



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
MAYOR'S OFFICE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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Mayor de Blasio and International Affairs Commissioner Abeywardena Announce New Participants Selected for the NYC Junior Ambassadors Program

- On World Children's Day, students welcomed into innovative program that partners with the United Nations to build young global leaders poised to take action on urgent issues including climate, migration, and inequality -

NEW YORK — Mayor Bill de Blasio and Commissioner of the Mayor's Office for International Affairs Penny Abeywardena celebrated World Children's Day today by announcing the new group of classrooms and after-school programs selected to participate in the 2018-2019 NYC Junior Ambassadors program. Comprised of more than 500 diverse seventh-grade students and award-winning educators across the five boroughs, this innovative program immerses participants in the work of the United Nations in order to build young global leaders prepared to address urgent world issues starting with action in their own local communities.

"I welcome the new class of the Junior Ambassadors program, a terrific effort to empowering a network of young global leaders and educators across the five boroughs, and connecting them with the resources of the international community," said **Mayor de Blasio**. "Our city is a global leader in sustainability, and that leadership also extends to helping our youngest generation learn how to make a difference for the world of tomorrow by starting in their communities today."

The United Nations' (UN) World Children's Day is recognized every year on November 20 to promote children's rights and encourage actions to create a better world for the youngest generation. World Children's Day marks the anniversary of the date that the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1959 and the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989.

"Today we celebrate World Children's Day by welcoming our newest class of young leaders into the NYC Junior Ambassadors program. These promising seventh-graders will join thousands of alumni, throughout the five boroughs, in learning about the UN's Sustainable Development Goals as well as taking action on global issues through community projects in their neighborhoods," said **Penny Abeywardena, Commissioner of the Mayor's Office for International Affairs**. "Young people have a critical role to play in solving worldwide challenges from climate change to migration and inequality, and our Junior Ambassadors are doing this work every day. As host to the United Nations and the largest diplomatic community in the world, New York City is uniquely positioned to provide these youth leaders of today with the tools, experience and ongoing support to become the global decision makers of tomorrow."

“The United Nations is delighted that another batch of NYC Junior Ambassadors has been selected. We can’t wait to welcome them! This initiative from our host city is a wonderful way to connect our leaders of tomorrow with the work and values of the UN,” said **Alison Smale, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications**.

Each class selected for the NYC Junior Ambassadors program will incorporate the United Nations and its work on the Sustainable Development Goals to address poverty, inequality and climate change into their curriculum, with educators teaching subject areas ranging from science to arts to language. All participants will receive a curated tour of the UN headquarters in Manhattan tailored to their class’s curricular interest, and a classroom visit from a senior diplomat.

NYC Junior Ambassadors will also attend a special year-end celebration and receive a certificate acknowledging their participation in the program. Graduates will gain access to an alumni network of thousands of young, future leaders, while participating educators receive professional training and materials supporting the implementation of their lesson plans throughout the duration of the program.

Some 85 applications from educators across the five boroughs were submitted during this year’s application period, and 20 classrooms and after-school programs were chosen to become members of the latest cohort of NYC Junior Ambassadors. Selected participants include students with disabilities, English as a New Language learners, and new and veteran educators. With this latest cohort, more than 2,000 students and educators from more than 70 classrooms and after-school programs have participated in the NYC Junior Ambassadors program since its launch in 2015.

Since its beginning, participants in the NYC Junior Ambassadors program have experienced classroom visits from UN Ambassadors representing over 30 countries. Students also have participated in special global events, such as addressing a UN youth assembly in recognition of World Peace Day, speaking on a panel with the UN Secretary-General, and participating in the first World Ocean Conference. Participating classes have organized walks for world hunger and children’s rights, written letters to elected officials about climate change, and raised funds for women’s and girls’ education worldwide, among other activities.

The [Mayor’s Office for International Affairs](#) partners with the [Department of Education](#), the [Department of Youth and Community Development](#), the [United Nations](#), and the [United Nations Foundation](#) to provide this unique opportunity to middle school students across the city. New York City-based local and global leaders participated on the Selection Committee. The selection process takes into consideration classroom diversity – both geographic and demographic – as well as class size and educator commitment.

"Congratulations to the new NYC Junior Ambassadors who are going to become global leaders for the 21st century," said **Schools Chancellor Richard A. Carranza**. "Each day I’m proud of the difference our young adults make in their communities, and I cannot wait to see our Junior Ambassadors take their advocacy to a new level."

