

Community *WORKS*

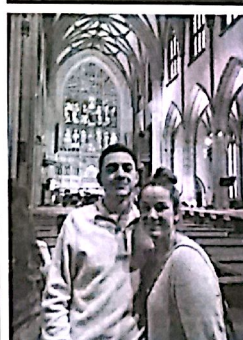
The One World Club at Martha's Vineyard Regional High School is on a mission to celebrate diversity within our school, and in the great, complex world out there. Now in its fifth year, the program takes a group of students each March to New York City, where they visit the High School of Economics and Finance and a number of museums and cultural events, all with a common theme: diverse humanity.

In June, the club's partner school brings a group of 25 of their students to the Vineyard to be immersed in our rural way of life. There are major learning experiences for both groups. Over the years, the program has evolved both in terms of the number of students who participate and the variety of events offered. In its first year, nine students traveled to New York and welcomed back a group of 25 New York visitors, but over the years, that number has steadily increased, and this year 43 Vineyarders stepped on the boat and traveled to the big city. The One World Club was joined by the Business Club.

Jason Lages, a senior, reflected on his second One World trip, noting that he met a New Yorker of Brazilian ethnicity who shared his passion for soccer: "His name was Gabe, and he took us to their gym to play soccer. Ben Clark, Ricardo Andrade, Tucker McNeely, Elijah LaRue, and Paulo daRosa all joined the game."

During his visit to New York, Jason also met with his old friend Sami Steigmann, a Holocaust survivor and inspirational speaker. We met Sammi last year at the Museum of Tolerance and invited him to come to our school to speak to our students, and this year he will do that again.

"Seeing Sami was very important to me," Jason said. "His attitude to life is so amazing. I love his message that we should all forgive ourselves and then move on with our lives. Meet-



PHOTOS COURTESY ELAINE WEINTRAUB

One World Club celebrates diversity

And a trip to New York City. BY ELAINE WEINTRAUB

ing him was one of the best parts of the One World program."

New York offers many options, and students visited the 9/11 Museum, the Museum of Tolerance, the Irish Famine Museum, the National Museum of the American Indian, an off-Broadway musical, Central Park, the Metropolitan Museum, Times Square, and the St. Patrick's Day parade. They also shadowed classes, and were entertained at dinner at the High School of Economics and Finance.

The morning of March 17 was a glorious

spring morning with the cherry trees in bloom as we walked across Central Park to watch the parade. Various decks out in green attire, students enjoyed the sense of excitement, the music, and the sheer number of floats and bands. This year, for the first time, the Irish Gay Association was allowed to march with their lilac and green banners flying. Mayor Bill de Blasio walked with them, and senior Gabe Nunes observed, "They should be allowed to walk; they're Irish too."

Sophomores Ewellen Carlos and Julia Felix

enjoyed being in the city and focusing on how different everything was. "I often visit New York, so I wasn't fazed by the subway or the crowds," Julia said, "but I loved going to the 9/11 Museum, and it made me understand just how impacted New York was by what happened. It made it real for me."

For Ewellen, the contact with the students from the other school was really what she enjoyed most. "I just got out there and introduced myself, and within a few minutes I was exchanging numbers and we were texting each other," she said. "I can't wait

for them to come back, and I want to help getting everything ready for their visit. They live in this huge

busy city where everything happens so fast. I wonder what they will think of our sleepy Island."

The Business Club traveled with One World Club this year and shared most events with them. They visited Pricewaterhouse in Manhattan, where senior Lucas DeBettencourt's aunt is a partner. Andy Di Mattia, a member of the Business Club, was impressed by the luxurious offices and the prime location. "Just being in such a big, busy city for the first time in my life was amazing," Andy said, "and visiting Pricewaterhouse really gave me a sense of what big business is about and how it works. I found that very valuable."

Never has it been more important for us to be culturally competent and to be able to appreciate the wonderful diversity of the world. Our trip was about celebration, bearing witness, and learning how to be in the world. **mv**

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