



Unite Lebanon Youth Project

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IN THIS ISSUE

An apple a day... makes a child HAPPY! 1

Running for a United Lebanon 1

"If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough." 2

"My life turned upside down because of ULYP": Meet Lina Al Murdaa 2

"My dream is coming true": Meet Salwan Abou Salem 3

Duke Engage: Bridging the gap between the USA and Lebanon 3

Volunteer Spotlight: A life-changing experience 4

IN OTHER NEWS

New website! 4

New blog! 4

An apple a day... makes a child HAPPY!

Last Wednesday as the first rays of sunlight began to shine on the Corniche of Beirut, ULYP's organic apples arrived at The American Community School (ACS). With the help of some ACS Middle School students, the ULYP apple stall was set up and the smell of fresh apples filled the air.

Everyone who ate a delicious apple fresh from Hammana that day had a smile on their face: because by buying an apple, they all made a donation for children in need. All the money collected from selling the apples is going to ULYP's HAPPY program (Healthy Alternative Program for Preschoolers and Youth). This gives underprivileged four to five year olds a head start in life by providing them with art, music, games, IT, English, reading and plenty of outdoor exploration, through which they are taught ULYP's core values – respect of others, mutual understanding, cooperation and citizenship.



They say an apple a day keeps the doctor away... We say an apple a day makes a child HAPPY! Thank you to all the students and teachers at ACS for your support!

Running for a United Lebanon

This year for the first time ULYP has partnered with the Beirut Marathon Association (BMA) and we have been encouraging our friends not just to *run for Lebanon*, but to *run for a United Lebanon*. There are many Lebanese NGOs who have partnered with the BMA this year, all who benefit by getting back a small percentage of the registration fee from every runner who signs up to run for them.



ULYP hoped to get at least 50 people to run with us, but after sending out dozens of emails and meeting with various interested groups we managed to get almost 170 runners! We are so thankful to all of our friends including FNB, the Manchester United Lebanon club, and some local school kids and mums, who helped us reach this fantastic number.

The money raised is going to fund a module of our SAWA project- an arts-based program that brings underprivileged children and youth together to unite through music, art, mosaics, and drama while practicing mutual understanding, citizenship and respect.

Some members of ULYP staff will also be running in the marathon relay' on the 10th November, if you aren't signed up to run then come along and support!

Website: www.unitelebanonyouth.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/unitelebanonyouth

Twitter: www.twitter.com/ULYP

“If you can’t explain it simply, you don’t understand it well enough.”

We recently had a very fruitful workshop with Rama Chakaki, the founder of Dubai-based Baraka Ventures, about the use of social media to develop NGOs and enhance fundraising. During our 4 days with Rama we were introduced to other organizations' communication strategies, and given many insights into creating effective and profitable campaigns. One of the key messages we will take away in fact comes from Einstein – ‘If you can’t explain it simply, you don’t understand it well enough.’

After discussions and brainstorming, we are all excited to create a new digital strategy; including improving and simplifying the main messages on our website and other digital platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. With Rama’s advice and as ULYP nears its 4th birthday, we aim to build up a more effective channel of communication between us and the world, to increase our online presence and to better spread the word about our work and our vision. Another key goal is to improve our means of receiving feedback from our friends and supporters – your comments, criticisms and complements are very valuable to us!



In the end we came up with a plan to launch a campaign for our HAPPY program later this year. This will allow us to expand the program to more children and improve the services we offer them, which means more HAPPYness for all!

We want to thank Rama for her enthusiasm and patience, her great presentations and the invaluable lessons and support she has given us. If you want to know more about Rama and her work, you can follow her on Twitter at : @rchakaki

“My life turned upside down because of ULYP”: Meet Lina Al Murdaa

Lina Al Murdaa is one of ULYP's first students to be going on to study a masters program and we are very proud of her hard work! As she begins her course we asked her to tell us a bit about her life and her studies:

My name is Lina and I am 22 years old. This year I graduated from the Accounting Department of the Faculty of Commerce and Business Administration at Beirut Arab University. I have just started my post graduate studies doing the Master of International Business at Hult International Business School in Dubai.

Getting into the ULYP foundation opened the door for me to the whole world; it gave me the chance to finish my bachelor's degree and to continue my studies by doing a master's. I am also very grateful to my sponsors, Blue Rose Compass, who gave me the scholarship to study at Hult.

Studying abroad and gaining the experience that I am getting from Hult is something that I could only ever dream about. Being able to study in different campuses around the world, the cultural diversity that I am experiencing and the intense professional business program that we are taking really makes this university worth leaving everything behind for.

For me, my life turned upside down when I became a member of the ULYP foundation. Now I have the whole world in front of me and I want to seize this chance to help change and improve the life of other students around the world, no matter who they are or where they come from. I have been given the opportunity to have a decent life and I want to help make this happen for everyone in the world.



