our experiences with other people. That inspired me and I don't think I will ever forget it because He has so much hope in us and that was inspiring.

Fiza Kamran (770)

Ambassador Wallace mentioned that he went to multiple schools which I related to the most. I had to transfer to two different elementary schools and now middle schools. All schools are different, You have to get used to the environment, and the way they teach. Ambassador Wallace was told by his prime minister that he should be an Ambassador, so he couldn't resist. It just gave me the idea that I should listen to those who are important to me, like my role models. Those who I trust are able to see good things in me just like the Prime Minister of Jamaica saw in Ambassador Wallace. I wasn't able to ask the Ambassador any questions but what he said about the times during COVID in Jamaica stuck with me. People were living in poverty, and they didn't have any nutritious food like many other countries around the world. COVID affected the country really badly, so I could not stop thinking about that. Also, I was really surprised by how his day went. I thought he got free time when he left his office, but no, he has to do this for 24 hours so there can be some sort of contribution to the work of getting rid of poverty and hunger.

Zhilin Liang (850)

A personal detail that I relate to is that he studied hard to get where he is. However, he started out wanting to do one thing but things changes but he was still successful. I used to think I wanted to be rich or be the best but now I just choose to live my life and see where it takes me. When he was younger, the ambassador didn't know what he wanted to do in the future but when he finally knew it changed as life. I think that even though I might know what I might want to do or be, I don't know what I'll do, what decisions I'll make, or what things might change but I am hopeful. The one thing that stuck out to me was when he answered what part of his career as an ambassador was the hardest, his answer was being able to convince others. The reason it stuck with me is the fact that throughout your life you're bound to meet people who disagree with your views and sayings and try to persuade them into understanding your views.

Shariat Sultan (850)

Ambassador Wallace values education and believes it is a pathway out of problems like poverty. I'm sure his family values education just as much as he does. I can relate to this because my parents put a lot of pressure on me for education, and want me to get the best education that I could possibly get to grow as a person for the future. Learning the fact that Ambassador Wallace had a long academic journey, and studying in different countries gave me ideas. I have always thought about taking a few years of education in another country and now realizing that I could learn things from a different perspective makes me want to do it more. I want to see the world in different ways. The answer to my question that stuck with me the most was when Ambassador Wallace said that his prime minister asked him to be the official ambassador and he couldn't say no to him. It shows that the work he was doing was lovely and done so wonderfully, he was worthy enough to get chosen to be the ambassador. He worked very hard to get to where he is, even if his ultimate goal wasn't even to become an ambassador.



United Nations Junior Ambassadors at Ditmas 62

Junior Ambassadors Reflect on Ambassador Wallace's Visit**Kaylyn Cla (750)**

One personal detail from Ambassador Wallace's talk I remembered was that he wasn't working towards being the ambassador of his country but was elected by his Prime Minister and he couldn't say no. Another thing I learned from the talk with the ambassador is that not everyone grows up the same way. I learned this because he said that his grandfather had to take his mother to a school hoping they would get in and his family moved to different places for better opportunities. I relate to this because my mom moved to the United States from Jamaica and later my grandma came for a better life. The question I asked Ambassador Wallace was "Why can't the government just reduce the prices so everyone can afford food?" The answer of the ambassador stuck with me because he said that it's not within the power of the government to control food prices. He said that Jamaica gets most of their supplies from other countries and that the war between Ukraine and Russia stopped a lot of ingredients from being shipped around the world so inflation went up also with food prices.

Arifin MST Zeni (703)

Ambassador Wallace went to school in Jamaica and England he studied in two countries just like me. I studied first in my own country and now in America and I also have more than one role model, just like him. It is okay to have more than one role model because I have at least 4 role models that I can never pick the best one. Ambassador Wallace did not dream of being an ambassador of his country to the United Nations and being in a leadership role model to many students and people. His Prime Minister saw something in him, things that he is very good at someone and asked him to be an ambassador. With everything, Ambassador Wallace said I think, focusing in on what you dream about can help you in many ways. Just follow what you want then you can get your dream career.

Humarya Bhuiyan (704)

The personal details shared by the Ambassador that I relate the most to are that his family is diverse just like mine, and he had different career choices throughout his life which is my plan. Learning about Ambassador Wallace's academic and career journey as a Junior Ambassador gave me ideas, such as focusing mainly on the subjects that you know are going to help you in your confirmed career choice, and being open-minded and respectful towards others' perspectives, for my own journey. The comments that Ambassador Wallace made and gave for the question I asked stuck with me, he mentioned that knowing how to compromise is an important step to working with other people. Because they might not have the same perspective as you and taking their point of view into consideration is important.



