



AMIDEAST  
اميد ايست



*Access*

*in*

*Action*

*January 2012*



# How do students describe Access?



# U.S. AMBASSADOR'S LETTER

*Embassy of the United States of America*



Beirut, Lebanon

Dear Access 6 Graduates:

I would like to commend all of you for being part of the English Access Microscholarship Program and congratulate you on completing the program successfully. Through your hard work, you have improved your English skills dramatically. You have also learned about the history, culture and traditions of the United States. It was my great privilege to celebrate American Independence day with many of you this past summer at El Rancho. Thank you for a Fourth of July I will not soon forget!

In my time in Lebanon, I have come to recognize and appreciate the value the Lebanese people place on education in general, and in the study of languages in particular. Like America, Lebanon is a true leader in education. Although we come from different countries, we share many things in common. We all share a passion for education and understand its critical importance. It is the key to progress and development – the development of an individual, a nation and a region.

We have sent Access alumni on different Department of State exchange programs in the past, and we want to send more of you in the future! I encourage you to become a friend of the Embassy on Facebook and learn about our many educational programs or visit our website in both Arabic and English at [lebanon.usembassy.gov](http://lebanon.usembassy.gov) to see about other opportunities we offer to Lebanese youth.

I hope that the end of your Access experiences will not mean the end of your connection with the Embassy. As you go forward, please continue to consider yourselves part of the U.S Embassy family.

So again, I wish you all the best in your future endeavors, and I look forward to following the many successes I know will be achieved by our Access alumni!



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maura Connelly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping tail on the "y".

Maura Connelly  
Ambassador

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Letter from Maura Connelly, U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon

### About Access

- 1 Program Information
- 2 Access Class Locations

### Class Pages

- 4 Abbassieh
- 5 Baalbek
- 6 Beirut
- 7 Bint Jbeil
- 8 Burj Al Barajne
- 9 Britel
- 10 Bttram
- 11 Douris
- 12 Ghazieh
- 13 Haddadeen
- 14 Halba
- 15 Hermel
- 16 Jib Janneen
- 17 Majdal Anjar
- 18 Moukhtara
- 19 Nabatieh
- 20 Qalmoun
- 21 Qobayyat
- 22 Qobbe
- 23 Saida
- 24 Sarafand
- 25 Tamneen Al Tahta
- 26 Tripoli



### Activities & Events

- 28 Certificate Ceremony
- 29 Discover Lebanon Day
- 30 Drama Workshop
- 31 Yellow Bird Productions
- 32 Field Day
- 33 Halloween
- 34 Thanksgiving
- 36 Chen Lo & the Liberation Family and Gospel Choir concerts
- 37 Leadership Program
- 38 Community Service Day
- 39 Project Citizen

### More Access

- 40 Between the Lines
- 41 Access Teachers
- 42 Stay Connected

### About AMIDEAST

# PROGRAM INFORMATION

## HISTORY OF ACCESS

The U.S. Department of State's English Access Microscholarship Program empowers deserving 14- to 18-year-old students in communities around the world to study English. Since its inception, U.S. embassies have selected English teaching schools, institutes, and organizations in 85 countries to enroll approximately 70,000 students in the English Access Microscholarship Program. In addition to English language learning, the program provides an American-style classroom experience using U.S. materials and emphasizing active learning.

## ACCESS IN LEBANON

The U.S. Embassy in Lebanon established the English Access Microscholarship Program in 2004 under the administration of AMIDEAST. By December 2011, the program reached 2,648 students from all Lebanese areas, including the most remote regions in North and South Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley.

The program provides 400 hours of English language training and American cultural experiences over a period of two years for students who are awarded the scholarships based on their school grades, personal essays, and economic need.

The program's aims are to:

- increase English language skills and capabilities within underserved communities of Lebanon;
- help with the students' personal development;
- empower the students through diverse workshops and activities; and
- strengthen mutual understanding and cooperation between Americans and Lebanese.

Students from over 150 public schools in Lebanon have participated in the program with the support of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. In addition to improved English language skills, Internet usage among Access students has increased from 20% to 80%. Several dozen Access students have gone on to win scholarships to study in the U.S. or at American universities in Lebanon, and most continue their studies at the university level.

