

# ST. MARY'S

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FOR FAMILIES, FRIENDS, ALUMNI, AND SUPPORTERS OF ST. MARY'S SCHOOL



FULL STEAM AHEAD

# Global Exchange

# INSPIRES DEEPER LEARNING

By **ANDREA SHERMAN, Level Up Village**

**A**t St. Mary's School, an International Baccalaureate World School in Aliso Viejo, California, teachers are always looking for ways to broaden students' global understanding.

*"I have overheard some deep insights on the part of my students."*

To that end, Heidi Galloway, Language and Literature teacher and Department Chair, recently offered Global Conversations to all four of her sections of sixth grade English. Her students read and discussed *I am Malala* with global partners in India and Uganda.

"It has been a fantastic experience. The partnership has elevated my students' thinking and awareness. Their global partners are becoming real to them, real people, real friends," said Galloway.



Galloway's students were paired one-on-one with partner students from one of three schools: Ekalavya in Bangalore, Masoom Night Schools in Mumbai and Gayaza High School in Uganda. While reading *I am Malala*, they communicated with their individual global partners by sending and receiving video messages each week that explored important themes from the book.

"I have overheard some deep insights on the part of my students. For example, when talking about how they are leaders, and how they can develop further as leaders, many mentioned activities they are involved in that I did not know about. Some said they are leaders for their younger siblings, and others shared that this spring they will run for office in our school's student government," said Galloway. "It's a sure thing that they have been inspired by Malala."

The students are also gaining insights into their partner's daily life, traditions and popular culture.

"They are genuinely curious about their partners' customs and interests. They ask about their school day, their subjects and their sports," said Galloway. "When it came to the conversation about leadership, they asked high level questions about the governments of our partner countries. The partnership has elevated my students' thinking and awareness."

The Ugandan students paired with St. Mary's learned a great deal from the global exchange, as well.

One of the important themes students discussed as part of the Malala exchange was access to education. Students at St. Mary's heard first-hand how education is valued by Masoom night school students, who have jobs such as selling vegetables or making shoes during the day, and then go to school at night.

"From education, we learn about having respect for everyone and manners," said one Masoom student. "Many children don't go to school but they need to get educated. I am working in the day and I am studying in Sri Krishna night school."

Another one said, "Education is very important to everyone, both girls and boys. Everyone should get an education. Like Malala, she is getting education with bravery."

Comments from Ugandan students were also eye-opening for their partners in the U.S. One student at Gayaza High School said, "In my opinion, education has helped the emancipation of women in Africa. In some places in Africa, and around the world, some girls don't go to school because their families don't have the money or it's not allowed in their tradition so they get married early because their parents need the bride price."

When it was their turn, students at St. Mary's reflected with comments like these: "My education has really helped me throughout life. It has helped me write well and do math. My Dad got a good education and got a good stable job because of his education."

### Letters to Malala

This year for the first time, grade six Language and Literature students had the opportunity to read an important new autobiography, *I am Malala*, by Malala Yousafzai. They came away with great admiration for this young woman, very close to their own age, who has the courage of her convictions.

Students' response to literature was a series of letter written to the author. In the first letter, students asked Malala questions. In the second, they described her in terms of one of the IB Learner Profile traits. And in the final letter, they commented on a quote from Ziauddin Yousafzai, Malala's father. When he was asked by a reporter, "Do you know who it was who shot your daughter?" Mr. Yousafzai replied, "It was not a person. It is an ideology."

Sixth grader Gabe McNeill's thoughts on this quote are beautifully expressed in the letter below. ■

6 April 2016

**Dear Malala,**

Your father is a great person for not wanting revenge against the person who shot you. He wanted to stop the ideology of what he did instead. When asked about who shot you, he replied with, "It was not a person, it was an ideology." I think that everyone should know about this. It's not the person who attacked you who should get the blame, it's their ideas.

I think he means that the ideology of extremism was your shooter's motive. This extremism ideology controlled all his actions. The shooter was probably raised extremist, or was converted by someone he trusts. Your father is a brilliant man for knowing that revenge against the shooter wouldn't stop later shootings. He knows that to stop the shootings, you would have to stop this extremism. The extremism is the motive behind all of the Middle East's problems right now. The problem is, when one group is destroyed, another takes its place.

Your book and your speeches have inspired millions, including me. You and your father are amazing people to keep on fighting through everything. Your book has taught me many lessons, like not to want revenge, or to accept what has happened throughout my life, and move on. It has helped me become a better person, thank you for writing this book!

Sincerely,  
**Gabe McNeill**