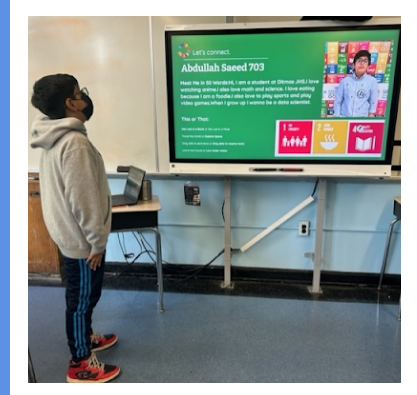
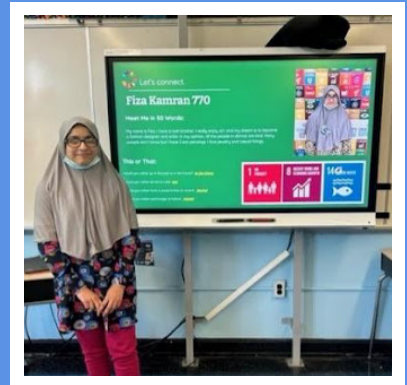
NYC Junior Ambassadors



United Nations Junior Ambassadors at Ditmas 62

Only "Connect " Cards

This fabulous online connect card project was developed by Jennifer Williams and Riley Justis of Take Action Global who did Professional Development instruction for all of the UN Middle School Ambassadors coaches.



United Nations Junior Ambassadors at Ditmas 62

"Sell" ing a Role Model

A young leader and student at George Washington University, Evangeline Sell, shared advice and tips on youth leadership and future success.

Abdullah Saeed (703)

The interview with Evangeline (Eva) was really cool, it was like meeting a young ambassador. Something that I learned about her was that she is from Philadelphia. One thing that was surprising was that she was homeschooled her whole life and went to school when she was 15. She also shared some skills that are needed for a successful young leader. She said the main thing was that get or be prepared to get told no. Also you need to work hard and have inner motivation. One of the most important was to be able to connect with others. Like if you need to be an ambassador you need to be able to talk to others and form relationships. My experience was great I got to know tips and tricks about colleges and being an ambassador.

Humayra Bhuiyan (704)

Ms. Eva, shared with us why we should make our voices heard. We heard that we should believe in ourselves. Eva told us how rejection and rejections are not synonyms for the end of your dreams. We can and should bounce back up after failures. There is no age for dreaming or having ambitions, and how being passionate about something can benefit us in many ways. (Whip cream on top, she gave us helpful tips on how to get in colleges we are interested in)

Fiza Kamran (770)

Ms. Evangeline Sell is a student at George Washington University, she didn't go to regular school, was homeschooled instead. She went to a community college in Philadelphia, where she lived. She's proud of how she met Dr Rose as an Intern and she does a lot of work with poverty and she wants to fix injustices. She experienced people being scared of being rejected but it is a part of success. When you are asked about your future, you can become more passionate as you go through school. Colleges like to see what students are passionate about. She applied to 9 schools. She got rejected by 6 of those 9 and the rejections hurt. She mentioned that for anything you apply to, they want to see your progress, and why you applied to this, etc. she feels that she is a role model to us because doctor Rose trusts her speaking to us. She gets judged by her height but she says it's not about size, it's about a mindset. She did not go to traditional school, so she didn't have exposure to role models at such a young age like us. She always impressed people by her impressive work. What a great leader!



United Nations Junior Ambassadors at Ditmas 62

"Sell" ing a Role Model

Charlene Wu (880)

Evangeline Sell is a student at George Washington University and will be an intern for a U.S. Senator. Something I learned from the interview is that being rejected is nothing to be worried about, rejections is a part of life and you can achieve something even bigger when you get rejected. Rejection is something you learn from not to be sad about. Evangeline sell also stated that when she was applying to go to George Washington University, she got rejected to her top few schools. Later on, Ms. Evangeline got a scholarship to George Washington University for her work she did. She didn't give up and she wasn't really upset about it. Her experience as an intern helped her get into a college. I learned that no matter how you look, how tall you are, and you can achieve something big. Be yourself, you don't need to care about what other people think about you to do something. Achieving something is when you are yourself and work hard and nothing bad gets in your way. Just ignore it to achieve it no matter what happens.