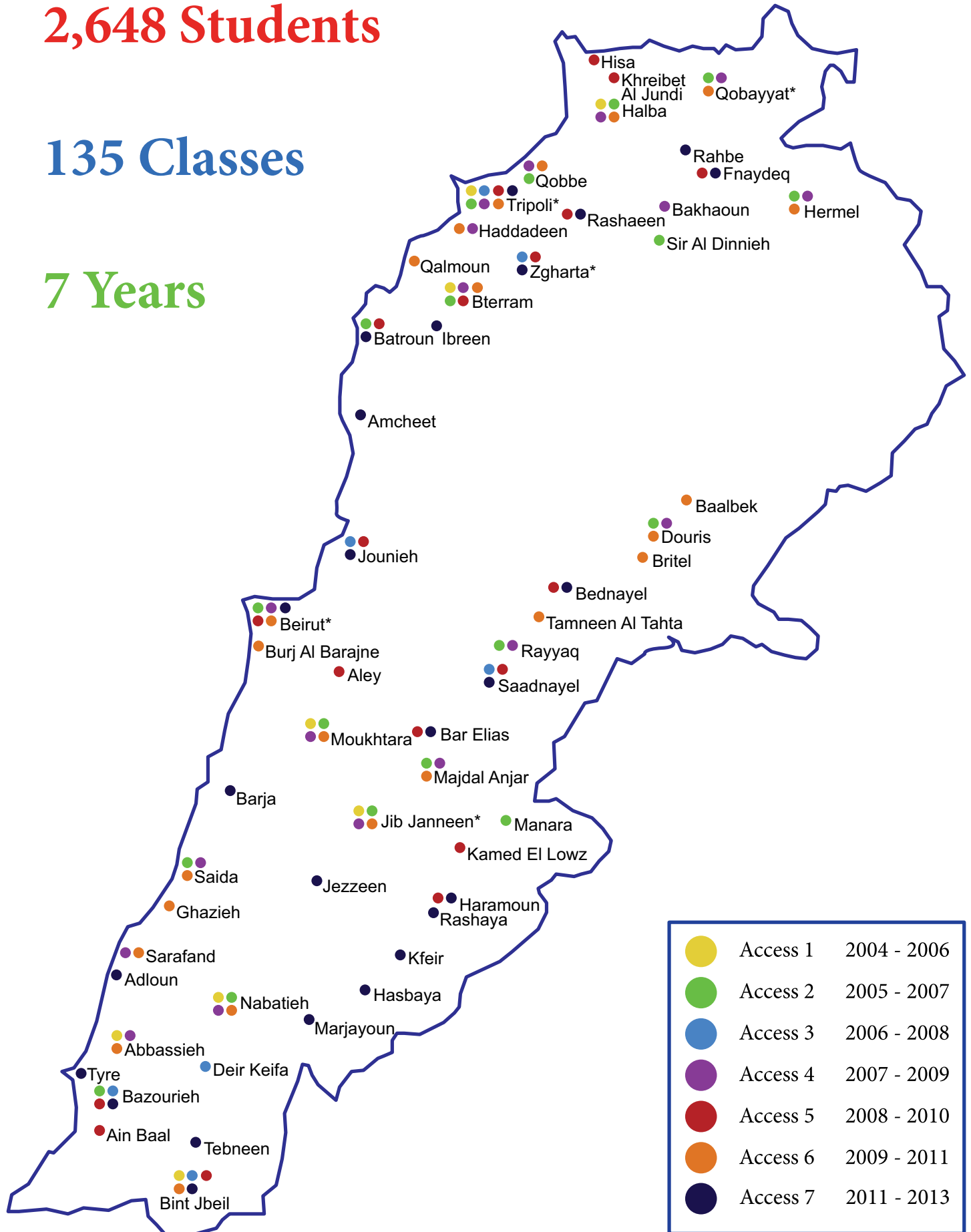


# ACCESS CLASS LOCATIONS

2,648 Students

135 Classes

7 Years



(\*) sites that have had multiple classes operating simultaneously

## In a class of their own...



At the heart of the Access Program are its classes. Access 6 boasts 23 classes from across the country – from the highest mountain in the north to the low-lying valley to the east to the coastline hugging the west and all the way down south. These students from all parts of the country were given an exceptional opportunity - not only to learn English, but to get to know their fellow Lebanese.

Throughout the two-year program, students evolved and changed, growing into the self-confident, responsible, mature and bilingual young adults they are today. Not only did they receive a traditional American academic education inside the classroom, but they received lessons outside the classroom too. Each community service project served as a method to teach the students about leadership and civic engagement, as well as helping students discover their innate and hidden talents.

An experience of a lifetime: no class has the same story to tell. This is their version of this exceptional time in their lives.



## An Outlook of Donation

The students wanted to spend time with the elderly residents of the Al Aman House, who were being cared for but needed social interaction. Before going to the residence, the students, with the principal's permission, fundraised at the school for their community service activity. On the day of the project, the students, along with five other volunteers, arrived at the residence bearing gifts of roses, juice, and cake, and spent the day talking and laughing with the residents. The project was a success: the class felt happy having made these forgotten people laugh and smile. Students recognized the value of their actions, proving that they could be active in their community.

