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‘Imagining Tomorrow: H2O’ Challenge Announces Winning Teams

Teams of students from the U.S. and Ghana propose high-scoring solutions to water issues in their communities, with help from expert mentors.

NEW YORK, March 2, 2016— The [Imagining Tomorrow: H2O challenge](#), an initiative of the [Global STEM Alliance of the New York Academy of Sciences](#) and partners [Sisters Cities International](#) and [Sqore](#), announced two winning student teams, one from the U.S. and one from Ghana. The challenge was developed to encourage students ages 13-17 from around the world to create innovative science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM)-focused solutions to critical water-related needs that exist in their communities.

Due to rapid urbanization and climate change, water is increasingly becoming a scarce resource in many communities around the world. To address this challenge and engage students in the solution, the Global STEM Alliance, Sister Cities, and Sqore created the Imagining Tomorrow: H2O challenge where young innovators were paired with expert mentors to develop their own sustainable solutions to these pressing water scarcity issues.

Using their passion for STEM, students applied their knowledge to either a “site water audit,” where they researched how a site in their community could use water more efficiently, or a “fresh water in the future” challenge, where students thought about how water resources and general infrastructure could be maintained 25 years into the future. During the 60-day challenge, New York Academy of Sciences-affiliated scientists and practitioners served as mentors and supported the students as they researched issues, investigated options, and designed their solutions.

Congratulations to the winning teams:

- Team “H2O YEAH!,” comprised of **Adaline Kerr** of Whetstone High School and **Kurtis Chenoweth** of Columbus Alternative High School from Columbus, Ohio, was chosen for their gray water system solution.
- Team “Dayzins,” comprised of **Zaid Adam Hadir Idriss** and **Yiwere Aminu** from Lebanon Islamic Secondary School in Accra, Ghana, were chosen for their rainwater harvesting solution.

Both teams received high scores for their ingenuity in using readily-available resources to solve a local issue. These winners were chosen from a total of nine submissions from Nepal, Ghana, and the U.S. The winning teams will receive a cash prize, as well as entry into The Junior Academy of the New York Academy of Sciences.

The GSA would like to thank the challenge participants and mentors; sponsors, [Itron](#) and [Suez](#); and its challenge judges:

- **Alan Cohn**, Climate Program Director, NYC Department of Environmental Protection,
- **Peter Corrigan**, Service Hydrologist, WFO Blacksburg, NOAA,
- **Ruth Marfil-Vega**, PhD, Environmental Scientist, Innovation & Environmental Stewardship, American Water, and
- **Eric Spring**, Humanitarian Support Officer, Oxfam America.

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About Sister Cities International

Founded by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956, Sister Cities International serves as the national membership organization for over 560 individual sister cities, counties, and states across the United States with relationships in over 2,300 communities in 150 countries. This sister city network unites tens of thousands of citizen diplomats and volunteers who work tirelessly to promote peace and understanding through programs and projects focusing on arts and culture, youth and education, economic and sustainable development, and humanitarian assistance.

About the New York Academy of Sciences

The New York Academy of Sciences is an independent, not-for-profit organization that since 1817 has been committed to advancing science, technology, and society worldwide. With more than 20,000 members in 100 countries around the world, the Academy is creating a global community of science for the benefit of humanity. The Academy's core mission is to advance scientific knowledge, positively impact the major global challenges of society with science-based solutions, and increase the number of scientifically informed individuals in society at large. Please visit us online at www.nyas.org

About the Global STEM Alliance

The Global STEM Alliance is an international initiative of the New York Academy of Sciences with over 230 partners in more than 100 countries and regions, including government agencies, corporations, educational institutions, and nongovernmental organizations. The mission of the GSA is to increase the number and diversity of students in the STEM pipeline, with a goal of reaching a total of 1 million students in 100 countries by 2020. By providing hands-on research projects, mentoring opportunities with leading STEM experts, and a comprehensive, tech-based learning platform, the GSA arms students with the skills they need for successful careers. The programs of the GSA are geared towards under-served groups, with the special goal of reducing the skills gap between schools and the workforce. Visit us online at www.globalstemalliance.org.