United Nations Junior Ambassadors at Ditmas 62

Visit to the United Nations' Headquarters



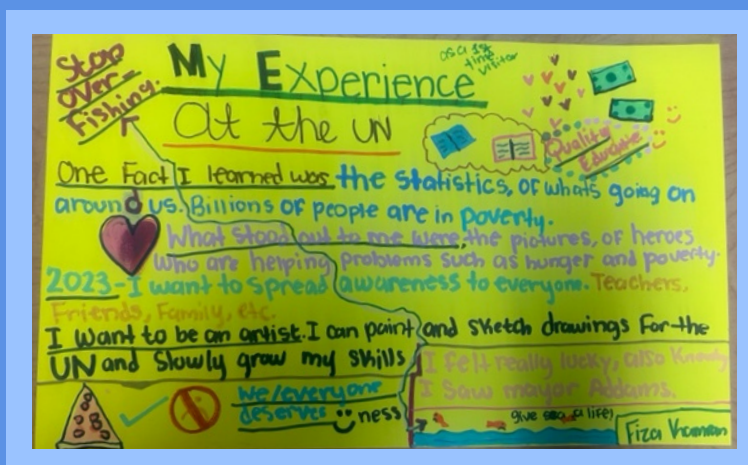
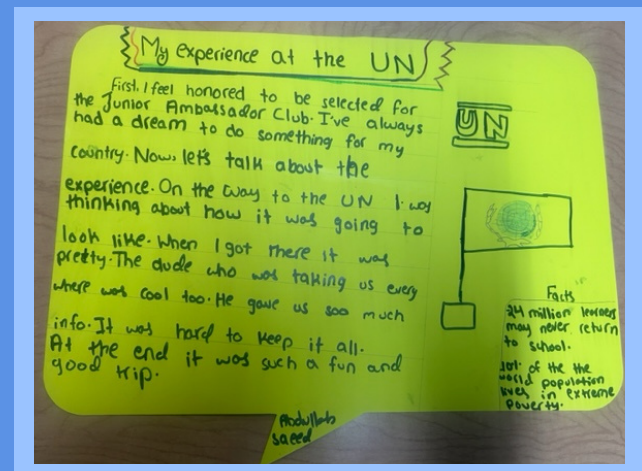
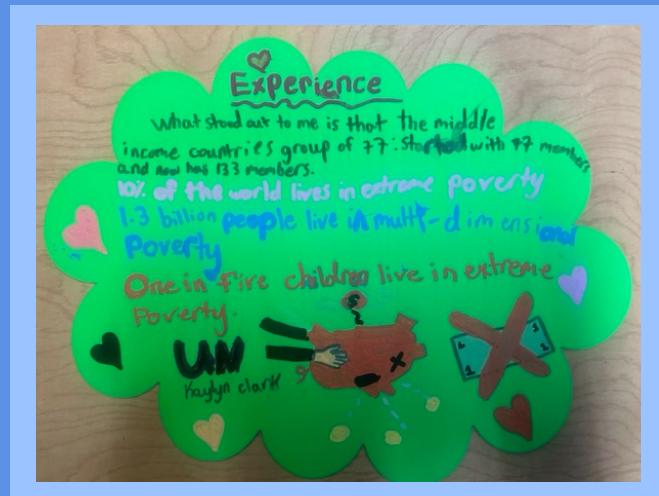
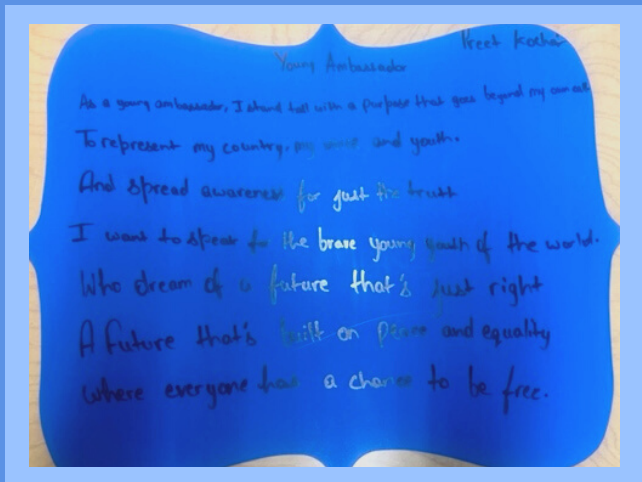
United Nations Junior Ambassadors at Ditmas 62

