



Unite Lebanon Youth (U.L.Y.P.)

WINTER NEWSLETTER

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S.A.W.A. - "Together is Better!"



S.A.W.A. is an acronym for *Strengthening Amity with the Arts* and in Arabic it means "together". This program aims to provide the arts to marginalized Lebanese and Palestinian youth. Through music, theatre, mosaics, and arts and crafts, the participants are brought together to promote not only cultural and artistic collaboration between the two communities, but also to encourage a greater understanding and respect for

one another.

This season of S.A.W.A. was full of many enthusiastic children (ages 8-10) and youth (ages 12-14) who joined us from different schools in the Saida area.

The S.A.W.A. program utilizes the visual and performing arts to strengthen problem-solving and critical-thinking skills and instill in participants important qualities such as team-work and leadership, respect, tolerance, and citizenship.

The S.A.W.A. project offers participants the opportunity to take part in an arts based extra-curricular program, which is more often than not inaccessible to the students and remains limited to them in their schools and within their curricula.

On March 21, U.L.Y.P.

celebrated the conclusion of fall and winter modules of S.A.W.A. A closing ceremony was held in the presence of the teachers, principals and funders presented by Her Excellency, Hilary Childs-Adams, Canadian Ambassador who joined and went on a tour of the S.A.W.A. art gallery where intricate mosaics, sewing projects and other crafts from natural materials were displayed. The students also gave an interactive musical performance that walked the listener through a personal story created during the program. S.A.W.A. emphasized the importance of conflict resolution and the students performed dramatic skits that explored situations of conflict and how to best deal

with it.

U.L.Y.P. expresses its most heartfelt gratitude to the **Canada Fund for Local Initiatives** for making this program possible. With their funding, these children and youth got a unique experience with the arts and with creating new lasting friendships.

The next group of S.A.W.A. participants will start in April. For updates and pictures of this program please check out our Facebook page.



The H.A.P.P.Y. Program

U.L.Y.P. believes that a good head start to enhance pre-academic skills can be not only fun but is also essential to success in future schooling. H.A.P.P.Y., (Healthy Alternative Program for Pre-Schoolers and Youth) was piloted in 2010, assessment validated the need for it and the value of its impact. Accordingly, it has now become a U.L.Y.P. core program in the U.L.Y.P. Youth Academy.

The two month program is for 5-year-old boys and girls from the Lebanese host community and the various refugee

populations that reside in Lebanon. H.A.P.P.Y. gives the young learners access to a well-developed recreational and non-formal education program whereby character development and virtues such as honesty, integrity, respect, perseverance and open-mindedness are delivered within the curriculum. The program focuses on project based learning and enhances the children's pre-reading and pre-math skills. The program also focuses on character building skills, IT, music appreciation, gardening and arts and crafts. A

lot of learning takes place outdoors where the children benefit from our campus' open green spaces, trees and flowers.

The winter H.A.P.P.Y. module just concluded in the middle of March and had a total of 100 children experiencing all the fun activities it has to offer. The next session of H.A.P.P.Y. will begin in April.

The **Welfare Association** has been an generous contributor to this program and we thank them for helping the children start their schooling with such a positive and strong foundation.



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Volunteer Spotlight- Sam MacDonald



Sam MacDonald, valued U.L.Y.P. volunteer with his bride during their wedding last month.

“I WILL MISS THE STUDENTS AND WISH THEM ALL THE BEST OF LUCK IN THE FUTURE, AND AM GRATEFUL TO HAVE WORKED AND LEARNT SO MUCH FROM THE GREAT PEOPLE AT U.L.Y.P.”

Sam came to U.L.Y.P. in the beginning of 2012 with a strong desire to work with Lebanon’s marginalized populations. His introduction to us was through a friend who volunteered him for the U.L.Y.P. Bridge program at the Galilee school teaching a SAT preparatory course. Every Sunday he arrived at the school to teach and witness the motivation and enthusiasm of these talented students. He also saw the distance they would need to cover in order to raise their English test taking skills to the same level as their other high school grades in order to compete for spots in the nation’s universities.

By the end of this program we were so impressed by Sam that we asked him to join our team full time and put his previous teaching experience to use in our education division. Sam instantly

became a valued coworker while he, “came to learn more about the organization’s many activities, and came to understand why ULYP seemed to be so highly respected by my students and others I met.”

Sam’s first official role in the office was preparing the summer Bridge program at Dibbiyeh, working with the volunteers from Duke University as they taught an intensive month of SAT prep to our Grade 11 Palestinian and Lebanese students. Then it was on to the M.O.M.’s program, teaching a highly enthusiastic group of mothers introductory English. He also supported our effort in grant writing, took regular trips out to the Palestinian refugee camps, participated in events at our Dibbiyeh campus, as well as received a lot of guidance and education from fellow organizations leading

women and men. Sam says his, “most rewarding task was following our grade 11 students as they passed through the Bridge program, career guidance courses, and began taking the SAT exam and working individually with the U.L.Y.P. team to prepare their university applications for Lebanon and abroad.”

After getting engaged in January, Sam moved to be closer to his fiancé’s parents in South Korea. He is already greatly missed by U.L.Y.P. and when asked if he had any words to include for our readers he stated, “I will miss the students and wish them all the best of luck in the future, and am grateful to have worked and learnt so much from the great people at ULYP.”

Sam, we wish you the best of luck in your future too!

