



UNITE LEBANON YOUTH PROJECT NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2016

VOLUME 22

Times have been busy and productive at ULYP! During this period, we launched 13 different programs, travelled to Sharjah and met Malala, and established new partnerships with organizations in different parts of the country to host our programs and help us expand our reach to more children, youth, and women. We also identified a new cohort of university students, launched our plans for 2017 and updated our website.

We look forward to 2017 and wish you all happy holidays and a blessed year ahead.

WELCOME BACK, LIFE STUDENTS

"Education is the movement from darkness to light"
- Allan Bloom

The second cycle of the Learn | Inspire | Focus | Engage (L.I.F.E.) program, funded by the Welfare Association/Taawon in Lebanon, was launched in September. L.I.F.E. provides children at risk of dropping out of school with English enhancement classes and life skills sessions in the participating schools and at ULYP's campus. LIFE also engages the students' parents as partners in their children's development by providing them with sessions on child development. We are hoping L.I.F.E. will become one of ULYP's core programs!



INCREASED INSIGHT CREATES A CLEARER VISION

"The whole purpose of education is to turn mirrors into windows" – Sydney J. Harris



ULYP's cultural exchange program, Frame by Frame, funded by the European Union, has come to an end. As part of the closing activities, ULYP held a Training of Trainers on Thursday October 6th where the teachers who accompanied the students were provided with the tools and knowledge to continue cultural activities in their classrooms. In addition, local events were held in Beirut, the North, the Bekaa, and Saida, to disseminate the cultural movies developed by the youth covering topics such as traditional food, song, dance, and storytelling. Make sure to check (and like) our Facebook page to watch their movies!

“MAY I PLEASE DRINK WATER?”

“Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself” – John Dewey

English acquisition can happen quickly for young learners. This semester, 150 students arrived from five different preschools in refugee camps across Lebanon, most with no proficiency in the English language at all; most did not even know how to say "Hello." After just three weeks, we have seen the children's vocabulary expand to encompass colors, shapes, actions, and requests in English. Some of our students already ask "may I please drink water?" or "may I go to the bathroom?"

In addition to English, the emergent curriculum empowers students to express themselves and their opinions. Nihal is a shining example of both the healing and empowering potential of the curriculum. On day one, her teachers informed us that she does not eat at school. Instead of questioning her, we gave her the freedom and respect to do what she felt was necessary. Next we gave her (along with other students) responsibilities, such as serving food or cleaning up. Allowing

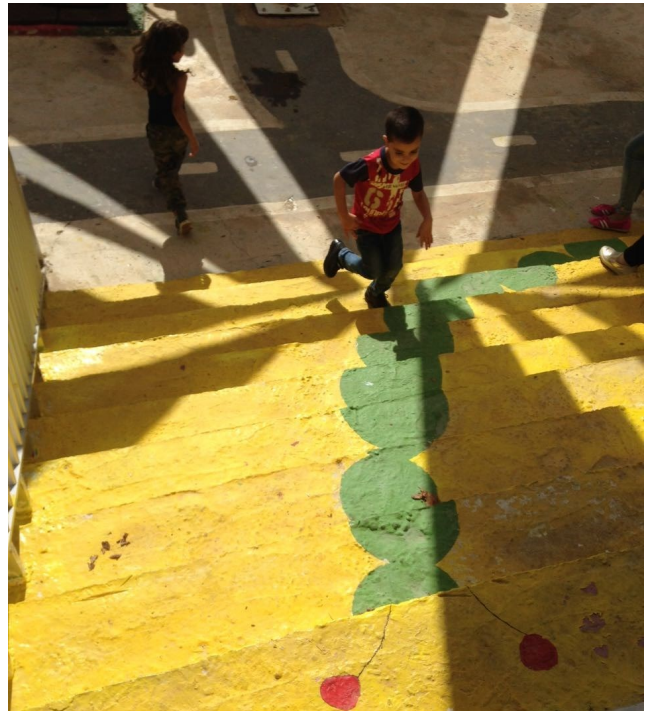
children to take responsibility is one of the most powerful and yet simple approaches to character building. Last week, Nihal accepted three biscuits during snack, and this week, she joined the class for breakfast as well as snack. Her personality is developing quickly as well. We look forward to seeing Nihal blossom throughout the rest of the program and are confident that her colorful and inquisitive character will manifest with ease.