*This program helped me learn in a new way. I have been changed. I start to love English more and more and also I start to love work in society and service my community.* Jamal Younis

*I learned in the past two years that learning is important and it is not only lessons and books but also responsibility and communication with others.* Bassem Jaffar

*I liked the Halloween party. It was a new thing to me. I learned about other people and how they celebrate for holidays.* Zeinab Tawbe

*I begin to learn new things, such as American culture, history, sports and holidays. These let me look at myself in a different way.* Fatimah Abou Khalil

*I felt each one of the old people as my father or mother or grandfather or grandmother. I think that in the future I may be like them and nobody will look at me or visit me. I think of doing similar activities in the future. I like to be more responsible in my society.* Ali Jouni

*I learned to be responsible. I learned to be active, not passive. I learned to give, not only to take.* Fatima Ajami





*I learned how to think, how to analyze, how to love, how to cooperate, how to be friendly and how to feel happy. In addition, I learned how to be a leader and how to succeed. Eliana Mayta*

*It improved my English and now I can communicate with anyone who speaks English. And I can choose any major I like and in any university. Nagham Harb*

*Access has made a difference in my life, certainly. The improvement in my language was awesome, and my level has changed and become higher. My personality became more powerful and I feel like I grew up. Lynn Moustafa*

*After we did our project, I felt proud and more confident and responsible. I would love to do community service again because I like working in a group and helping people and it's interesting and fun at the same time. Sawsan Toufaily*

*Of course it will help me in my future by communicating with people because I want to go to America from all of my heart if I get that chance. Joud Yahfoufi*

*My favorite activity was Field Day. It was a fantastic day, I like all games and sport we've done, especially the cooperation with the YES students and I like my first visit to AUB university, wonderful. Boushra Shreif*

## **Our Eyes Are Your Eyes**

The Baalbek girls realized that the blind members of their community are neglected and they deserved to feel that they were important members in society. The girls decided to build the self-confidence of blind children in the town by holding an exhibition of their hand-made products. First, the students made cards and sold them to raise money for the blind community. Then, the class invited the entire town to the exhibition and encouraged the people to buy their products. At the restaurant, several blind members performed and sang songs. The class realized how helpful they could be in their community and became more confident and responsible.



## Beirut Girls Care

The Beirut girls decided that the best way to make a difference in their community was to make others feel happy. Inspired by the Halloween event, the class decided to spend some quality time with orphans from Dar el Aytam. They planned lunch for them and each girl then took a small group of kids and played games like jump rope and musical chairs, constructed puzzles, and painted faces. The 40 children laughed and hugged the girls all afternoon, and the supervisors at the orphanage were extremely impressed with the girls' attitude. At the end of the day, each child received a small gift and some sweets, and the girls went home feeling that even at their young age, they are a benefit to others.

*As a matter of fact, being an Access student is a privilege. Access made tremendous changes in my life. My personality strengthened, my shyness started to vanish...it taught me to be punctual, level-headed, easygoing and open-minded. Terez Salam*

*I thought that it was really hard to do such a project because it needs a lot of commitment, responsibility, and a strong personality. After finishing this project, I felt that I can do whatever I want and all what I need is will and self-confidence. Nancy Zahri*

*Now I'm more knowledgeable with the English language. My skills, grammar, and writing had improved so much. But most what made me satisfied is that now I can speak the language fluently. Rana Lebdy*

*Field Day was a real fun day and I got to know more about American sport games. Also, we got to know other Access students and spent time playing games with them. Dima Hadid*

*In the past 2 years, I learned that whenever I fall, I rise up again. Never regret any decision. Feel blessed that this is my life and never let go of any opportunity. I learned how to respect other decisions and take them into consideration, work in groups and share my ideas with others, be competitive but at the same time have fun and wish the best for all. Lara Abbas*



*All those who know me envy me because I'm an Access student. This is because they noticed the difference Access made in my life. As I'm living in a rural area I didn't have the chance to do social activities. Access helped me participate in these activities and make friends and have fun. Ali Daher*

*We've got the opportunity to interact with the American culture and we have improved our English language abilities and I turned to be more open-minded and more independent. Zeinab Bazzi*

*The project encouraged us to do our best to succeed in achieving what we want, for we worked hard as a group. By dividing the work and organizing it we succeeded. Ali Bazzi*

*I learned to set my goals in life, solve my problems and take my own decisions. After two years with Access, my self esteem has increased, my high school rates have improved and I have a greater understanding of myself and the society. Fatima Khanafer*

*I had a lot of fun during Field Day. I enjoyed playing the American games and spending time with students from all over Lebanon. This made me know the value of having team spirit. Nour Alawieh*

## **Let's Keep It Green for the Sake of the Future Generation!**

South Lebanon's environment is suffering enormously from pollution, so the Bint Jbeil students decided to take action. First, they worked with the local municipality, public library and public schools to raise awareness of the problems through a seminar that gave practical advice to keep the environment clean. They also distributed small plants and designed brochures on how to take care of the plants and how to establish a friendly relationship between new generations and the environment. The area's public schools and citizens appreciated the effort of the Access class. The students realized that this campaign would contribute to a cleaner and healthier environment, so they arranged to implement future projects with the municipality.