Most Outstanding Mother’s Program (M.O.M.’s)



U.L.Y.P.’s progressive young women and mothers’ program is set to start in April. This program was created based on the belief that to empower the community as a whole and instill in youth the ideas of

cooperation, understanding and respect, women, in particular mothers, need to be included in the education.

The women in the Most Outstanding Mothers (M.O.M.’s) program are from various backgrounds including Lebanese, Palestinian and Syrian women. This program allows this diversity to be beneficial in learning from sharing experiences and difficulties.

The women meet three times a week to further their education in the basics of English phonetics, writing and

conversation while our more advanced students are challenged in an extensive reading program alongside regular classes.

The mothers are also introduced to basic computer skills and getting to know the Microsoft Office suite. Once a week, the participants have a visiting expert come and teach a course on subjects such as child development, home finances, health topics and conflict resolution.

The teachers of the program report “what an opportunity it is to teach these women and

how rewarding it is to hear their success stories and appreciation after the course ends.”

Please help us keep this course funded by donating on our website at www.unitelebanonyouth.org





Student success story – Maya Younis

Maya Younis is a recipient of a scholarship from the U.L.Y.P. Academy’s Bridge program. She is now attending school in Istanbul, Turkey at Koc University thanks to her hard work and perseverance. We asked Maya to write a little about her experience going to college abroad.

“I believe that college is a time for learning – but not only about academics. In my opinion, it is a time for learning about one’s own self. Personal growth and development are key components of the college years and I am convinced that a study abroad experience would offer endless possibilities toward accomplishing those ends.

Ever since I was a young girl, I dreamed of living in a foreign country, and U.L.Y.P. has helped me accomplish this dream. They gave me an opportunity to study in one of the best universities in Turkey (Koc University) and encouraged me to take some big steps for my educational levels sake.

Something about being independent and exploring the

unknown always appealed me. I have a strong desire to explore the world around me and to learn about foreign people and their culture. Studying abroad was a thoughtful decision for me. I have reached a point in my life where I want to see beyond the walls of my own everyday lifestyle and find a new way of thinking and experience things.

Studying at Koc was definitely one of the best decisions that I have made and will never regret. Students often go abroad not only to study but to improve their foreign language skills, enrich their personal experience and sometimes, because the academic programs they are looking for are taught abroad in a different way, the subject is approached from another angle.

I’ve met great friends who always offered me help and invited me to spend more time together. They all tried to teach me the Turkish language and more about their culture, customs and traditions. They were totally interested in hearing more about Lebanon

and our own experiences as Palestinians. Besides that, the university arranges many events and gives us the chance to participate in them, and enjoy working with others through the large number of clubs it holds.

Studying abroad exposes you to many challenges and difficulties. I have faced many problems including the poor language ability, crowded buses and subways, getting used to the daily routine and many others, but finally I found my way to adjust. Living away from my family has taught me how to be responsible and mature, and to begin developing new sets of skills that enable me to cope with the new environment. Anxiety and depression become less frequent with time, and eventually you will know how to deal with the demands of the new local environment. A person will never know the entire culture as locals do, thus it is going to be his/her responsibility to attain new knowledge and skills every day.

College is absolutely a period of new discovery and adventure. My time at Koc has already been filled with much adventure and personal discovery and I am certain that in the next coming years, Koc will only enhance that. I look forward with great anticipation and excitement to the adventures that await me in Istanbul. I will never forget how hard U.L.Y.P. worked directing me while I was in my high school years.”



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Corporate Social Responsibility- CSR- in Lebanon

On March 18th & 19th, U.L.Y.P. was invited to participate in the 3rd CSR Forum in Beirut. The term Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) describes a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary

basis. By encouraging CSR in our companies we are helping plan for a sustainable future in Lebanon.

This was an great forum that gathered local companies and civil society activities in Lebanon and worked with them to think about the social and environmental concerns that can improve the communities’ quality of life.

U.L.Y.P. participated in the forum and was asked to present its current activities. This presentation was well received and companies approached U.L.Y.P. to find ways to work together to empower the youth to help us all reach the goal of a united Lebanon.

For more information about how you can get your local

businesses thinking about Corporate Social Responsibility, please visit www.csrlebanon.com



Next issue: Early Summer 2013

New next issue:
Bridge student of the month



Website:
www.unitelebanonyouth.org

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Activity supported by the
Canada Fund for Local Initiatives

Activité réalisée avec l'appui du
Fonds canadien d'initiatives locales



*Thank you to all our private donors— you
have made a difference in the lives of
many program participants.*



INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?

If you are interested in volunteering with U.L.Y.P., please send your CV to us at ulypvolunteers@gmail.com and we will send you our volunteer application.

Please donate! Sponsor a program or a student.

Your donations and support makes the impossible possible.

Please donate to U.L.Y.P. so we can continue providing the marginalized children, youth and women of Lebanon opportunities to accept, tolerate, respect, trust and care for each other. To help us work towards a more united Lebanon, you can fill out the form below and return it to us or join our online campaign.

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Questions? Please Contact ULYP at +961 1 346 422 or 03 042200	
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Thank you for your generosity. We appreciate your support!	



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3 EASY STEPS

- Log on to our website
- Direct your donation to the ULYP Youth Academy or Bridge Program
- Insert your credit card information and submit

TOGETHER we can give our youth a life of HOPE, KNOWLEDGE and OPPORTUNITIES

BE ACTIVE...MAKE A DIFFERENCE

www.unitelebanonyouth.org