



# WORLDLINK ~ CONNECTING YOUTH TO GLOBAL AFFAIRS

## MISSION

- Promote international awareness and understanding among students
- Encourage critical thinking about international dynamics shaping global policies and economies, as well as local cultures and communities
- Stimulate discussion among young people, leaders and activists about challenges in our multi-faceted and inter-connected world
- Provide a forum for curious and informed youth to add their voice to a civil atmosphere of problem solving.
- Inspire youth to consider and model responsible global citizenship.

The **WorldLink Program** provides unique opportunities for high school youth from around the world to meet world leaders and experts. Initiated in 1997 as a youth education program of the World Affairs Council of San Diego, WorldLink is now a program of the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice at the University of San Diego. During its 13 year history, WorldLink has hosted over 8500 students from more than 65 schools. WorldLink provides the chance for students to explore and articulate their points of view on historical, contemporary, and emerging global issues. Students learn about challenges facing us locally and internationally, and engage in thoughtful discussions about solutions in a forum where their voices are heard and valued. Along the way, they develop a broader understanding of:

- leadership
- critical thinking, reading and writing
- local, regional and international issues
- respect for diverse perspectives
- human rights advocacy
- global citizenship



WorldLink Moderator Zealan Hoover greets speakers

## ANNUAL YOUTH TOWN MEETING

WorldLink hosts an annual Youth Town Meeting (YTM). Global leaders, representatives of the United States Department of State and other public and private organizations bring their experiences to student delegates. Each YTM covers a specific topic and involves nearly twenty speakers with diverse perspectives. Since 1998 more than 200 speakers have been featured, ranging from foreign prime ministers and presidents to local imams, priests and rabbis. Just a few of the many notable participants include:

- Fidel Ramos, 12<sup>th</sup> President of the Philippines
- Lilia Velasquez, Law Professor, International Immigration Attorney
- Janet Reno, U.S. Attorney General
- Kim Campbell, 19<sup>th</sup> Prime Minister of Canada
- Joan Mussa, Senior Vice President, World Vision

Youth delegates develop leadership skills by choosing topics of discussion, deliver opening and closing remarks, moderate workshops and cover the conference as journalists. Previous topics have included human trafficking, rights of the child, torture and counter-terrorism.

## DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

The free conference allows all socio-economic levels to participate in an exceptional forum where their voices are equally heard and valued, regardless of their backgrounds. Of the 30 participating schools this past year, attendance came from:



- 5 private schools
- 19 public schools
- 2 alternative schools
- 3 Mexican schools
- 1 juvenile rehabilitation program



JOAN B. KROC  
INSTITUTE FOR  
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UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO

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# WORLDLINK TRANSFORMS STUDENTS INTO LEADERS

## KUDOS FROM STUDENTS, SPEAKERS, TEACHERS

"WorldLink is such an important link to our small global village! (This) provides a tomorrow of individuals who will create social change and social justice across borders because (WorldLink) facilitated inspirational first hand knowledge of experiences and then the hard data of the wrongs that must be righted. The high energy of the diverse youth was palpable, as was their intellect. It was a very meaningful day for me." - Nancy Rubin, US Ambassador to the UN High Commission for Human Rights and speaker at the 1999 Youth Town Meeting

"WorldLink has made a huge difference in my life. Through the past 3 years that I have attended it has really inspired me to be a leader, become more involved, and to inspire other teens and kids. Thank you for everything." - 2008 student delegate

"I loved my experience with WorldLink. I think people our age should be more informed about global issues, and I believe that if WorldLink continues, successful future decision makers will be out there tomorrow. I am inspired to join the UN."— 2005 student delegate

"Your program has been a great addition to our regular programming. Most of our girls have never seen a college campus. They become excited about their education following our visit. I believe their participation has helped increase the number of girls graduating and/or getting their GEDs. Topics discussed have always helped these girls open up their attitudes and process their own pain." —Rebecca Booth, Sr. PO, GRF

## SPONSORS

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*The 2010-2011 student-selected theme is*

## Crimes Without Borders: Threats to Human Security

Human Trafficking

Illicit Drug Trade

Gangs

Small Arms/Weapons

Justice Mechanisms

WorldLink will offer a series of lectures and activities during the school year built around exploring the local, national and international dimensions of organized crime. **If you are a teacher** and would like to learn more about how to involve your class in these *free* activities, contact the WorldLink program officer. We are also looking for **community experts** who are willing to share their experiences with the participating youth.

All events are free but must be pre-registered with WorldLink.

To learn more, go to <http://peace.sandiego.edu/worldlink>

## FIVE WAYS YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Many students cite the annual Youth Town Meeting as one of the most rewarding experiences of their high school careers. The program's annual budget of \$100,000 covers activities, materials and program coordination for over 700 students in the region. We welcome you to join our efforts to provide the chance for our nation's future leaders to explore and articulate their points of view on historical, contemporary, and emerging global issues. Your financial support will allow WorldLink to:

~sponsor a school's full YTM participation: transportation, meals, materials (\$2,000)

~offer smaller, specialized Youth Forums (\$300)

~fund a speaker's travel expenses (\$800-\$3,000)

~renew the Virtual Classroom Project (\$15,000)

~strengthen WorldLink's endowment (\$500 and up)