



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
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MAYOR BILL DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES INAUGURAL STUDENT COHORT OF NYC JUNIOR AMBASSADORS

New program will encourage 7th graders to participate in future social change using U.N. as educational resource

NEW YORK— Mayor de Blasio and Penny Abeywardena, Commissioner of the Mayor’s Office for International Affairs, today welcomed the inaugural cohort of NYC Junior Ambassadors comprised of 7th graders from across the five boroughs. This new program helps educate young New Yorkers about the role the United Nations plays in the global community while encouraging participating students to engage in social change.

“Programs such as NYC Junior Ambassadors make use of our privileged role as home of the United Nations, and foster the strong partnership between New York City and the United Nations,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “Providing our youth with the knowledge and tools to encourage social change by learning from the global community is beneficial for all New Yorkers.”

In October 2015, on the occasion of United Nations Day, the Mayor’s Office for International Affairs invited 7th grade educators to take part in a citywide competition to participate in NYC Junior Ambassadors. Over 70 New York City educators submitted curriculum proposals inspired by the work and mandate of the United Nations, involving a variety of issues including climate change, child labor, human rights and gender equality.

“I am proud of the work my office is doing to connect the United Nations to the lives of New Yorkers. NYC Junior Ambassadors will be a transformative experience for participants, their families and their broader communities. The initiative provides a special opportunity for youth to share their experience of the important work of the United Nations with their families. These critical, intergenerational connections will have a lasting impact on the way we as New Yorkers think of the connection between New York City and the U.N.,” said **Penny Abeywardena, Commissioner of the Mayor’s Office for International Affairs**.

“I am delighted that the United Nations Department of Public Information and the Mayor's Office have been able to partner on the NYC Junior Ambassadors program. We love working closely with our host city and think this initiative is a great way to boost awareness about the

U.N. and its work among NYC students – many of whom will be future leaders. We are looking forward to welcoming the first cohort to the U.N. Headquarters very soon,” said **Cristina Gallach, Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information at the United Nations.**

The inaugural cohort of NYC Junior Ambassadors will participate in curated tours of the United Nations headquarters and visit to diplomatic missions. United Nations Ambassadors and experts will also visit their classrooms to discuss their experiences in depth. At the end of the program, these 7th graders will receive a certificate attesting their participation in NYC Junior Ambassadors as a way of celebrating their efforts to become active global citizens.

A committee of New York City-based local and global leaders selected the cohort. Considerations such as classroom diversity – both geographic and demographic – as well as class size and educator commitment were weighed in during the selection process.

“As a member of the Selection Committee, I was able to see firsthand the incredible enthusiasm for the NYC Junior Ambassadors program among educators from all academic subject areas across New York City. I look forward to hearing the same excitement from seventh graders who will have the opportunity to learn about the great work of the United Nations and engage in issues that affect their communities and the world. The NYC Junior Ambassadors program will empower our young people to become the next generation of world leaders,” said **Bill Chong, Commissioner of the Department of Youth and Community Development, and Member of the Selection Committee.**

“The NYC Junior Ambassadors program offers middle school students a unique opportunity to use the United Nations as a global classroom to become active and civically aware citizens prepared for college and careers. This initiative will cultivate an important awareness about global issues and teach our students important skills such as critical thinking, public speaking and conflict resolution,” said **Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña, and Member of the Selection Committee.**

“As a former teacher in New York City public middle schools, and now working with an international foundation, I was honored to be part of the Selection Committee. These outstanding classrooms will become models of global citizenship to inspire all of us,” said **Valerie Rockefeller Wayne, Chair of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and Member of the Selection Committee.**

This initiative is part of the effort by the Mayor’s Office for International Affairs to strengthen the connection between New Yorkers and the United Nations, and is made possible through a partnership with the Department of Education, the Department of Youth and Community Development, the United Nations and the United Nations Foundation.

“Young adults often feel helpless to do something about the global problems around them. I am hoping that NYC Junior Ambassadors will give them a voice not only to ask questions but also to offer solutions. I applied to NYC Junior Ambassadors on behalf of my classroom because I wanted to give my students the opportunity to learn about careers at the United Nations that they

may wish to pursue as they become adults,” said **Michelle Jennings, a Science Teacher at the Brooklyn Science and Engineering Academy.**

“We are thrilled to be a NYC Junior Ambassadors classroom. As an educator, I have the opportunity to guide my students into realizing and fulfilling their voice through advocacy to make a meaningful impact in the future. Being able to assist in the process of inspiring my students is truly rewarding, because it reinforces why I am here, and what I am doing to help these students change the world,” said **Annette Bindert a Literature Teacher at the 30th Avenue School.**

The NYC Junior Ambassadors cohort will participate in activities from January through June 2016. To receive updates on the program, follow the Mayor’s Office for International Affairs on Facebook and on Twitter at @globalnyc.

NYC Junior Ambassadors 2016 Inaugural Cohort:

1. Sports and Arts Foundation in Schools/Castle Hill Middle School (J.H.S. 127), Bronx
2. St. Ignatius School, Bronx
3. P368 Star Academy (P368K), Brooklyn
4. Brooklyn Science & Engineering Academy, Brooklyn
5. Philippa Schuyler Middle School for the Gifted and Talented (I.S. 383), Brooklyn
6. NIA After-School Program (I.S. 192), Brooklyn
7. Shuang Wen School (P.S./M.S. 184), Manhattan
8. Anthony J. Pranzo School (P.S./I.S. 113), Queens
9. Hunters Point Community Middle School (30Q291), Queens
10. The 30th Avenue School (Q300), Queens
11. Edwin Markham Intermediate School (I.S. 51), Staten Island

NYC Junior Ambassadors Selection Committee Members:

1. City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito
2. Council Member Daniel Dromm
3. Carmen Fariña, Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education
4. Penny Abeywardena, Commissioner of the Mayor’s Office for International Affairs
5. Bill Chong, Commissioner of the Department of Youth and Community Development
6. Kathy Calvin, President and CEO of the United Nations Foundation
7. Valerie Rockefeller Wayne, Chair, Rockefeller Brothers Fund; and Board Member, Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors

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