



**highschoolNGOconnect.org™**

*...where high school students meet global change makers  
in nongovernmental humanitarian relief organizations (NGOs)*

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## **Paterson High School Students Meet Global Humanitarian Leaders Through Innovative *highschoolNGOconnect.org*™**

### **Students cap-off extracurricular experience with impassioned presentations on global humanitarian issues**

Paterson, NJ (March 9). The award of global citizenship certificates to six Paterson high school students completed the successful debut of ***highschoolNGOconnect.org***, a nonprofit academic enrichment program that brought these students face-to-face with leaders of diverse NGOs (nongovernmental humanitarian relief organizations) all around the world. To earn certificates, students delivered compelling “elevator pitches” for NGOs that focus on human trafficking, forced dislocation of families, hunger, poverty alleviation and natural disaster relief.

For students selected to participate in ***highschoolNGOconnect***, interviews with NGO leaders transported their classroom to the virtual front lines of urgent humanitarian initiatives in South America, North America, Africa and the Middle East. They spoke via Skype with experts engaged in rain forest preservation and bioregional ecology (Eco-Ecuador), ending child hunger in the United States (The No Kid Hungry campaign) and promoting public health in central Africa (Uganda Village Project).

"Connecting International High School students to leaders of global humanitarian organizations suits our mission to empower compassionate, informed and confident global citizens," said IHS principal Dr. Robina Puryear-Castro.

The skills-oriented curriculum introduced students to the vibrant NGO sector and explored music and art arising from humanitarian distress in addition to the featured interviews with leaders of prominent NGOs. ***HighschoolNGOconnect*** supplies this academic enrichment at no cost

in school districts where more than half of the students are eligible for free or subsidized meals and welcome the chance to embrace worldwide humanitarian causes.

Taj Hamad, chairman of the **World Association of NGOs (WANGO)**, and Steven Mintz, Executive Director of **High School Network for Global Philanthropy, Inc.**, awarded the certificates on behalf of their respective nonprofit organizations. **HighschoolNGOconnect.org** is the first enrichment initiative by the High School Network, launched in 2016.

“This is a great project because it opens the minds of young people to the world, and particularly to a group that is trying to help and to give,” said Mr. Hamad. His organization unites more than 30,000 NGOs worldwide in the cause of advancing peace and global well-being. Because of travel plans, Mr. Hamad prepared a taped message of congratulations for the students in the pilot program.

“I was really impressed by how passionate the students were in asking the questions surrounding NGO-UVP work and its public health impact,” said Mr. Kenneth Kaggwa, program coordinator at the Uganda Village Project (UVP), who was interviewed by the students. “I’m sure they are going to be strong global advocates.”

A fourth NGO leader (Global Emergency Response and Assistance) visited the Paterson classroom in person to describe the immense challenges that refugees encounter when they flee to new homes.

International High School furnished a superb environment to test an ambitious academic enrichment concept. “Skilled educators nurture exceptional students who deserve every opportunity to flourish on a global stage,” said Mr. Mintz. “We are thrilled with the results of the pilot program and we look forward to embarking lots of similar opportunities.”

**Background: HighschoolNGOconnect.org** supplies nonprofit, global-minded academic enrichment to urban, suburban and rural high schools where more than half of the students are eligible for free or subsidized meals. Launched in 2016, **highschoolNGOconnect** adheres to a rigorous curriculum taught by local teachers. The core skills-building mission 1) connects students via Skype to inspirational change-makers in worldwide non-governmental humanitarian relief organizations (NGOs), 2) equips compassionate students to champion humanitarian goals, and 3) spurs bold nonprofit leadership that eases local social problems. The program is poised to expand in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New York State and Connecticut high schools under the banner of the High School Network for Global Philanthropy, Inc., in Montclair, New Jersey.

**The World Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (WANGO)** assists more than 30,000 NGOs that seek solutions to humanity’s basic

*problems. Initiated in 2000 by a handful of international NGOs and prominent visionaries, WANGO has quickly become one of the premier international bodies for non-governmental organizations that are committed to the ideals of universal peace, justice, and well being for all humanity.*

***The Paterson Public School District*** is a diverse urban school district located in northern New Jersey. As the third largest school district in New Jersey, the district enrolls over 28,000 students in 56 schools to accommodate students in pre-kindergarten through grade 12. The school district's strategic plan focuses on four priorities: *Effective Academic Programs; Creating & Maintaining Healthy School Cultures; Family & Community Engagement; and Efficient & Responsive Operations.* For more information, visit [www.paterson.k12.nj.us](http://www.paterson.k12.nj.us).