Visit to the United Nations' Headquarters



United Nations Junior Ambassadors at Ditmas 62

Reflecting on the Visit to the United Nations



Culminating Day



United Nations Junior Ambassadors at Ditmas 62

Stepping Back So Students Can Step Up

By Dr. Rose Reissman

As a former student leader, I have spent my career nurturing student leaders. Imagine my frustration, when my student leaders reach back to me, begging for explicit directions. How can students who opt to be student leaders actually lead? Here's how to inspire them to lead. First, ask the students to explain why they "consider" themselves to be leaders. Listen to what they say. Some define leadership as getting good grades and being well behaved in school. Some have been leaders in writing, creating arts, school projects or on teams as captains or mentors. These experiences ranged from school plays, art expos, sports teams to steam projects. These experiences that led to their realizing they were "leaders" because they helped team members or "found" solutions to overcoming obstacles and challenges. Some of the key Stem specific vocabulary of "challenges," "prototype testing," "building a solution," "generating ideas," "conducting research" and "stating a problem," had transferred themselves into the students' conception of leadership. Students who had accompanied parents who did community leadership or organization leadership, whether as neighborhood tenant, block organizers, church, social group, or job team, had very concrete ideas of what leadership included. Other students had already experienced a real world necessary leadership role as children in their families because they had had to "translate" for adult non-English speaking members to fill out necessary government, lease and medical forms. For them, they had a sense of "leadership" as a meaningful mature responsibility with power and some pathos. It is a good idea to get write ups or a videotape of these student definitions of leadership, so that other school leader groups can use them as an initial idea base for a discussion. Second, when the students have shared ideas about the meaning of "leader" to them, lean in with your own experiences as a student leader. For me that insight occurred when I was ten, in the process of making a speech at a community event. My speech had been authored and timed according to a topic format, the group adult leader had selected. I had practiced the speech which I memorized in front of the adult group leader several times to the leader's satisfaction. I had also practiced it at home to my mother's satisfaction. But on the day of the event the adult speaker prior to me, said something that piqued my interest. I decided to turn to the previous speaker and pick up on what that adult had said, I ended my off the cuff, unscripted remarks with a laugh line that got the audience's attention, in a positive way. I smiled. I glimpsed my mother looking initially horrified that I deviated from the script, but proud. As I walked off the stage, the event adult runner said: "You are a speaker." I liked saying what I thought. From then on, I intentionally switched texts of speeches at last minute to suit my ideas. Usually I got away with it. I put my own spin on projects. I defined leadership myself for myself. I also lost some opportunities, some friends and even points from some adults along the way, the price of leading. Should you not wish to get personal with your students the experiences of young leaders like Malala, Greta and others can also shared as well as those of neighborhood student leaders. Try the Project Soapbox found [here](#) for immediately relatable peer student leaders.



United Nations Junior Ambassadors at Ditmas 62

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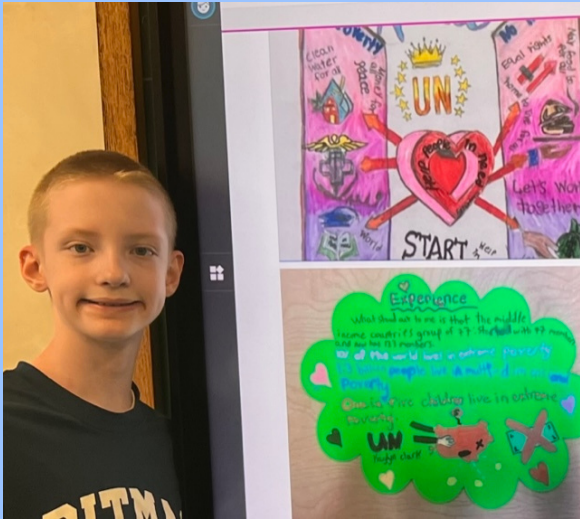
With student leadership concepts and actual peer student leader examples shared, next student leaders need to launch a student run project, production or publication. The key to this project is less detail and set templates, but more input from students themselves. So for our spring 2023 UN Middle School Junior Ambassador Project, the students selected two SDG Sustainable Development Goals – Zero Hunger and No Poverty. They created logos for each of these, they wanted tee shirts with their designs and their names. They networked with the PTA to raise money for UNICEF. They decided to talk to individual classes themselves using a PowerPoint Presentation. They prepped a banner and poster for Ambassador Wallace, the Jamaica Ambassador to the United States. They developed to raise with him these questions with him but of course developed others when he visited in May, 2023. While dedicated adults Keitha Rhoden, Social Worker head of the Student Leadership Council and Michelle Myers- Guidance Counselor, facilitated, and logistically planned the Junior Ambassador Program, neither templated the expected student project or audience outcomes. Together as trainers, we curated resources and even brought in a US senator intern who had at 19, to talk with these younger peers. We adults did not step in to lead the Junior Ambassadors. That was their mission to realize as they conceived it. At the culminating event, a gathering of the peer Middle School Junior Ambassador leaders from across NYC, my colleagues and I stepped back. The Junior Ambassadors, did not ask us what to do. They spotted US Ambassador to the United States Linda Thomas Greenfield and stepped up to chat, share newsletters and their tee shirts. We stepped back. Our stepping back, allowed the students the space to step up to lead.