# BURJ AL BARAJNE



## Let's Take the First Step

Community service for the boys of Burj Al Barajne meant implementing a project for the neediest of places. Because they also wanted to benefit the greatest number of people, the class wanted to renovate their high school courtyard. They decided to repaint the entire courtyard, so they first inquired about all the necessary materials. With the help of two extra volunteers, they then divided the project into three days, painting the walls the first two days, and then painting pictures and inspirational words on the third day. The school students were very surprised and pleased with the bright colors livening up the playground, and the boys learned how to be cooperative and responsible about serving their community.

*My language developed in a rapid way and all the people around me observed the change. In addition, I discovered new places in my country and communicated with a variety of people from distinct cultures and religions.* Mohammad Hodroj

*Community service taught us that we should not be selfish; we should help our community and make it better. At the beginning I felt it was silly but I was totally wrong. It made a huge impact, the school was astounded.* Amer Maksoud

*I learned one thing which can be summarized in one word: teamwork. Teamwork symbolizes the perfect way to deal with your mates. It's so important to work in a group, we'll communicate better and work faster.* Hamzah Maksoud

*Everyone in this life if you make him more educated and let him participate in any extra educational program will benefit.* Adnan Kriek

*I have learned lots and lots, that if I want to list what I have learned it would take me days to finish. I learned to share and volunteer for the sake of others. I also learned to hold responsibility whatever the circumstances were. I learned to make use of my time. Even after I'm done from the program, I will try never to get off the right road.* Hasan Bshara

*It gave me the right to live amazing moments and it had sculpted special memories on my mind. I think that it gave me a new spirit to enter this life.* Fawzi Haidar



*I became an English speaker and now I can communicate with foreign people. Access helped me to know more about Lebanese culture and American culture and participating in the activities helped me to interact with people from different places. Mariam Shahab*

*From Access, I learned many lessons and values which benefited me a lot. It helped me to develop American culture and how to speak English. It enriched my soul and mind. Alaa Al Massry*

*After doing our public library project, I felt that we really needed this project to educate and to teach about the world. Ahmad Ismail*

*Access encouraged me to learn; it enriched my English vocab, and it gave me an international language that I can use in my daily life and communications. Furthermore, it gave me high self-confidence which allows me to interact in society. Access opened for me many options. Ali Dika*

*Access provided me with three levels of English and it motivated me to become an English reader and listener. Moreover, it will make a difference in my future since it helps me to continue my education. Abeer Sbat*

### **Public Library**

Thinking of reaching as many people as possible, the Britel class realized their school and village lacked something very essential: a public library. Indispensable in serving the educational needs of the students, the class decided it was high time to have one at the school. The students, along with two extra volunteers, first decided to raise more funds for the library. They bought glass bowl aquariums, decorated them, and sold them. They used the funds to buy books for the new library, from which 500 students would benefit. The school students were extremely appreciative, and the Access class learned how to volunteer regardless of the time and effort for the sake of serving needy people.



## Moments with Angels

The B Terram students wanted to focus on children from different social classes, religions, and sects. First, they fundraised and collected books for donation. Then, the class distributed 250 books, bookmarks and sweets at the B Terram Middle School. They also decided to spend some time with children suffering from cancer at St. Jude medical center, where they distributed 25 books. The children from both B Terram Middle School and St. Jude felt appreciated, and teachers were pleased to see students receive books they otherwise couldn't afford. The class finished the project understanding how to be selfless and help others, and they realized that teamwork is the key to success.