Happy is funded by the Welfare Association - Taawon, Lebanon in partnership with UNICEF.

CIRCLE III

“Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom” – George Washington Carver

This October we proudly launched the third cycle of the CIRCLE program, and its four additional components. These include a cultural program, an English for resilience program for youth, a program raising awareness against gender-based violence for youth, and lastly, an English conversation program for returning Most Outstanding Mothers participants to ensure the sustainability of their English learning. CIRCLE III is carried out in partnership with UNICEF and now encompasses ten programs. All ten programs focus on developing conflict resolution, teamwork, and communication skills, as well as resilience and psychosocial well being.



ENTHUSIASM AND PASSION FOR LEARNING

ULYP's SHARE program, funded by the Beit Jiddi Foundation, is designed to Spread Hope And Revive Education. It focuses on enhancing the English language knowledge and fluency of 7th and 8th grade students in the Chatila refugee camp in Beirut. The pilot was launched in April this year and given its success, it will now officially be running parallel with the school year.



#RESPECT

"We are all equal in the fact that we are all different. We are all the same in the fact that we will never be the same." – C. JoyBell C.

We are excited to announce the launch of a new program, #RESPECT, funded by the US Embassy Beirut Local Grants Program. The program aims to empower and enable marginalized youth ages 16-22 as well as their teachers to engage in conflict resolution activities, and to embody and promote the values of acceptance and tolerance in their communities. The youth will be developing short movies to be disseminated on social media platforms. They will also be trained to spread the important messages they have been taught - those of tolerance, respect and coexistence - and head to remote schools in the Bekaa and the South to do so. Stay tuned to follow the progress of the program – we are so excited to show you the outcomes of #RESPECT!



BRINGING LIGHT AND COLOR TO SYRIAN REFUGEES

"Life throws challenges and every challenge comes with rainbows and lights to conquer it" - Amit Ray



Rainbows appear when the sun shines despite the falling rain. We may not be able to stop the rain from falling and eradicate all the challenges the refugees face, and yet we strive to provide rays of light for those in need, allowing their true colors to shine and rainbows fill the sky for a brighter and more hopeful future. With our new educational program, RAINBOW, we aim to bring light and color to Syrian refugee children, their mothers, and their communities. RAINBOW is a holistic educational program that not only addresses the English language needs of the Syrian refugees but also gives them, their parents, and communities, the gift of language and self-esteem that will stay with them well beyond the life of the program itself - wherever their circumstances may take them. In its first semester, RAINBOW will be operational in Tripoli, Saida, and Beirut. Make sure to like us on Facebook to stay updated on these upcoming launches!

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CRTDA TRAINING ON COMMUNICATION

In partnership with the Collective for Research and Training on Development – Action (CRTDA), previous participants from ULYP's Most Outstanding Mothers (MOMs) program, who also participated in a Leadership Training course held in June, joined a two day training program in September that focused on communication. It was a great success, the MOMs were further empowered and gained additional communication and leadership skills to help them start their own initiatives.

REFUGEE CODE WEEK

In October, some of our Most Outstanding Mothers (MOMs) participants were trained on the Scratch program as part of the Refugee Code Week initiative launched by SAP MENA. Scratch is an introductory coding program where one learns to program their own interactive stories, games, and animations, with the ability to share them with others online. It was a day filled with coding fun and the classrooms were buzzing. After the fact, the participants shared their newly acquired coding skills with others and spread the joy around.