“My dream is coming true”: Meet Salwan Abou Salem

One of our Bridge students Salwan Abou Salem was recently awarded a scholarship from Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), and offered a place on a big research project. We asked Salwan for her thoughts on receiving this recognition of her hard work, as well as her plans and dreams for the future:

I was originally introduced to ULYP when graduating from Al Qalaa Secondary School in Saida and I am currently studying Mechanical Engineering in Texas A&M University in Qatar. Since coming to Qatar, I have been committed to doing my best, getting on the right track and making the Palestinians proud. I applied for the annual HBKU Merit Scholarship because I had attained the required GPA, and now it will allow me to continue my studies.

As for my research involvements, my physics TA approached me and asked whether I would like to contribute to a research project with Dr. Othmane Bouhalil. The project is called “Uniformity studies in Gas Electron Multiplier based detectors”. This UREP proposal is funded by QNRF (Qatar National Research Fund) and will continue for a whole year, starting in Fall 2013.

I feel so excited and happy about my future; excited to begin the research and to have new experiences, and happy to accept the challenge and do my utmost to achieve my dream of becoming a mechanical engineer. Now I see my dream coming true. Qatar was the right place for me to go and do what I really wanted to do. My father used to say to me “Go where you think you can achieve something”. I hope to one day invent something that will help people all over the world, but eventually my wish is to join the Stars of Science Program.



I would like to thank my family and friends for being there for me at all times. I would also like to thank Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al Missned for her efforts to raise the education level in Qatar; without her I would not be in one of the top universities in the world. My thanks in the end go to Mrs. Melek El Nimer and Mr. Salim Karroum who introduced me to the key to everything; the key to life and the key to success. I wouldn't be here without them.

Duke Engage: Bridging the gap between the USA and Lebanon

This summer ULYP had the pleasure of welcoming seven American volunteers from Duke University, on the Duke Engage program. Christophe Viret, Jessica Gronna, Ishaan Jalan, Annabel Wang, Etka Kurucan, Eric Peterson and Kathy Zhou all volunteered as teachers in the Bridge program, giving classes on SAT preparation, extra English and college counseling.

The volunteers shared three key interests which brought them together and made them work well as a team: a strong interest in the culture and language of the Middle East, a desire to enhance social equality and a love for working with youth and children. The volunteers agreed that their time in Lebanon was both about teaching others as well as personal development through learning about Lebanese culture and the Arabic language.



The Duke Engage volunteers contributed to making the summer Bridge program a great success and we thank them for their hard work and wish them all the best of luck in the future.

Volunteer Spotlight: A life-changing experience

Stephan Beavers was one of two interns who joined the ULYP office over the summer. Stephan was an energetic and enthusiastic member of the ULYP team and his presence in the office is truly missed!

I came to ULYP at the beginning of summer 2013 as an intern from the Arab American Institute (AAI), an American based non-profit organization. I originally assumed that my summer would be spent working on social media and development for the AAI in Washington D.C., but the plans were changed and I was soon referred to ULYP in Beirut. I was overwhelmed with anticipation to be working and living in Beirut for the summer, and knew it would be an invaluable experience for someone deeply interested in NGO work and the region in general.

The bulk of my work at ULYP was divided between working in the development office as well as helping to create the college counseling aspect of the Bridge Program taught by the Duke University volunteers. Working with the Lebanese and Palestinian high school students in the Bridge program was a demanding and exciting experience. College admissions are increasingly competitive and looking for well rounded, high-achieving students. Moreover, the costs of attending university are rising, making it ever more difficult for underprivileged youth. Working in a college counseling office at the King's Academy high school in Jordan provided me with experience in the field, which was highly beneficial in my work here. The challenge lay in creating and solidifying a two-part workshop, which was to be simultaneously informative, interesting, and fun – all while keeping a balance between informing the students of the often daunting facts of college and admissions and keeping them motivated for the application process. At the conclusion of our workshop it was amazing to see the students excited for college and discussing potential universities and majors they were hoping to apply for.

What I expected to be a US-based summer internship turned out to be a life-changing summer experience, living and working in Beirut for ULYP. I loved working with the ULYP team whose kindness and passion for their cause is inspiring. Leaving Beirut was difficult after having met so many remarkable people who in a multifaceted and often challenging region continue to work towards overcoming social boundaries and conflict, through promoting peace, understanding,



In Other News... New website and blog!

ULYP has a new website! You can find the latest information about our programs, upcoming activities and lots of new photos! Please visit and let us know what you think – we would love to hear your feedback.

www.unitelebanonyouth.org

We also have a new blog! Here we will be uploading stories about our students and volunteers, keeping you up to date with our program news, and telling you about our latest events and campaigns. Please like, comment and share what you see!

www.unitelebanonyouth.wordpress.com



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