*Access has made a difference in my social life because I communicated with many people and I think Access can help me in my future studies and work because my English improved. Manar Sabha*

*Most important is that we met many people from the U.S. Embassy. Youssef El Bouty*

*After my experience as a volunteer, I'll continue community service because youth can change the world and make a difference. Valeria Tannous*

*Our project was about visiting the children who have cancer. At first, I thought it will be painful for me to see them but after I visited them I felt so happy. We actually left an impact on them! It was the best project I've ever done in my life. Jessica Hanna*

*I learned a lot of things. Now I can read English and talk very well. I can have a conversation with American people. I love this feeling. I love you Access. Mariana Fawal*

*I have learned a lot of things about American traditions, sports, food, and I found some similarities between us and them. Nadim Abou Sleiman*



*I felt that I was a useless person in my society, but after I did the project, I felt that I was a participatory one. I will do community service again because if we work together we can change all the bad things that deteriorate our society.*  
Abeer Toufaily

*Being in Access and participating in its activities for two years was a chance to learn plenty of things. Now I have experience, self-confidence, and ambition to do more things in life.* Maha Ahmad Bohlok

*It gave me a push to achieve goals in my life. It introduced me to many places and let me know about different civilizations. It taught me how to be a leader in my life and in helping others.* Fatima Al Outa

*I feel that Access has given me many opportunities to meet other people and to exchange our opinions and points of view together. It's a beneficial program which provides us with several basic skills that should be followed in our life to continue it successfully.* Israa Zaiter

*I became more fluent in speaking English. I've learned to be more confident. I've learned to be a good sport. I've learned to work hard and not to waste time, because if we take advantage of every minute in our lives we will fulfill all of our dreams.* Narjes Jamal Al Deen

## **Your Destiny is in Your Hand**

Unfortunately, many people have suffered the loss of someone dying in a car accident. The Douris girls decided to help reduce the number of car accidents by making an awareness campaign for their peers. First, the girls made 250 brochures about the cause of car accidents, their outcomes, and ways to reduce them. They teamed up with YASA, Youth Association for Social Awareness, and with the Interior Security Forces, to speak to over 70 students about car accidents, during which they distributed brochures and collected donations. The proceeds were given to YASA to help people who have suffered from car accidents. The class found that the lecture impacted not only the students but their families and friends as well, and the class understood that youth can develop their community.



## **Draw a Smile in a Child's Eye**

Much like Field Day, the Ghazieh class wanted to hold a day of fun and games for a local orphanage. The class, 16 other school students, and many other volunteers planned the day's events, such as face painting, musical chairs, piñata breaking, and others. During the event, students chaperoned groups of orphans from one activity to the next, with others manning each area. The kids enjoyed lunch and received prizes at the end of the day, leaving with big smiles on their faces, which everyone considered the biggest reward. The class, to keep the project sustainable, decided to teach the orphans English and visit them regularly, to help them with schoolwork and see them for holidays.

*Community service is a very good achievement for a person. It lets him develop his abilities and feelings that he is an active part of society so I wish I could participate again in such an event. Amena Attalah*

*Access helped me in increasing my English language skills and strengthening my commitment to community service. It has promoted teamwork, problem-solving, and knowledge of other cultures. Moreover it has provided me with a motivating and challenging learning environment. Nisreen Haisam Khafajah*

*Access has made a big difference in my life; personally, when we all cooperated with each other for our community service project, and academically, because my language became better and my grades in school became better. Hasan Abo Dabbous*

*Access has made a huge difference in my life. It changed my life socially. I learned how to interact with new people without having conflicts and how to accept a loss or win. Majed Admad Ghaddour*

*Personally I have changed because I learned new things about students in Lebanon from different religions. Academically, I improved in English in a very good way. Even teachers could see this improvement. Ghina Hamdan*





*I have learned to work in a team, to be part of the society and not to feel ashamed of what I am and to be proud of myself and the things I do, and to be what I want, not what others want, and never miss any opportunity I got because it may change my life like Access did. Sondos Hamzeh*

*Access has made me meet different people from different cities and made me share their thinking through the projects, the activities, and the competition. Rayane Sultan*

*We made an impact on those kids' lives by giving them hope that there is a better life that they could reach. I want to make a difference in this world, even if it was a small one. Abir Al Sabbagh*

*I learned how to accept others with differences and how to communicate with my society. I learned that I'm not alone in the community, there's always a group that shares the opinions for solving problems. Farah Sherkawi*

*I have learned in the past 2 years from being an Access student to stop judging people according to their physical shape and look deep inside them. I have learned to be myself, to open my eyes and see life, to know that there is someone cares about me and care about my future. I think, I found myself after years of being lost at Access. Thanks a lot. Yassmin Lawzi*

## **Drawing a Smile**

The class wanted to make a difference for needy children in Tripoli. The students contacted Spinneys to use the kid's area and arranged with McDonalds to have lunch. The girls bought items for the games and activities, and contacted the bus driver to pick up the kids. On the day of the project, 18 needy children came and had fun with the Haddadeen class. Customers at the store noticed and were supportive of the students, with many encouraging them to do more community service. At the end of the day, the kids went home with great memories and felt appreciated. The project helped the class understand the true meaning of volunteerism and also allowed them to count the blessings they already have.