**Stepping
Back So
Students
Can Step Up**



Ditmas STARR Leaders



Liam



Liam began creating websites during the 2022-2023 school year. He is the first 12-year-old webmaster at Ditmas Jr. High School. Liam is passionate about recycling and sustainability, and urban planning. When Ditmas Trends was co-created by his peers and teachers, Liam wanted to help. One day he asked me if he could create a website. I said, yes! Technology is a language that “just speaks to me.” “I can just look at something and envision it and create it. With a father who develops software, it seems that website design is in the DNA.

Ditmas STARR Leaders



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Junior Ambassadors' Final Reflection

At the beginning, I thought being an ambassador meant...

Someone who leads others, instead of following them.

Someone that can be depended on at all times.

Helping people at all costs and being a role model.

Someone who is a role model. Leaders have high expectations placed on them.

Being in an afterschool club to learn about the United Nations and its Sustainable Development Mission.

Meeting and greeting someone special when they came to our school.

Being apart of a regular after school program.

Someone who helps people. But I thought there were not many ambassadors.

Meeting other people which I was excited to do.

During the program I was most excited about....

Going to the United Nations and Gracie Mansion.

Learning new things and helping people

Going to the United Nations and the capstone project.

The visit to the United Nations, the visit from the Ambassador and the trip to Gracie Mansion.

The trip to the United Nations

The trip to the United Nations because there was so much to learn being there.

Going to the United Nations and Gracie Mansion, I like going on field trips.

Going to the United Nations and Gracie Mansion.

Today as we celebrate we realized that...

The Sustainable Development Goals are important for us to learn about in school.

Students all over the boroughs are just as determined as we are for the SDGs to be completed.

Different solutions to the problems of the world are important.

Joining afterschool is also about going on fun trips.

That being an ambassador is more than just attending meetings and greeting people.

I have to be grateful for the opportunity to be a Junior Ambassador

It was a great decision to join the Junior Ambassador program.

We finished the Junior Ambassador Program



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Resources

For Educators and Student Leadership Coaches

Cultural Day
Podcast Handout

Junior Ambassadors'
Podcast

Making Trips Meaningful

The Junior
Ambassadors' Mission

Student Leadership
Through Podcasts

Quote Inspiration Activity



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Despite Being Strangers, We All Want to Work Together

By Humayra Meher Bhuiyan

The earth is our home.
We all live in it together.
Why should we not all take care of it,
As well as one another?
Almost half the world's population lives in poverty,
So let us do something to help our earthling peers.
More than 800 million starve each day.
One in four children do not grow properly,
Due to lack of nutrients.
But why should we care?
This is not really our problem . . .
Nor related to us.
Why should we care?
We are strangers.

Those people can't afford a visit to the doctor.
Even if their lives are at risk.
Now, tell me, how can you not care,
About something like this?

Technically,

We are brothers and sisters.
So we have to have each other's backs,
No matter what.

We all have to help one another,
No matter what country we live in.
We all must work together.
To create a world
In which we all want to live.

Despite being strangers,
All of us need to work together-
To change the world
for the better.

Instead of just sitting and hoping-
Try to take some actions(s).
Because anyone can make a difference-
And definitely YOU can YOURSELF!!



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Illustration by Zhilin Liang

