



# UNITE LEBANON YOUTH PROJECT NEWSLETTER

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This has been a busy period at ULYP. We concluded many programs and started new ones. We celebrated the class of 2016 and initiated them as ULYP alumni. We thanked our Board member Ceci Clark for three years of commitment to ULYP and wished her good luck as she relocated to the USA, and welcomed our new member, Adalat Nakkash, to the ULYP Board of Trustees. We launched our new website and expanded our Facebook reach. We went to Dubai, we went golfing, and are planning a concert in the Fall.

## **SAVE THE DATE: SUNDAY OCTOBER 2, 2016, IS ULYP CONCERT NIGHT!**

Souad Massi and her band will be performing at the Music Hall seaside venue for ULYP. We will be communicating about this very soon. For now, please save the date!

Until then, we are looking for sponsors in the categories of \$10,000, \$5,000 and \$1,000. We are preparing the sponsorship packages, which will include the publicity, free tickets, and visibility options. If you are interested in fully or partially sponsoring this concert to help us reduce the cost and increase the benefits for our programs, please contact us at [ulypoffice@unitelebanonyouth.org](mailto:ulypoffice@unitelebanonyouth.org).

## **ULYP CELEBRATING EDUCATION EVENT – JULY 9, 2016**

With the slogan “the future starts now”, ULYP held its second annual CELEBRATING EDUCATION event on July 9, 2016. This is an event that we launched last year with the word imagine: imagine having the students who graduated from universities on full or partial scholarships facilitated by ULYP on our campus to be recognized and celebrated. Then we moved from the realm of dreams to the realm of reality, and held that event in 2015 ending with a promise to make it an annual one.

This year, we celebrated the ULYP class of 2016 comprised of 93 graduates, 14 from universities abroad and 79 in Lebanon. More than a quarter of the graduates, 24 to be exact, graduated with distinction (GPA 3.5 and higher) and 7 of them with high distinction (GPA 3.8 and higher). Amongst the ULYP class of 2016 are degrees in engineering, social work, environmental health, hospitality and tourism, nursing, nutrition, business administration, psychology, medicine, architecture, communication arts, chemistry, economics, biology, medical lab, marketing, pharmacy, and math.

The event was full of pride, smiles, and tears of joy. The program included two keynote speeches: the first from Dr. Hiam Sakr, president of the American University for Science and Technology, followed by the Turkish Ambassador to Lebanon, His Excellency Mr. Çağatay Erciyas. The program also included the distribution of two awards: the Giving Back to the community award granted to students who volunteered at ULYP in different positions while pursuing their education, and the Abu-Haydar Honor Society award for students who graduated with high distinction. The class representative, Hussein Mirii, spoke on behalf of the class and shared his experience since 2010. We share with you excerpts from his speech in this issue.



## ACT II – ENCOURAGING CHILDREN THROUGH LEARNING AND ART

*“Hope is the power that gives a person the confidence to step out and try.” – Zig Ziglar*



Our second cycle of the ACT program (Action for Children of Today) has come to an end. ACT is an educational program offering disadvantaged children ages 7 to 15 English classes, IT, art, drama, music, and conflict resolution workshops. Through these activities, the children are given the opportunity to improve their self-confidence and understanding of others. We are proud to have had 100 students graduate from the second module. The students participated in a closing ceremony at the ULYP campus on May 7, and walked out with certificates and ACT branded bags with educational materials. ACT II teachers participated in a training of teachers’ workshop offered by ULYP where we shared the methodology used, and empowered them with the skills and materials for them to sustain the impact.

With this, ACT II came to its conclusion and we are now waiting for ACT III to be approved. To date, ACT I and ACT II were supported by FutureFirst – HSBC.

## CIRCLE II COMES TO AN END

*“Learning gives creativity. Creativity leads to thinking. Thinking provides knowledge. Knowledge makes you great” – Abdul Kalam*

This spring marked the conclusion of our CIRCLE II program, which provides multiple activities to children, youth, mothers, and teachers, implemented in partnership with UNICEF. The program aims to improve the psychosocial wellbeing of participants and offers a range of targeted programs that focus on developing teamwork, conflict resolution skills, and communication skills while improving the participants’ self-confidence and self-expression. April and May were busy months as each component celebrated its achievements and conducted their closing ceremonies. A training of teachers session was also held during this period and over 20 teacher participated in a full day workshop sharing and learning new knowledge and skills for improved teaching.