## You Are Not Alone

The class took the project as an opportunity to help a family in desperate need. The family lived in complete destitution: the three children were deaf and unable to attend school, and the father was unable to find a steady job. The class fundraised and accepted donations, got help from volunteers and support from the mayor, and helped repair the home. They also gave two of the children hearing aids and a saj to the mother to help generate income for the family. The family felt hugely grateful to the class, and the students finished the project having learned how to listen and communicate with different types of people, as well as how to organize a project and be responsible and effective in society.

*Access has changed my personality, from a chaotic girl to an organized girl. It has filled the blanks in my life. Because of Access, now I know more about Americans' lives, and since I have the dream to study in America so due to Access it'll be easier for me to study there. Rouba Meslmany*

*Of course Access has made a difference in my life. It got me more culture about many countries. In addition it helps me to speak English more. Sara Khoder*

*Personally, it made me more self-confident and I made more friends. Academically it improved my English, both written and spoken. Socially, I was introduced to other cultures and people which made me more respectful to other areas. Manal al Fatima*

*The community service project encouraged me to do another one. If I feel after this project I have many abilities, I can use it to help other people. I'd love to do community service again because it's a very beautiful thing when you help someone if you can. Rayan El Korhany*

*First I learned English. Second, it allowed me to communicate with new people. Third, it gave us the opportunity to our future study and work. In addition we learned a lot about the history of America and its culture. Ahmad Meslmany*



*Access was a wonderful opportunity that enforced my English language and my potentials. It increased my knowledge and potential in the community.* Karine Mahfouz

*Thanks to this program, I met many new friends and I visited many places that I had never seen before. It gave me the ability to communicate with others. I learned many skills in the social projects and how to participate in society.* Silvana Fakherdine

*My favorite activity was Project Citizen because we found a solution to problems in my community.* Moustapha Allaw

*I wasn't so excited before doing our community service project, but during this activity, I became so excited because I saw how much I can impact the economic situation of those poor families with a small box. I will absolutely do another project because I saw the influence and impact of my first one.* Hamza Allam

*Absolutely Access has made a difference in my life, and it will make a difference in the future because we have learned English and we have visited many places. I hope I can visit the USA and continue my education there.* Mouhamad Hmaidan

## **Providing Clothes and Food for People in Need**

Hermel, a remote village in the Bekaa, has a high poverty rate. The Access class saw that this is a problem to be addressed and decided to take action. First, they fundraised at school to raise money for groceries, with teachers also donating money. Then, they bought basic food supplies and loaded them into boxes and distributed the boxes to poor families in the village unable to afford their basic needs. After distributing the boxes, the class went to the local orphanage and spent time with the children, painting their faces and eating cake with them. They resolved to continue visiting the poor families as well, and learned from this project that they are extremely blessed, and should appreciate what they have.



## High Hopes

The students wanted to make an impact in their community by raising awareness of breast and prostate cancer. In order to do so, the students raised funds to pay for the cancer screenings as well as transportation funds to get to the medical center. With the support of the school principal and the Lebanese Red Cross, the class presented to 23 women and three men the warning signs of cancer, followed by a screening. The men and women were very happy and grateful to have had the screening. The students enjoyed the project and felt that they did something marvelous toward people who really needed to be helped.

*It really transformed me from a shy, lonely teenager into an outgoing person. My English also improved a lot, which will help me a lot at the university and in my personal life as well. Rim Ghandour*

*The past two years have been full of surprises. I learned a lot about America and their history, culture, people and especially the holidays. But the main thing is that I learned English. Nadia Orra*

*I've got courage to speak English in front of people and present presentations with self-confidence. The things I gained will of course help me in my future and in communicating at college and then at work. Jana Hawary*

*I've learned so much about the American culture, teamwork and cooperation to implement projects, how to socialize and to meet people of a different culture. Participating in the activities was so beneficial and helped us a lot in learning skills. I've learned how to help others and care more for them. Soumaya Hammoud*

*Access didn't actually teach me how to work in groups and cooperate; rather, it helped me apply these two concepts by participating in the activities. Ibtihaj Jamil Kassem*

*Access promoted many of our abilities and gave us the capability to do so many things we used to be afraid of. Laura Al Wardani*



*I learned to be more confident and not to judge a person without knowing him.*  
Dou'aa Kharroub

*Access helped me in my daily life. It made me more confident and always to be frank, not to be shy in giving my opinion, and how to cooperate with people and suggest information in a polite way.* Houria Jalloul

*I am proud of myself and my confidence increased so I can talk with no hesitation. It introduced us to the society and allows us to know its needs and its problems from the volunteering we did.* Haifaa Yassin

