



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
MAYOR'S OFFICE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 21, 2024

Contact: Malissa Ifill, IAMedia@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 319- 9439

**NYC MAYOR'S OFFICE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMISSIONER
EDWARD MERMELSTEIN ANNOUNCES 2024 COHORT OF NYC JUNIOR
AMBASSADORS**

*Innovative program empowers approximately 740 NYC Youth and Educators
to Act Locally on Global Issues through Engagements with the United Nations and the World*

NEW YORK- Today, Commissioner Edward Mermelstein of the Mayor's Office for International Affairs marked the start of the 9th program year of NYC Junior Ambassadors with the unveiling of the 2024 cohort of participating classrooms representing public schools and afterschool programs across the five boroughs of New York City. This announcement continues Mayor Eric Adams and the Administration's commitment to young New Yorkers and their engagement in global affairs and community advocacy. The 2024 cohort is diverse across subject areas, topics of interest, learning abilities, and other socio-economic spectrums. It will include approximately 21 classrooms from 7th, 8th, and 9th grades, totaling nearly 740 students and educators. The 2024 program year will run from January to June. The program is possible through a grant from the New York City's Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City via the MSC Foundation.

"Our administration is creating opportunities for young New Yorkers every day, and the NYC Junior Ambassadors program delivers that for over 742 young people and educators," said **New York City Mayor Eric Adams**. "When young people engage as citizens, they learn how to advocate for themselves and their communities. I want to congratulate the new cohort of NYC Junior Ambassadors — thanks to you, our city and our world will be in good hands."

"My team and I are thrilled to welcome the 2024 cohort of NYC Junior Ambassadors. Empowering young New Yorkers is a core part of our mission. We are happy to collaborate with our sister agencies, the United Nations, and other stakeholders to give our youth and educators unprecedented opportunities to experience life beyond their zip code," said **Edward Mermelstein, Commissioner, NYC Mayor's Office for International Affairs**. "This program transforms the lives of participants by broadening their perspectives and empowering them to

trust their voices while acting for the good of their communities and the world. We are grateful to Mayor Eric Adams for his vision for New York City youth and educators. Together, we are creating a legacy of global citizens.”

“The youth are our future! Providing our future leaders and their educators the opportunity to work in partnership with the United Nations is a pivotal step to ensuring that barriers which normally separate individuals are removed,” said **Chief Advisor Chaplain Ingrid P. Lewis Martin**. “Providing pre-teens and teenagers an opportunity to learn about cultures outside of their norm is a key step to breaking down walls and building bridges that will lead to a peaceful world.”

“New York City is a global city – and we’re thrilled to welcome this year’s class of NYC Junior Ambassadors to this exciting program,” said **Chief of Staff Camille Joseph Varlack**. “These leaders of the future will have the opportunity to broaden their horizons, gain a better understanding of the world around them, and take part in premier global events with key dignitaries.”

“New York City is truly an international city due to its unique relationship with the United Nations, its diverse immigrant communities from across the globe, and its booming tourist sector serving thousands of visitors from abroad,” said **Deputy Mayor for Strategic Initiatives Ana J. Almanzar**. “As a result, the city’s young people are well-positioned to become future leaders in public service, business, and environmental justice. I know firsthand from my own experience at the United Nations during college that programs like NYC Junior Ambassadors are instrumental in exposing our students to challenges across the globe and allowing them to participate in developing their own solutions.”

“New York City is the proud home of the United Nations, and we are happy to give New York City youth and educators access to this historic building through our globally recognized and award-winning program, NYC Junior Ambassadors,” said **Aissata Camara, Deputy Commissioner for Policy and Strategic Initiatives and Chief of Staff, NYC Mayor’s Office for International Affairs**. “As the world continues to face challenges and become more polarized, it is important to create platforms for people, especially youth, that enable them to harness their voices and build connections with people globally. We have seen the power of this program in the lives of youth and educators across the five boroughs over the years. We can’t wait to witness the incredible journey of this new cohort!”

“The NYC Junior Ambassadors program embodies our dedication to amplifying youth voices in conversations that resonate, from local neighborhoods to the global stage,” said **Christie Saint-Vil, Director of Strategic Relationships, NYC Mayor’s Office for International Affairs**. “The program exposes our youth to different experiences that will shape their outlook on the world for years. We’re excited to welcome the 2024 cohort of students and educators to our 9th program year. Let’s empower the next generation to shape a world that listens to their insights and dreams.”

“The NYC Junior Ambassadors Program motivates students and teachers alike to take an active interest in the work of the United Nations and the challenges facing humanity, through the lens

of the Sustainable Development Goals. In parallel, it inspires them to search for practical ways to improve their own communities,” said **Melissa Fleming, Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications, United Nations**. “We are delighted to continue working with the Mayor’s Office to embrace this program, reaching this year 730 students and educators from 21 classrooms throughout NYC.”

“The NYC Junior Ambassador program provides our young people and educators a unique avenue to engage meaningfully with the United Nations in their important work of supporting humanity and fostering global citizenship as we work towards a common good,” said **New York City Public Schools Chancellor, David C. Banks**. I am excited to see the partnership between New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) and the NYC Mayor’s Office for International Affairs continue and the NYCJA program thrive during this critical time in the world. I look forward to hearing about the key lessons our students take away from this extraordinary experience.”

“The Department of Youth & Community Development (DYCD) is proud to be a longtime partner in the NYC Junior Ambassadors Program and helping young people find their voice as global citizens to make the world a better place for all,” said the **NYC Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) Commissioner Keith Howard**. “Under Mayor Adams’ forward-thinking leadership, young people are learning in the world’s greatest classroom—New York City—and well beyond the five boroughs. DYCD looks forward to collaborating with our agency partners, educators, and the United Nations in connecting the cohort of 2024 with real-world civic engagement.”

