

# MMUN

## **Woods Middle and High School students visit the Montessori Model at United Nations**



An expanded delegation representing School of the Woods attended the fourth annual MMUN conference in Brooklyn Heights, NY, and programs at United Nations Headquarters from February 28 through March 3, 2010.

Each year, students world-over participate in United Nations models, mostly high school and university students. The Montessori Model (MMUN) was created for Montessori students from Canada, Caribbean, Haiti, Mexico and the United States for upper elementary and middle school students, age 9-15.

The Montessori Model was established in 2007 to honor the 100th anniversary celebration of Montessori education, which fosters global peace through a strong human development approach from infancy to adolescence. Each session of MMUN is structured to give the students real-life experiences, to help them develop social understanding and tolerance on an international basis.

MMUN participation has increased both in numbers and regions - from 400 student delegates in 2007 to over 750 in 2010 - from delegates mostly from mainland USA and few from Canada in 2007 to delegates from all US states plus territories of Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, Canada, Haiti, Mexico, Sweden, Jordan, and adult observers from Australia and Peoples Republic of China. Due to the earthquake in Haiti, the Haitian delegates' absence was felt. School of the Woods has continued to make a very positive presence in the continuous development of the MMUN over the last four years - 2007 to now.

There were 14 WMS students making the February 28-March 3 trip this year, along with 14 students from Woods High School, all of whom are WMS alumni.

Woods Middle School student delegates were Dorna Abdi, Lauren Almstedt, Charlotte Brannon, Caroline Catlin, Creed Coram, Kienne Coram, Thorleif Crux, Sonny George, Sean Gossard, Liam Hudson, Allison Keys, Matthew Lucas, Michael Nielsen, and Charlotte Wiesenthal.

All high school students (interns) at the 2010 conference were our very own Woods Middle School MMUN student alumni. They were Adriel Barrios, Kelly Benthien, Milan Das, Ciarán Finlayson, Rachel George, Susana Hart, Nicole Kunkel, Andrew Lagarde, Katie Miller, John Moger, Mae Savanna Schaffer, Detria Turner, Lauren Welling, and Rachel Yarus.

In 2010, for the first time MMUN student alumni were invited to be part of the MMUN Secretariat to support the long-term vision of developing a cadre of strong sustainable leaders within the Montessori community. Along with experienced MMUN Montessori educators, they are invited to lead and conduct MMUN conferences at the International, National, and Regional levels as Presidents, Vice Presidents, and Rapporteurs (facilitators). Having middle school MMUN alumni take an active role in the MMUN Secretariat each year at the MMUN conference in NYC in their High school years - starting as Rapporteurs and moving up as Vice Presidents and Presidents - is an effective means of nurturing peaceful global citizens. Furthermore, the high school interns can become powerful role models in influencing the younger middle school student delegates to take on a future leadership role.

A simulation of actual United Nations committees, MMUN discusses real issues and convenes to debate and vote on the resolutions that each committee proposes. Schools are first assigned a country or countries depending on the size of the delegation. These delegates represent the country or countries in various committees. Each committee addresses two global issues of importance. The delegates research the issues and write a position paper. The position paper prepares the delegates to take a stand on issues during the debate and writing of resolutions at the MMUN conference in New York City.

The group was accompanied by teachers Stephanie Romero and Dr. Lalit Ecka of the WMS faculty. Dr. Ecka was the MMUN School Coordinator, MMUN Student Intern Director, and President of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat). ❖

# 2010



**Let's let some of the delegates speak for themselves:**

Charlotte Brannon, who served on Security Council B, says "Not only did I learn about global issues and debate at MMUN but also learned a lot about myself. It was the most amazing experience ever and I wish it would continue forever."



"I learned that just doing the work wasn't what the teachers were looking for. They were looking for people who wanted to be there, who were motivated, could act professionally and be aware of their surroundings. An amazing experience, I would love to do it again." – Creed Coram, International Court of Justice.

"My experience was exciting and rewarding. I learned how to negotiate and speak in front of people I don't know, and to understand and respect other countries' perspectives." – Thorleif Crux, Security Council B.

"I learned that in working with people from all over the world who have differing ideas and solutions, you have to have an open mind. Situations were discussed that were real life issues, not things that were made up." – Charlotte Wiesenthal, UNESCO.

**THE SEVEN COMMITTEE OPTIONS AND TOPICS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS**

**First Committee of the General Assembly; Disarmament and International Security Reduction of Military Budgets**

- Strengthening international cooperation against atomic, biological, and chemical terrorism

**UNESCO**

- United Nations Literacy Decade: Education for all, especially women and girls
- Achieving universal access to information and knowledge, especially in rural areas

**World Bank**

- The World Bank members discuss loan proposals from UN Member States to improve infrastructure, schools, electricity, agriculture, housing, roads.

**G-20 - The world's 20 countries with the largest economies**

- Creating opportunity for the world's smallest economies
- Reduction of food production worldwide

**United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat)**

- Young people in the development of human settlements
- Elimination of slums worldwide, especially in Asia

**International Court of Justice (ICJ)**

- Georgia vs. Russian Federation: Application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- Peru vs. Chile: Maritime Delimitation Dispute

**Security Council B**

- Non-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and North Korea
- The Situation in the Middle East, including Palestine

"I was a Rapporteur, UN Development Programme, carrying out various roles and tasks. Next year, I want to participate as an intern, working in whatever position is needed, though I feel that working as a vice president or president would expand and develop my skills and give me a new experience. – Katie Miller.

"My role was vice president, UN Settlements Programme/UN Habitat, which involved aiding the Rapporteur. The committee president allowed me to assume the president's role for a while. Next year I would like to be a vice president again to further observe and ready myself for a role as president." – Susana Hart