CARING COATS CAMPAIGN 2016 - "GIVE A COAT, WARM A HEART"

Our third annual Caring Coats Campaign ran throughout the month of October. We have had donation boxes placed all around the city ready to receive contributions. More than 50 boxes of warm clothing items were collected, sorted, organized and shared with underprivileged communities in dire need for warmth. Thanks to the many donations, we were able to warm more than 3,500 hearts in need. We send special thanks to Aramex for their generous donation of all the boxes we needed.



UNIQUE GIVING

Mrs. Nada Kiblawi, our friend, supporter, donor and board member of ACME, ULYP's sister organization, along with her husband Nazeeh, hosted an open house "Mubarak" party for their three new born grandchildren at their residence in Great Falls, VA in November.

In her invitation to everyone she wrote:

"2016 has been for our family a year that we will always remember with joy and gratitude... we have been blessed with three beautiful and healthy grandchildren: Naji Fadi Kiblawi (January, 2016), Maya Samer Kiblawi (July, 2016) and Nora Kiblawi Mone (September, 2016). Together with our precious Tala Fadi Kiblawi (April 2013), we now have four cherished grandchildren.

Nazeeh and I would be greatly honored if you would join us to celebrate together and welcome our new family members. Please note that our grandchildren expect absolutely no gifts or flowers; but they do urge you instead, to help the more deserving Palestinian students in the refugee camps in Lebanon."

Creativity has no end with Nada!

BRIDGE AND THE SUMMER UPC

During the summer of 2016, ULYP's Bridge program conducted the first module of its 10th University Preparatory Course (UPC) running in three different locations: ULYP's Debbiyyeh campus, the American University of Science and Technology (Beirut), and Nazareth UNRWA high school (Tripoli).

The course offered 146 selected bright underprivileged 11th graders from UNRWA and Public schools all over Lebanon with more than 80 hours of English and Mathematics SAT preparation.

Our team of volunteers involved five current ULYP university students, one ULYP intern, and eight volunteers from the 'Duke Engage' program run at Duke University in the United States, who generously dedicated their time and put in huge amounts of effort to not only train the students, but also guide and inspire them about their educational journeys moving forward.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank AUST for hosting our program and the UPC volunteers and especially the Duke Engage coordinator Ahmad Jitan and Director Dr. Antepi for all their efforts and time invested in teaching, guiding, counseling, and inspiring our students, ultimately giving them hope of a better future.



BRIDGE GOES ONLINE AND EXPANDING ITS REACH

In November, the BRIDGE scholarship application went online. Students can now log into the Bridge Student Support website through the BRIDGE section on the ULYP website. From there, students may register all their details and provide all the necessary documents. This website was made possible thanks to the generous donation of the Welfare Association in Lebanon - Taawon and the technical support of Thomas van den Berg and his team.

Bridge also received funding to sponsor Lebanese students from public and private schools, allowing even more students to enter university. Moreover, The Bridge Scholarship Program received funding to assist 21 Syrians in improving their English language before being admitted into university. Thank you Big Heart Foundation for making this possible.

STAYING IN TOUCH, SHARING A MEAL

Weekly dinners hosting ULYP scholarship students were re-launched during this period too. Students who received scholarships for the academic year 2016-2017 attend weekly dinners or coffee meetings during which they get to interact in small groups with Melek, members of the scholarship committee and the ULYP team. This is one of the ways we stay connected with our students and support them in facing any challenges that may hinder their path to success. Additionally, it serves as a great platform for our students to learn about the new activities at ULYP and stay connected with one another.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT – MEET WASSIM BASHIR

In 2014, Wassim was awarded a very prestigious merit based scholarship to complete his last two years of High School at Eton College – one of the top boarding schools in the world. The day Wassim boarded the plane to London his life changed forever. Despite having come from an entirely unique background to his peers, Wassim quickly picked up his pace and adjusted within just a few weeks. Schoolwork was quite challenging at first, but, as Wassim says, it takes time getting used to the pace and learning time management techniques.