“We believe in partnerships and are committed to investing in our future generations. We take great pride in supporting the NYC Junior Ambassadors program to connect local New York youth to global action,” said **Daniela Picco, Executive Director, MSC Foundation**. “With peace, humanitarian aid, and sustainable development at the heart of the United Nations mission, nurturing young minds and fostering dialogue with crucial stakeholders is an investment in shaping our future.”

Through the globally recognized and award-winning NYC Junior Ambassadors program, young New Yorkers are empowered to think of themselves as global citizens and help create a better, fairer world while learning about the United Nations and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which seek to address poverty, climate change, and inequality. Each class will incorporate the SDGs into their curriculum with their educators. All participants will receive a curated tour of the UN headquarters tailored to their class’s curricular interest and a classroom visit from a senior diplomat. Since its inception, participants in the NYC Junior Ambassadors program have welcomed UN Ambassadors representing every continent to their classrooms.

Students have also participated in special global events, such as moderating events convened by presidents of the UN General Assembly, speaking on panels with senior UN and world representatives, including the UN Secretary-General, and participating in global conferences. Last year’s cohort participated in an event celebrating the end of their journey at Gracie Mansion, where they engaged Mayor Eric Adams and Ambassador Linda Thomas Greenfield, the Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations as well as the Representative of the United States of America in the Security Council of the United Nations.

Since its launch, approximately 5,300 students and educators from classrooms and after-school programs have participated in the NYC Junior Ambassadors program. The Mayor’s Office for International Affairs partners with the NYC Public Schools, the Department of Youth and Community Development, the United Nations, and the United Nations Foundation to provide this unique opportunity to middle and high school students across the city.

“The impact that the NYC Junior Ambassadors Program is having on youth in New York City is unprecedented,” said **Troy Wolfe, Senior Director, of Partnerships & Special Initiatives, United Nations Foundation (UNA-USA)**. “We are witnessing the rise of middle and high school students, who understand the art and science of diplomacy and can apply innovative ideas to supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals locally, nationally, and internationally,”

“As we look to support the development of young leaders across New York City Schools, we see the critical need to support educators as professionals and stewards of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. We believe that educators are the link between local and global action and impact, inspiring learners to create sustainable change within our interconnected global community. said **Jennifer Williams, Executive Director, Take Action Global**. “By integrating the SDGs across learning environments and into lesson plans, the Global Goals become part of the learning process – encouraging both a global perspective and a solutions mindset. Systemic change can come through the next generation of leaders, and their understanding, compassion, and motivation can be fostered by the teachers and the experiences they encounter in our schools today.”

“I was very pleased to learn that we will be a NYC Junior Ambassador classroom again this year. The program brings such great benefits to the students. The most important one is that students get to see how what we are learning relates to other people outside the classroom”, said **Jeff Utz, Science Teacher, at The Montauk-Junior High School 223 (Brooklyn)**. “They will also learn about the United Nations and the Sustainable Development Goals and their importance. Of course, I will teach them about this, but when they leave the classroom and visit the UN as well as have an ambassador visit, they experience their learning differently. Finally, working with other teachers around the city enhances my teaching and learning as well.”

“Eagle Academy for Young Men, Southeast Queens, is excited to be a part of the 2024 cohort of NYC Junior Ambassadors! Empowering young men to be “Globally Conscious, Globally Competitive” is a core part of our mission”, said **Patrice McCullough, Educator, Eagle Academy for Young Men III (Southeast Queens, Queens South District 29)**. “Eagle SEQ Scholars are taught to take pride in their families, friends, community, and most of all, themselves. Through their leadership, they blaze a trail for others to follow. Partnering with The NYC Mayor’s Office for International Affairs, the Department of Youth and Community Development, the United Nations, and the United Nations Foundation further supports Eagle Academy SEQ's mission to expose our young men to opportunities and a world that goes beyond the walls of their inner-city community.”

About the Mayor’s Office for International Affairs

The New York City Mayor's Office for International Affairs fosters positive relations and encourages collaboration between the international community and New York City's agencies and local neighborhoods. The Office is focused on promoting NYC's economic development opportunities, sharing New York City's policies and best practices globally, and responding to requests from foreign governments, the United Nations, and the U.S. Department of State. For more information, follow us on [Twitter](#) (now X), [Instagram](#), and our [website](#).

2024 NYC Junior Ambassadors Cohort

1. Brooklyn Science & Engineering Academy, Brooklyn
2. East New York Middle School of Excellence, Brooklyn
3. Ebbets Field Middle School, Brooklyn
4. IS 171: The Magnet School of Leadership & Innovation, Brooklyn
5. I.S. 223: The Montauk, Brooklyn
6. I.S. 285: Meyer Levin, Brooklyn
7. Icahn Charter School 4, Bronx
8. P.S./I.S. 95: The Sheila Mencher School, Bronx
9. The New School for Leadership and the Arts, Bronx
10. World View High School, Bronx
11. Manhattan International High School, Manhattan
12. Mission Society NYC @ Harlem Village Academy, Manhattan
13. Partnership with Children @ Renaissance School of the Arts, Manhattan
14. I.S 204: The Oliver Wendell Holmes School, Queens
15. Eagle Academy for Young Men III (SEQ), Queens
16. Long Island City High School, Queens
17. Queens Collegiate: A College Board School, Queens
18. South Asian Youth Action (SAYA) @ J.H.S. 202: Robert H Goddard, Queens

19. Village Academy Middle School, Queens

20. I.S. 61: Willam A. Morris, Staten Island

21. Marsh Avenue School for Expeditionary Learning (MAELS), Staten Island

###