CIRCLE II included local events whereby the children and youth organized events in their communities to showcase their achievements and share with the community the impact of education in their everyday life. ULYP congratulates all participants for the completion of their programs! CIRCLE III has been proposed and hopefully will be approved and launched very soon.





### HAPPY – LEARNING WHILE HAVING FUN

*“Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere.” – Chinese proverb*



After eight wonderful weeks, the HAPPY program (Happy Alternative Program for Preschoolers and Youth) has come to an end for another group of preschool children. In this module, the children learned the basics of English, reading, math, music, art, and IT. During their weekly sessions on campus, the children enjoyed interactive early childhood schooling while being immersed in the English language through songs, stories, and indoor and outdoor activities organized by the ULYP teachers. Like us on Facebook to watch a short movie on the program!

HAPPY is funded by the Welfare Association in Lebanon/Taawon.

### FRAME BY FRAME LAUNCHES IN THE BEKAA!

*“The beauty of the world lies in the diversity of its people.” – Unknown*

Our Frame by Frame program, funded by the European Union, continued during the spring. Frame by Frame is a cultural exchange program with the goal of understanding one’s culture, exchanging it, and celebrating it. After two successful and preparatory modules, ULYP went to the Bekaa to involve Syrian refugees living there. The youth there worked hard on surveying their community members to extract cultural understanding and started working on developing their short films. The youth also had the opportunity to exchange their culture with European youth, and this group shared their experiences with two ULYP volunteers from Eton College. Next module works with Lebanese youth along the same lines. At the conclusion of the program, all the participants will have the chance to exchange their stories, films, and lessons learned to celebrate culture, which is one other way of understanding that diversity is a cause to celebrate not discriminate.



**LIFE: LEARN | INSPIRE | FOCUS | ENGAGE – INSPIRING THE UNMOTIVATED**

*“In order to succeed, we must first believe that we can” – Nikos Kazantzakis*

This spring, ULYP launched the LIFE program with the slogan Learn | Inspire | Focus | Engage, in partnership with the Welfare Association in Lebanon/ Taawon. LIFE targeted 80 students who are at risk of dropping out of school or who have lost their motivation to learn by offering them a chance to improve their English proficiency, which is key to their success in other subjects. Students from two UNRWA schools in Beirut participated in this pilot, which included English classes in their schools and activities on conflict resolution and resilience at ULYP’s campus. For the first time, ULYP included in its program sessions with the students’ parents as partners in the journey of education. Sessions on child development, child psychology resilience, and conflict resolutions were offered along with tools to help support their children’s education. The parents’ assessment was positive and validated the need for such sessions.

On May 26, the students celebrated their achievements, and performed dances and songs at the closing ceremony. Each student went home with certificates of achievement and an English workbook developed specially for them to work on in the summer, stay motivated, and further enhance their English skills. A short movie about the program will soon be available on our Facebook page, stay tuned! A refined and improved LIFE II will resume in the fall.

**BRIDGE WELCOMES THE NEW COHORT**

There is never a dull moment anywhere at ULYP and definitely not in the BRIDGE program. The scholarship committee has selected the new cohort of 150 students entering 11<sup>th</sup> grade in the next academic year to enroll in the BRIDGE program. They have started their journey of SAT classes and the university prep and counselling sessions. In parallel to this, and now that the Baccalaureate results have been announced, ULYP is busy matching students with university acceptances with scholarships as well as following up with the fresh graduates as they start their next phase in life, either pursuing masters degrees or jobs. BRIDGE is funded by different generous donors.

**DUKE ENGAGE ARE ENGAGED WITH ULYP AGAIN**

After a year of a break, eight Duke students enrolled in the DUKE Engage program arrived to Lebanon and immediately started their work with ULYP, mainly the BRIDGE program. The mission of the Duke Engage program is as follows: “Duke Engage empowers Duke students to address critical human needs through immersive service, in the process transforming students, advancing the University’s educational mission, and providing meaningful assistance to communities in the U.S. and abroad.”

