



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 23, 2015

CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-295

**ON UNITED NATIONS DAY, CITY ANNOUNCES NEW INITIATIVE FOR SEVENTH GRADERS
TO BECOME JUNIOR AMBASSADORS**

Initiative strengthens connection between UN and NYC students, builds global consciousness for educators, students

NEW YORK—In celebration of United Nations Day, the Mayor’s Office for International Affairs announced today the launch of NYC Junior Ambassadors. This unique initiative is designed to bring New York students closer to the United Nations – by activating a set of 7th grade classes, focused on issues ranging from science to social studies, from across the five boroughs to participate in the UN’s mission of addressing the world’s most pressing challenges. The Mayor’s Office for International Affairs is offering this rare opportunity to middle school students, in partnership with the Department of Education, the Department of Youth & Community Development, the United Nations, and United Nations Foundation.

“The United Nations is a blessing to New York City and an underutilized resource for New Yorkers,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “People come to the United Nations from all over the world to exchange ideas and work towards a greater good. We want to bring New Yorkers closer to the UN, and NYC Junior Ambassadors does that by helping our students become global citizens.”

Founded in 1945, in the wake of World War II, the United Nations is a multilateral organization that strives to maintain international peace and security, promoting sustainable development, protecting human rights, upholding international law and delivering humanitarian aid. New York City has been the proud home of the United Nations Headquarters since 1952, and it hosts the largest diplomatic and consular community in the world.

Secretary General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon said, “As we mark the 70th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, we also express our tremendous gratitude for the many contributions of New York City and its residents. New York has been our generous host – and now it is our turn to invite New Yorkers into our meeting rooms and conference halls. Education is one of the pillars of global progress, and we are honored to be able to do our part to promote the development of new generations of young leaders and global citizens.”

“The United Nations is an incubator for positive change on a global scale and we are fortunate to have it in our city,” said **Commissioner for International Affairs Penny Abeywardena**. “In bringing the classroom to the UN, we want to encourage students to study global issues while thinking about the challenges facing their own communities. We want New York students to be on the cutting-edge of creative problem solving.”

The NYC Junior Ambassadors program targets youth at a critical time in their personal and intellectual growth, and helps them understand the real connections between themselves, their city, and the world at large. The program will provide ten groups of 7th grade students from school classrooms or afterschool programs singular access to the United Nations community, including a curated visit to the United Nations Headquarters and a classroom visit from a senior UN diplomat.

“In our globalized world, it is critical that students can approach all situations with empathy, understanding, and critical thinking,” said **Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña**. “The United Nations is an incredible place to learn these lessons and gain an international perspective that will serve them in the classroom and far beyond.”

“At the Department of Youth and Community Development, we are committed to leveraging the remarkable cultural and political spaces in our communities, by transforming them into educational experiences for students. A well-rounded education lives beyond the hours and boundaries of the traditional classroom setting, and NYC Junior Ambassadors does just that,” said **Commissioner Bill Chong, New York City Department of Youth and Community Development**.

New York City 7th grade educators from all subject areas are invited to apply to NYC Junior Ambassadors on behalf of one of their classrooms or afterschool programs, and can do so by visiting the Mayor’s Office for International Affairs [website](#) and filling out the web form application. Educators from the selected classrooms are required to incorporate the United Nations in their classroom or afterschool curriculum. The application process opens today, October 23 and closes on November 25, 2015. The NYC Junior Ambassadors Selection Committee, comprised of New York City-based local and global leaders, will offer their expertise by reviewing applications and selecting the final ten classrooms.

“NYC Junior Ambassadors is an opportunity to engage youth in the five boroughs on issues that affect their communities and the world. Empowering youth to become leaders benefits all New Yorkers. I am proud to be a member of the Selection Committee,” said **Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito**.

“I am honored to serve on the NYC Junior Ambassadors Selection Committee with such a distinguished group of local and global leaders. In my 25 years as an educator and in my current role as Chair of the Education Committee, I have sought to bridge the gaps between New York City’s diverse communities. I cannot imagine a better way to celebrate this diversity and bring communities together than by connecting our city’s youth to the United Nations,” said **Council Member Daniel Dromm**.

“The idea for NYC Junior Ambassadors comes at a pivotal moment. Not only is the United Nations celebrating its 70th Anniversary, but it has also just adopted Global Goals that the world will seek to implement between now and 2030. I cannot think of a better time than now to engage youth on global issues,” said **Kathy Calvin, President and Chief Executive Officer, United Nations Foundation**

The ten participating classrooms will be announced on December 14, 2015. The NYC Junior Ambassadors will begin their journey in international affairs in January of 2016.

###