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MCW'S 2016 YOUNG LEADERS PROGRAM INSPIRES GLOBAL YOUTH TO ENACT CHANGE

New York, NY, August 16, 2016 — MCW, an organization dedicated to addressing communities' pressing needs by empowering current leaders and readying leaders of tomorrow, convened thirty-nine young leaders from around the world to participate in MCW's 2016 Young Leaders Program (YLP) held at New York University in New York City and Champlain College in Burlington, Vermont.

Each participant entered the retreat with a social change to address in their local communities. Topic areas included environmental issues, youth development, human rights, education, gender equality, entrepreneurship, healthcare, and intercultural dialogue. During the retreat, educators, guest speakers, and MCW board members and staff provided guidance, inspiration, and skills building workshops to assist participants to develop a vision plan to address their social change.

Representing eighteen different countries and territories, including Afghanistan, Austria, Bangladesh, Colombia, Egypt, Hungary, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Pakistan, Palestine, South Africa, Sudan, the United States, and Zimbabwe, the retreat was a platform for intercultural dialogue and understanding.

"We saw an incredible group of young people this year who are not only deeply concerned about their communities, but are motivated to make a change," says Nitya Ramanathan, Coordinator of the program. "Through intensive planning sessions and year-long mentorship, our Young Leaders will be prepared to carry out their projects and affect change in their communities."

Ifreet Taheea, a participant from Chittagong, Bangladesh, says, "I came here with the goal of making my community a better place and that was about it, I did not know where to start. [During the retreat], my plans and thoughts have matured to such a level that I never could have imagined. I had a plan and I now definitely see it in a clearer way. Every hour we are learning something new, every speaker is sharing their experiences and it is all helping us grow, and that's what this whole process is about!"

Thought-provoking and inspiring presentations were given by representatives from Causeumentary, Far More Precious, Kaydabi Games, Muck Rack & Shorty Awards, Pearson, Stony Brook University, Supra Endura, UPstander International, Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program, What Better Looks Like, and Young Minds for Gender Equality.

The program also provided participants with educational tools required to make change in a globalized world. This included networking, social media strategy, pitching ideas, telling your story, working in multi-cultural environments, and public speaking skills.

"I've learned so much and I'm so glad to have been part of this program. I appreciate it because as a person I've grown," says Gamuchirai Mazingi from Harare, Zimbabwe. "It has made me a global citizen,

and I'm more aware of what's happening around me, and how much change we need to make. I'm excited and can't wait to go back [to Zimbabwe] and teach people what I've been learning.”

Informal activities offered throughout the week highlighted different mediums for social change, including a screening of the documentary *Salam Neighbor*, an award-winning film that follows two American filmmakers as they spent one month living alongside families in a refugee camp, to learn about the experiences and stories of the millions who have fled conflict and war zones, particularly Syria. To help with the screening, Katie Thompson, the Chief Brand Officer for Causeumentary, participated in a panel discussion on refugees.

The retreat concluded with the annual Open Doors Ceremony hosted by Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City on August 4, 2016. The celebratory event featured remarks by Eddie Bergman, MCW Co-founder and President of the Board of Directors, Dr. Charles Robbins, MCW Board Member and Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and Dean of the Undergraduate Colleges at Stony Brook University; Khalid Elachi, Chief Operating Officer at MCW; and Nitya Ramanathan, Coordinator of the YLP.

During the 2016 YLP, MCW received significant support from the New York and Vermont communities through in-kind donations and gifts from sponsors [Agata & Valentina](#), [Ben & Jerry's](#), [Champlain College](#), [Chipotle Mexican Grill](#), [Ess-a-Bagel](#), [Fairway Market](#), [Hill and Bay Restaurant](#), [NYU School of Professional Studies](#), [Trader Joe's](#), [Whole Foods Market](#), and [4imprint](#).

To view photos of MCW's Young Leaders Program retreat, please visit: <http://bit.ly/MCW-2016YLP>



The thirty-nine 2016 Young Leaders Program participants and the MCW team at Champlain College, Burlington, Vermont

About MCW (Miracle Corners of the World)

MCW is a non-profit organization with a vision for communities' throughout the world to achieve greater levels of education, improved health, and increased economic security and a mission to address communities' pressing needs by empowering current leaders and readying leaders of tomorrow. Based in New York and founded in 1999, with partner organizations in Africa (Rwanda, Tanzania, and Zambia) MCW offers the following: Community Development, Oral Health Care, and Young Leaders programs. MCW also supports Partner Initiatives, including Human Rights and Pediatric AIDS Treatment for Africa (PATA).