We will include more news about their work with ULYP in the next issue. Stay tuned.



## ULYP EVENTS

### THANK YOU FRIENDS OF ULYP IN DUBAI

On June 15, Melek and Nicole returned to Dubai to meet with friends of ULYP there. Mrs. Sawsan Jafar and Mrs. Adalat Nakkash gathered around 100 friends in the lovely Imm Sherif restaurant. Melek and Nicole updated everyone on the ULYP achievements and growth, and enjoyed a wonderful Iftar together. Thank you friends of ULYP, Dubai. Thank you Sawsan and Adalat.

### ULYP GOES GOLFING



At ULYP, we follow the win-win rule of thumb for our fundraising events: our guests benefit from the activity and ULYP programs benefit from the support. This year, and for the first time, but surely not the last time, ULYP partnered with the Golf Club of Lebanon and a golf tournament was held on May 8. More than 70 golfers signed up for the tournament. The players and their families gathered for coffee and breakfast offered by the Golf Club and at exactly 9 a.m. the game started. Once concluded, everyone walked over to the lunch area and enjoyed a superb lunch offered by the Mayrig restaurant. The Golf Club committee quickly calculated the results and these were announced. The team who came in second place received trophies and the winners received tickets for four to Turkey offered by Nakhal Travel. ULYP thanked the players, Mayrig, Nakhal, and the sponsors including Jammal Trust bank. ULYP also thanked Future TV for publicising the event and hosting ULYP and the Golf Club on their show to raise awareness.

Stay tuned for the 2017 Golf tournament!

### THE MOMS COME BACK FOR MORE

This spring, a new partnership was created between ULYP and the Collective for Research & Training on Development – Action (CRTDA). Together, ULYP and CRTDA selected previous participants from ULYP's Most Outstanding Mothers program (MOMs) to participate in different trainings, one of which was a four-day workshop in Jordan. A total of 35 women have engaged in this program so far, gaining leadership skills and knowledge. In Jordan, the women participated in one of four workshops on starting businesses in industries of dairy, catering, jam making, and flower growing.



**VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT – SUSI ESLAMI**

In this section, we direct the spotlight on one or two ULYP volunteers who worked with us sharing their time and expertise to help us achieve our mission. Here is what Susi had to say.

“I arrived in Beirut in the summer of 2013. My husband had been assigned to the Beirut office of the international organization he worked for. It was a huge change in my life. We had lived in the Washington DC suburbs for 20 years and had raised our sons there. I had a lot of friends and was very active in our community. I suddenly found myself in a situation where my husband was my only anchor and I had very little independence. I wanted to immerse myself in this new culture and find an organization where I could make myself useful. I was introduced to ULYP through a friend and a wonderful new world opened up to me. I met with the team, visited the campus, and then met the women/students I would work with. I fell in love with ULYP!

I taught three modules during my time at ULYP; the first was a group of advanced English speakers and the second two modules were women who were beginners. In spite of the difference in their abilities, the women all came to the program eager to learn and very appreciative of our efforts. So many of the women came from very difficult circumstances. Some Lebanese living in difficult family or community situations, some had fled from the war in Syria, and others were Palestinian refugees living in the camps. As a woman who was educated in the West, I took for granted that I could do almost anything I set my mind to, and although I was aware that women and men are not yet full equals in the workplace, I had not faced too many obstacles in my life. The women I taught did not share these experiences. I was moved by their life stories. They faced hurdles in their daily lives that I could not even imagine. In spite of this, they arrived every morning with big smiles and lots of hugs. They were hungry to improve themselves, so that they could in turn help their children and families.

I learned that despite our very different lives, we were not that different. As mothers, our children are our highest priority and we would do anything in our power to give them better lives. As women, we all need to support each other and to hold each other up when life’s challenges are difficult to bear, and to celebrate the moments of joy together. I learned that differences in language and culture do not mean much when it comes to the basics in life. The women I had the privilege of teaching face unimaginable obstacles with a grace and dignity that warm and break the heart at the same time. I never imagined that I would receive the love and friendship that I was given by my students. I will never forget them. I hope that I was able to make a difference in their lives and I hope that my path will cross theirs again in better days in the future. I thank ULYP for this opportunity and reiterate that I am here to help whether I am near or far.”

