

“Individually, we are one drop.
Together, we are an ocean.” - Ryunosuke Satoro



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Boston Public Schools students to engage in groundbreaking exchange program with Mongolian schools in 2011

Fifteen students and teachers from each country will travel abroad to live with families and learn about free expression in civil society

BOSTON, MA - September 21, 2010 - The Boston Public Schools will soon participate in a groundbreaking exchange project between public schools in the United States and Mongolia. The Emerging Youth Leaders program will send 15 students and teachers to Mongolia for three weeks in the summer of 2011; and 15 Mongolians will travel to Boston in the autumn. The groups will spend time visiting schools and media outlets and touring significant sites.

In addition, throughout the year, hundreds of students and teachers in both countries will participate in activities that focus on democracy and free expression in civil society. They will engage in online exchanges about the media, and will enjoy training about journalism from media experts and professionals.

“This is such a fantastic opportunity for Boston public high school students!” says Yu-Lan Lin, Director of World Languages for Boston Public Schools. “Not just for the lucky ones who get to be immersed in life in Mongolia for three weeks, but for all the students and teachers who will engage in the training about media and free expression.” All costs are covered by a grant from the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Students and teachers from four Boston high schools will be invited to apply: Boston Latin School, Snowden International School at Copley, Quincy Upper School, and O'Bryant School of Math & Science.

“Living with a family in another country is the most powerful way we know to establish bonds, open minds, and deepen understanding,” says Dave Santulli, Executive Director of United Planet, the organization that is managing the travelers’ experiences in both countries. “I’m so delighted that we’re helping young people and educators to have such profound connections in Mongolia and the U.S. They will gain so much insight, wisdom, and joy in the journey.”

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Another key component of the project is the online interaction that will take place among the educators and students. iEARN-USA (International Education and Resource Network) will facilitate the online exchanges between Mongolian and American participants on its multimedia collaboration center. Educators and students will gain cross-cultural perspectives, and exchange information on issues of free expression, objective reporting, critical media analysis, documenting sources and peer article editing -- all of which are responsibilities of citizen engagement and participation.

“In addition to teachers and students from Boston Public Schools, we will recruit 20 additional teachers/classes to participate in online collaboration with the Mongolian students as they learn the principles of journalism and free expression in a civil society,” notes Ms. Tina Habib, Director of Government Programs at iEARN-USA. “Students will be able to become certified World Youth News (WYN) reporters by successfully completing an online certification course, designed in collaboration with journalists from the New York Times and the Columbia School of Journalism. They will post stories and photos on the WYN website (<http://worldyouthnews.org>) and be eligible for further posting on the PBS News Hour’s website.”

Boston, MA, incorporated as a town in 1630 and as a city in 1822, is one of America’s oldest cities, with a rich economic and social history. What began as a homesteading community eventually evolved into a center for social and political change. Boston has since become the economic and cultural hub of New England.

Mongolia, a landlocked country in East and Central Asia, is bordered by Russia and the People’s Republic of China. Mongolia’s political system is now a parliamentary republic; during the last century, its politics were similar to those in the USSR, until a democratic revolution in 1990 led to a multi-party system, a new constitution in 1992, and transition to a market economy. Since 2006, the media environment has been improving with the government debating a new Freedom of Information Act, and the removal of any affiliation of media outlets with the government. Market reforms have led to an increasing number of people working in the media, along with students at journalism schools.

The project is a program of the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. It is being managed and implemented by United Planet (based in Boston, MA) and iEARN (International Education and Resource Network).

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About United Planet

[United Planet](#), an international non-profit based in Boston, MA, strives to create a world in which all people understand, respect, and support one another. United Planet's global network of leaders and volunteers fosters cross-cultural understanding and addresses shared challenges to unite the world in a community beyond borders.

Over the past nine years, United Planet has worked with local communities all over the world to find meaningful work for volunteer travelers; and has placed thousands of volunteers in those communities to live and work - for periods ranging from a week to a year. United Planet is the U.S. and Canadian member of the [International Cultural Youth Exchange \(ICYE\) Federation](#), founded in 1949.

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About iEARN

iEARN was launched in 1988 as a pilot project between the US and former USSR to demonstrate that students could use emerging new technologies to work together on meaningful educational projects that enhance the quality of life on the planet. It is iEARN's vision that if students start working together globally from the earliest ages (5-19), they will learn better through experiential interaction with peers in other countries and learn that the world's issues can be resolved by collaborative solutions. iEARN has grown to become the world's largest educational network for project-based learning, with programs in more than 130 countries.

iEARN-USA was awarded the 2003 Goldman Sachs Foundation Prize for Excellence in International Education and is a 2004 Tech Museum Laureate winner for "technology benefiting humanity." Please visit www.iearn.org and www.us.iearn.org or e-mail: iearn@us.iearn.org iEARN-USA is based in New York City.

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