*I learned many things. First, the most beautiful thing, I improved my English language. And by participating in the activities I learned sportsmanship and challenge.* Wissam Abdel Khalek

*I learned how to be part of a team when we were working in groups. After that I can say that I learned and strengthened English language which is the most important and usable language all over the world.* Mohammad Ali Al Ajami

*Now I feel that there's meaning to my life by helping people through volunteer activities and I'm now like a social activist because I really entered to the society.*  
Raseel Adawi

## **Don't Make Your Blood Type Your Last Concern**

Many accidents have happened in Majdal Anjar with people needing blood transfusions but many times blood was not available or the specific blood type was unknown. The students decided to solve this problem. First, they distributed advertisements throughout the village announcing a blood test. They then created a guide to list people's names and their blood types. On the day of the event, with the help of the Al Hodoud Social Club and 10 volunteers, the class tested the town's citizens and recorded their names, phone numbers, and blood types in the guide in case of emergency. The village was pleased with the effort, and the students felt happy with the direct social contact and became more aware of their community's needs.



## **Togetherness**

The students felt that they should spend their time with the orphans at the Abey Orphanage. The class, inspired by the Field Day activity, put together a series of games for the kids to enjoy. Musical chairs, jump rope, and other games were organized and at the start of the day, balloons and sweets were distributed to the 70 orphans. Two piñatas filled with candy also kept the children entertained as they raced around collecting the candy. After the games, the students and kids enjoyed cake and juice, and songs were sung together. The students were extremely touched by the children who didn't want the Access class to leave.

*I have learned a lot of things from participating in the activities. First of all, I've learned to believe in my abilities and skills. Also I've learned that us – the youth of Lebanon – have the capability to force a change in our country and make it a better place. Malak Al Hassanieh*

*In addition to improving my English skills, Access had also inspired me to volunteer in youth service as a way to make a difference in my community. Moreover, interacting with students from different cultures and building social bonds with them had strengthened community ties. Yasmeen Kerbaje*

*A man can be rich but one day he may lose everything, but education and skills he'll never lose. Alaa Al Hadi*

*I felt an unspeakable feeling, I felt I did something really easy but helpful for those orphans. Helping others and doing other things to help our community make you feel that you did help others and made them happy and never lose their hope. Wael Riman*

*Access changed me by making me more aware about the American traditions, and also I believe that Access gave me more chances to have a better future, besides improving my English language. Alaa El Okaily*



*When you say Access, you mean a dream for all students. I was very happy in the past two years. It was like a dream that I didn't want to wake up from!*  
 Mohammad Bawar

*Being an Access student was an important step in building my future. Whatever I say, it's not enough for thanking the Access Program.* Waed Darwish

*I'll do community service again. I believe that we all need each other so if everyone of us did community service, the world will be a better place to live.* Reem Rida

*I realized that there are a lot of needy people in this world. I'll do community service again because every one of us should think about others.* Shireen Koumaiha

*I improved my English, helped other people, met new friends and knew customs and traditions about America. Being a student in Access made me a new person that is confident, active, and powerful.* Ayah Bidi

*Being an Access student was a great experience, full of many lessons including learning how to share our thoughts and opinions with listening to each other. In addition I gained really good friends of different religions, where we learned to accept the difference in our thoughts and personalities. Also I got to know other cultures more...and in the end, English is really fun.* Nour Berjawi

## **Pleasing the Orphans**

The students felt that the best way to improve their community was by planning a fun day for children at an orphanage. The class purchased books and gifts beforehand, and on the day of the project, the students arrived at the orphanage bearing small gifts and organized a day of fun for the orphans. With the support of the school principal, classmates, and parents, the students were able to bring happiness to those who lack happiness, and discovered that working as a team is beneficial. They also realized that serving the community is a must and is rewarding in and of itself. They resolved to repeat the experience.



## Sit on the Rainbow

The school courtyard, a gray, desolate place, was particularly uninspiring for the students. They planned to colorfully paint the courtyard and plant flowers as well as make benches for students to sit on. They raised funds to help with the cost, with the municipality also pitching in. The day of the project, the 13 students and a volunteer painted the walls of the area and the newly-made concrete benches. They also weeded and planted 160 flowers in the garden, and added trashcans. The school students and principal were surprised and pleased to see the new courtyard and the Access class felt that even with this small project, they made their community a better place.

