



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
MAYOR'S OFFICE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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International Affairs Commissioner Abeywardena Announces New Participants Selected for the NYC Junior Ambassadors Program

- 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 — Following World Children's Day, Commissioner Penny Abeywardena of the Mayor's Office for International Affairs ushered in the 5th year of the NYC Junior Ambassadors program by announcing this year's cohort of participating classrooms and afterschool programs. Representing all five boroughs of New York City, the diverse group of more than 650 seventh-grade students and educators who are part of the 2019-2020 cohort will engage directly in the work of the United Nations and explore ways to address urgent world challenges both locally and globally.

"We've seen in recent months how the voice of young people can be a catalyst for change on worldwide challenges like global warming. Through the NYC Junior Ambassadors program, our youth are given yet another opportunity to grow as global citizens and advocate for change, starting in their own communities," said **Mayor's Office for International Affairs Commissioner Penny Abeywardena**. "As we mark this five-year milestone, our commitment to the youth of New York City and to the principles of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals is stronger than ever. By connecting students with the incredible resources in our international community not only are we equipping them to be the leaders of the future, we are creating a better future for all of us."

World Children's Day is recognized by the United Nations (UN) annually on November 20th, 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. World Children's Day promotes children's rights and celebrates actions to create a better world for young people.

Through the NYC Junior Ambassadors program, young New Yorkers are empowered to help create this better world through learning about the UN and the Sustainable Development Goals which seek to address poverty, climate change and inequality in all its forms. Each class in the program will incorporate these goals into their classroom curriculum, with educators teaching a wide variety of subjects. Educators receive professional training and materials to support their lesson plans. In addition, students will receive a classroom visit from a senior UN diplomat and a curated tour of the UN headquarters in Manhattan tailored to their class's curricular interest.

The participants will also attend a special celebration where they will showcase their year-end projects

and receive a certificate acknowledging their participation in the program. Graduates will also gain access to an alumni network of thousands of young, future leaders.

Since its beginning, participants in the NYC Junior Ambassadors program have welcomed UN Ambassadors representing 36 countries to their classrooms. Students also have participated in special global events, such as moderating an event convened by the President of the UN General Assembly for World Children's Day, speaking on a panel with the UN Secretary-General, and participating in the first World Ocean Conference. Each participating class also finds a way to make a difference, starting in their own communities, from organizing walks for world hunger and children's rights to campaigning to reduce food and plastic waste in their school and beyond.

This year, the program received nearly 70 applications from across the five boroughs. From this pool, 20 classrooms and after-school programs were selected to become members of the 2019-2020 cohort of the NYC Junior Ambassadors program. In addition to these newest members, approximately 2,500 students and educators from nearly 80 classrooms and after-school programs have participated in the NYC Junior Ambassadors program since its launch in 2015.

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.

“The United Nations is delighted to partner again with the City of New York on this exciting initiative. The 2020 batch of Junior Ambassadors will be visiting UN Headquarters as the Organization marks its 75th anniversary – so this is a timely way to connect the leaders of tomorrow to the discussions today about what a better world should look like,” said **Melissa Fleming, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications**.

“On World Children's Day 2019, we pause to reflect on youth and the role that they are playing to support the United Nations and the Sustainable Development Goals. Through the NYC Junior Ambassadors Program, we are witnessing a new generation of global leaders capable of thinking globally and acting locally. The United Nations Foundation salutes these young 7th grade scholars, their schools, their teachers, and their communities, and looks forward to another year of innovation, critical thinking, collaboration, and learning,” said **Kathy Calvin, President and Chief Executive Officer of the United Nations Foundation**.

“Our students are the future, and they are taking action to address our nation's most urgent issues so that they can create a better world for their children. Congratulations to this year's participants selected for our Junior Ambassadors Program, I'm so excited to see the difference you make in your communities and across the world,” said **Schools Chancellor Richard A. Carranza**.

“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 program transcends the classroom, allowing the students to take lessons about human rights and sustainability to the streets of New York City. It is heartening to see young adults so attune to world affairs and committed to making a lasting impact across the globe. The initiative helps youth find their voice by recognizing the importance of civic engagement and thinking critically about important international issues,” said **Bill Chong, Commissioner of the Department of Youth and Community Development, and member of the Selection Committee**.

“Youth are leading community change locally, and we as a city are committed to seeing their leadership reach new heights,” said **Anusha Venkataraman, NYC Chief Service Officer, and member of the Selection Committee**. “We welcome the NYC Junior Ambassadors who will serve the greater community and strengthen our city’s democracy.”

“Our world relies on the young generation to lead us to a better and sustainable future. It is our job to equip them and we can only do so by working together with educators to ensure young people have the opportunity to fulfill their potential. I’m glad to see that the NYC Junior Ambassadors program is committed to supporting the United Nations’ vision of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by working with and for young people in New York City,” said **Jayathma Wickramanayake, Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth for the United Nations, and member of the Selection Committee**.

“This program embodies the inclusivity, globalism, cultural connections and academic excellence that will yield the leaders we need for a more sustainable future. I’m honored to be involved,” said **Valerie Rockefeller, Chair of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Board Member of the Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, and member of the Selection Committee**.

“The NYC Junior Ambassadors program represents our commitment to center youth voices in the conversations that matter to them, from their local neighborhoods to the world stage,” said **Christie Saint-Vil, Strategic Relationships Manager for the NYC Junior Ambassadors Program, Mayor’s Office for International Affairs**. “We are thrilled to welcome the newest students and educators to the 2019-2020 cohort. We can’t wait to get started with our 5th program year.”

The NYC Junior Ambassadors program will run from December 2019 to June 2020. 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 2019-2020:

1. M.S. 17: Girls Empowerment Movement, the Bronx
2. M.S. 29: The Melrose School, the Bronx
3. M.S. 46: The Arthur Tappan School, the Bronx
4. Saint Phillip and James School, the Bronx
5. Brooklyn Science and Engineering Academy, Brooklyn
6. M.S. 442: School for Innovation, Brooklyn
7. Boerum Hill School for International Studies, Brooklyn
8. M.S. 915, Brooklyn
9. Liberty Avenue School: Cypress Hills Development Cooperation, Brooklyn
10. The Clinton School, Manhattan
11. M.S. 247: Dual Language Middle School, Manhattan
12. New Heights Academy Charter School, Manhattan
13. I.S. 204: Oliver Wendell Holmes School, Queens
14. M.S. 226: Virgil I Grissom School, Queens
15. M.S. 217: Robert Van Wyck, Queens
16. Middle Village Preparatory Charter School, Queens
17. Al-Ihsan Academy, Queens
18. Academy of Medical Technology: A College Board School, Queens
19. Michael J. Petrides School, Staten Island

20. Al-Miraj Islamic 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. Valerie Rockefeller, Chair of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and Board Member of the Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors
6. 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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