

Peace Boat : Special Programs in Partnership

Program Report: Global Kids



Through working in partnership to build special programs with organizations that share similar goals, Peace Boat US is increasing opportunities for access to peace education programs onboard Peace Boat. These special programs typically involve a group of people from an organization joining a segment of a Peace Boat voyage to carry out study and international exchange activities both onboard and in the countries that the ship is visiting. The costs of the programs are typically covered through joint fundraising.

In 2006, programs were carried out in partnership with a New York City organization, Global Kids, Inc. which "acts to ensure that young people of diverse backgrounds have the knowledge, skills and experience they need to succeed in the workplace and participate in the shaping of public policy and international relations."

Global Kids Inc. – Mombasa, Kenya to Civitavecchia, Italy (August – September 2006)

With the objectives of developing new skills and building confidence through international experience, a group of young people from the New York organization Global Kids joined Peace Boat's 54th Global Voyage between Kenya and Italy.

Prior to the trip, the group researched and planned a series of workshops on issues pertinent to the voyage, including conflict resolution, tourism and the role of the United States in the world. Onboard programs were delivered in partnership with Japanese participants of Peace Boat, providing all participants with valuable experience in cooperating and communicating across cultural and language barriers.

In each port visited, the Global Kids group took part in exchange activities with local organizations designed to expose them to the reality of life in that particular country and provide opportunities for genuine communication with local people.

The program enabled its participants a unique opportunity to increase their awareness of the issues of conflict, development and inequality shaping our world, and of their own position in relation to these issues. In particular, the training elements of the program and the experience of interacting in a multi-lingual, multi-cultural environment empowered the participants with the skills and will to continue their work for change.

As Aneka Hewitt, a 16-year old junior at the High School for Global Citizenship in Brooklyn, N.Y. and a member of the Global Kids group says after visiting a Kenyan orphanage as part of the trip: "*When you learn from a book, that's OK, but you don't fully get it until you experience for yourself. You have to go out and see it. People have their differences, but we are all still people. All the conflicts that go on because people think they're so different are so pointless.*" Hewitt has since founded an organization to raise money for the Kenyan orphanage. "*To see someone who lived in a place so different, who had so little, I couldn't just come home and pretend it never happened,*" she said. "*I had to do something to make a change.*" (quoted in an article by Beth Hillman - . <http://jscms.jrn.columbia.edu/cns/2007-02-13/hillman-peaceboatusa>)

Global Kids Program Onboard
By Peace Boat 54th Voyage Web Reporter Kimberley Kowalczyk

As a special program onboard the 54th voyage, eight US youth from the New York City organization Global Kids joined the ship from Mombasa, Kenya to Civitavecchia, Italy. The group consisted of two coordinators (Courtney Killingsworth and Tiffanie Lewis) and eight high school students (Dewayne Baker, Kashif Caldwell, Namita Chand, Aneka Hewitt, Ana Jaquez, Samora Mitchell, Shareef Swindell, and Ebanesha Williams).

Global Kids was founded in 1989 in New York City. It is a leadership program developed for a diverse group of New York City teenagers, many considered at-risk youth, to provide them with the tools to become globally aware citizens who can think critically and speak for themselves. All participants of the program respect three guidelines. The first is "open mic" - when someone is speaking, everyone else is attentive. The second is to provide a "safe space" - you agree to disagree. The third is participation - the more you put in the more you get out of it.

Onboard, Global Kids shared four workshops with participants. They included a workshop on US culture (and culture in general), the positive and negative effects of tourism, United States Imperialism, and a conflict resolution workshop. They also gave a number of lectures including a discussion about their experiences as people of color in the United States and their impressions of post-9/11 US. They also joined a number of exposure programs in ports of call.

While the high school students enjoyed the unique opportunity to lead lectures and presentations in front of a large group of participants, they particularly enjoyed their smaller workshops focused on cultural exchange. Bringing their passion and knowledge from their lives in New York City, the kids lead participants in a series of lessons concerning their interests. Shareef led workshops on tap-dancing, a form of street dance that was started in Ireland by young people from low-income families trying to make money on the street. The dance is now popular with youth in New York. Ebanesha did a series on hair-braiding, an activity with an important stylistic and social role in the African-American community. Aneka performed and taught passengers a dance style known as "Stepping," a fast-paced rhythmic beat that is popular with African-American university fraternities and sororities in the United States. Finally Dwayne and Samora led a "basketball camp", teaching other passengers of all ages some of their favorite moves on the court before organizing a small tournament on the deck.

The Global Kids reveled in all aspects of ship life, from conversations about US politics to dance competitions. Their creative final presentation was a collaborative performance piece including theatre, slide shows, video, dance, music, and poetry. Their skits represented their expectations before arriving, their experiences on the ship, and their thoughts and hopes for their lives when they returned home. One thing was certain: their lives had changed forever, and they had grown so much from the experience of interacting with new cultures and countries. They will miss their many Japanese friends on the boat, and look forward to bringing the messages of peace they encountered on their journey back to their communities in New York City.

This was the third program on Peace Boat for Global Kids, Inc. Further information about past programs is available with pictures at:

Peace Boat's 46th Voyage

http://www.peaceboat.org/english/voyg/pv/46/lob/0901_27/index.html

Peace Boat's 41st Voyage

<http://www.peaceboat.org/english/voyg/pv/41/spe/030820/index.html>

<http://www.globalkids.org/Trips/international/peaceboat2003/index.jsp>