Upon graduating from Eton, Wassim applied to some of the top universities in the UK, including Imperial, UCL, Bristol, and Queen Mary's and Cambridge. Cambridge was his first choice and he is now enrolled there, excited and eager to learn. He is studying to become an engineer despite the fact that he is still quite confused as to what he ultimately wants to be doing work-wise. However, being the pragmatic young man that he is, he decided engineering would serve as a solid degree to have regardless of what his end goal may be.

Wassim's family are immensely proud of him. Wassim says his journey certainly took a toll on the family as his mother was always worried if he was fed well, if he forgot about them and if he would decide to marry a foreign lady! He now laughs when he speaks of those days and concerns – in hindsight he says they were silly as the experience actually had the opposite effect in his growing to appreciate home and his family while being away from them.

We wish him all the success in the future, are incredibly proud of him and cannot wait to see what he will do next!

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

In this section, we direct the spotlight on three of our amazing ULYP volunteers to whom we remain forever grateful. All three shared their time and expertise to help us achieve our mission. Read along to see what the volunteers had to say about their time with ULYP.

KEVIN HACK

Interned with ULYP from June to August 2016

"The students I met in Bridge, whether in high school, university, or the post-graduate world, allowed me to see first-hand why ULYP's mission statement is both important and powerful. Educational deficits to even the most qualified students leave them uninformed about why higher education is important and how to access it, especially given the restrictions faced by Palestinians in Lebanon."

"When I told a close friend of mine what I was doing for the summer, he told me 'there is no way that you won't come away from this a better, more aware, more amazing version of yourself.' Now that my time at ULYP has come to an end, there is no way I couldn't thank all of ULYP's magnificent staff and volunteers, and the truly meaningful labor they continue to do. It is only because of them that I can say that my friend might have been right."



CASPAR ROGERS

Volunteered with ULYP from July-August 2016



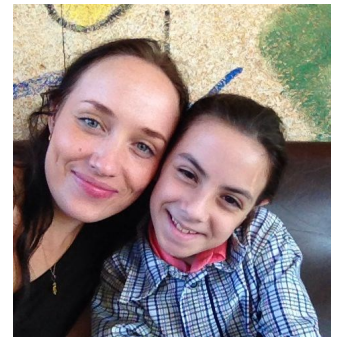
“Through working with ULYP for two months alongside my twin brother, I have personally seen the everyday change that charities bring and the incredible work they do, whether it is teaching English to Palestinian pre-school children or travelling to the Bekaa to help teenage Syrian refugees with essential life-skills, such as public speaking and drama, as part of the cultural exchange program known as Frame by Frame.”

“On the whole, the children [in the HAPPY program] were very shy initially at the sight of us two foreigners. But as each day passed, we grew very close not just to the boisterous boys, but even to the shyest of the girls. As we waved goodbye to these children for the last time, it was a very sad experience because as one teacher said, ‘to many of them, you are like their older brothers.’ Many of the children lacked male role models, and we felt that we helped fill that void in the limited time we spent with them.”

ANNA ASSENTOFT

Interned with ULYP from February 2016-July 2016

“Inspiring and enjoyable. These are the two words that come to mind when I think back on my six-month internship with ULYP. Inspiring because the amazing beneficiaries I met in the various programs maintain a high level of positivity and hope despite living a difficult life riddled with uncertainty. Enjoyable because of the great ULYP-staff that made me excited to come to work every single day. The wonderful ULYP-staff and the beneficiaries that I met made my internship an unforgettable experience where I was able to grow both on a personal and professional level. Thank you to all!”



ON THAT UPLIFTING NOTE, WE WISH YOU VERY HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM ALL OF US AT ULYP.

MAY 2017 BE A BLESSED YEAR FOR ALL!



Website: www.unitebanonyouth.org

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