“The NYC Junior Ambassadors program is an important investment in our young people that gives them an extraordinary opportunity to contribute to the future of our City and the world. The initiative helps youth find their voice as global citizens by recognizing the importance of civic engagement and thinking critically about important international issues. The NYC Junior Ambassadors program transcends the classroom—allowing students to take the lessons they learn about human rights and sustainability straight to the streets of New York City,” said **Department of Youth & Community Development Commissioner Bill Chong**.

“World Children’s Day is all about giving children and young people a voice to speak out on the issues that matter to them,” said **UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore**. “On this special day, I’m delighted to congratulate every Junior Ambassador on being selected into this important program.”

“It is critical that we recognize the significant role schools and teachers play in educating young people, preparing them for the future, and inspiring them to reach higher - each and every day. I am thrilled to be part of the selection committee for the NYC Junior Ambassadors Program that works to empower middle school students across the city to unleash their full potential,” said **Jayathma Wickramanayake, Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth for the United Nations**.

“On behalf of the United Nations Foundation, and our work to support the Sustainable Development Goals, it gives me great pleasure to recognize the New York City Mayor’s Office for International Affairs and their efforts to expose middle school students, throughout each of the five boroughs, to the ideals and principles of the United Nations. We recognize the forth cohort of the NYC Jr. Ambassadors Program on World Children’s Day, and look forward to collaborating with this stellar group of educators and students,” said **Kathy Calvin, President and Chief Executive Officer of the United Nations Foundation**.

“The Junior Ambassadors exemplify the curiosity, inclusivity, and positivity give hope for a brighter and more sustainable future. Their schools and teachers are nurturing scholars to become global leaders. It’s an honor to be part of the selection process,” said **Valerie Rockefeller, Chair of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and Board Member of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors**.

“The NYC Junior Ambassadors program provides lifelong skills to youth and their educators while fostering inter-generational conversations in their home, schools and city. Through strong partnerships, the program continues to grow with current participants and a robust alumni network. These youth are creating real impact in their communities and serving as models of global citizenship. We look forward to working with this year’s cohort to make global change locally,” said **Aissata M.B. Camara, Deputy Commissioner for Operations and Strategic Partnerships, NYC Mayor’s Office for International Affairs**.

The NYC Junior Ambassadors program will run from November 2018 to June 2019. For updates on the program, please visit nyc.gov/nycja and follow the Mayor’s Office for International Affairs on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

NYC Junior Ambassadors 2018-2019:

1. Icahn Charter School 4, The Bronx
2. Leaders of Tomorrow, The Bronx
3. St. Ignatius School, The Bronx
4. Mott Hall Charter School, The Bronx
5. Bronx Park Middle School, The Bronx
6. East Fordham Academy of the Arts, The Bronx
7. The Montauk (J.H.S. 223), Brooklyn
8. Peter Rouget (M.S. 88), Brooklyn
9. William Alexander (M.S. 51), Brooklyn
10. Anne Sullivan (P.S. 238), Brooklyn
11. Ronald Edmonds Learning Center II, Brooklyn
12. Brooklyn Science and Engineering Academy, Brooklyn
13. Harlem Children’s Zone Promise Academy I Middle School, Manhattan
14. Cornelia Connelly Center, Manhattan
15. Robert A. Van Wyck (J.H.S. 217), Queens

16. The Oliver Wendell Holmes School (I.S. 204), Queens
17. P.S./I.S. 78Q, Queens
18. Virgil I. Grissom (J.H.S. 226), Queens
19. Michael J. Petrides School, Staten Island
20. Marsh Avenue Expeditionary Learning School, Staten Island

NYC Junior Ambassadors Selection Committee Members:

1. Penny Abeywardena, Commissioner for the NYC Mayor's Office for International Affairs
2. Kathy Calvin, President & Chief Executive Officer of the United Nations Foundation
3. Bill Chong, Commissioner of the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development
4. Richard A. Carranza, Chancellor of the NYC Department of Education
5. Craig Kielburger, Founder, WE DAY
6. Valerie Rockefeller, Chair of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and Board Member of the Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors
7. Jayathma Wickramanayake, Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth for the United Nations

About the Mayor's Office for International Affairs

The New York City Mayor's Office for International Affairs works to foster positive relations and encourage collaboration between the international community and New York City's agencies and local neighborhoods. The Office is focused on sharing New York City's policies and best practices globally, as well as responding to requests from foreign governments, the United Nations, and the U.S. Department of State. For more information, follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and on our website.

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