*For me, Access is one of my favorite experiences that I'll never forget. It helped me out with English; it is one of the best things that happened to me. It changed my life...it made it better. I'm so thankful for being one of the Access Program.*  
Sally Abiad

*I was isolated, sad, and lacking courage – now I am more social, courageous and I have many friends. I made friends with people from different regions.*  
Najwa Trak

*We made an impact inside the school, that we can change anything for the best if we cooperate and work together. I like to do community service again and find society problems and learn how to solve it together.* Alissar Barakat

*I think cooperating is so important to make the project successful. I love this kind of job and I like to work with others, and if we failed the first time, sure we will succeed another time. Never lose hope.* Hind Jnad

*I learned nothing – I gained treasures. I gained others' love, as I gave them. I gained good morals, such as respect, being respected, offering help for free, because I know God is the one to reward me. I know how to trust the right people, how to cooperate, how to lead a team successfully, and lots of other things that I can't count. So Access is a hidden treasure that found me.* Ali Kabalan





*I can't really fit all the things that I learned in a single paper, not even in a book: friendship, perseverance, loving others, having fun with friends, being more sociable, and not to forget the education. I've become a new me!* Elie Tannous

*Halloween gave me the inspiration to be creative and to have the confidence to meet all the Access students in Lebanon.* Marina Antous

*The activity that attracted me the most is Project Citizen because I got the chance to express and discuss Lebanon's problems with students from different areas in English and in front of Americans.* Santa Tannous

*I met so many new people. I'm now familiar with the American culture and habits that I'm enthusiastic to go to the U.S. and explore what I learned!* Georgio Mikael

*I think definitely we all made an impact: we could change something. I am 100% sure about doing community service again because youth can change little things that have big impacts.* Christian Zeitouny

*Access gave me huge energy and lots of confidence. I feel more like a conscious citizen who can make a big difference in Lebanon and the society. I'm so prepared for more service in the community because I learned how helping people can change lots of facts. So thank you, the American Embassy, for giving me this amazing opportunity.* Nadine Semaan

## **Giving Light to a Desperate Hope**

The Access class did some research and found out that the local kindergarten was lacking educational resources. To raise more funds for the library, the students showed a movie in town and sold popcorn to the movie-goers, who were enthusiastic about supporting the project. With the money they raised, the class bought books, educational games, CDs and DVDs, a television and a DVD player, as well as a CD player. Then, the whole class painted the playground's walls, and decorated the classrooms with stickers and posters. The kids and teachers were all happily surprised to see the new kindergarten, and the Access students discovered the benefit of teamwork.



## Live With Colors

In an underserved community in Tripoli, the Al Chaarani orphanage is home to an extremely needy population. The class, aware of the orphans' predicament, decided to liven up their living space. The students first asked a seamstress to sew cushion covers. On the day of the project, the students changed the cushion covers, colorfully painted the walls of the room and decorated the doors with pictures. The students also spent time with the kids dancing, singing, and painting their faces. They came out of the project appreciating their own parents more and even more importantly, feeling responsible and powerful for having done something important for their community.

*After doing community service, I feel that my life has value. Aly Aly*

*I learned that I have to take the responsibility of improving my society. I learned that if all the young people gathered their powers to improve our society we will be one of the best countries in the world. Youssef Richeh*

*Access has made a difference in my life because I met many people and learned new traditions of other countries. Mohamad Wanous*

*Academically, my grades have improved. Socially, I've been more active in our society. The best thing is that I have learned the number one language in the world. Abdallah Kattar*

*I feel that I am a special girl who has a lot of dreams; in Access class, I've learned how to make my dream bigger and more powerful. Nada Nachar*

*Personally, I became open-minded and made a lot of new friends. Many people are proud of me, especially my parents and my best friend. Youssef Abou Daher*

*I have learned how to speak English perfectly. Also I have known about America: its holidays, its history, its independence. But the most important thing I have learned is teamwork. Jinane Awwad*



*When I started Access it was a new experience to me, and this experience changed my life. It changed my personality: I feel now more self-confident and I can talk fluently.* Farah Halimah

*Access shows me the positive side of the world. It provides the tools to build a good future.* Taysem Shamma

*I learned many things: first, I improved my English. Second, I made new friends. Third, I know the real meaning of volunteering, leadership, helping, and participation.* Walid Khalid Sobh

*Field Day provided us the opportunity to meet and know new friends and strengthen our self-confidence.* Khaled Nafour

*It improved my English accent and most of all got me to see people and places I never met before.* Tarek Samir Al Tahera

*Access class has helped me in many things. It gave me a boost in my academics and it helped me in communicating with others. In addition to that, I know that one day Access will make a difference in my future.* Mohammad Sadek

*Access means to me an open door to a shining future I wish I could pass through.* Ismail Sobah

### **A Smile Can Do Miracles**

Influenced by the Leadership Workshop they participated in, the Saida class decided to instill in their younger peers more self-confidence and leadership skills. Three students prepared motivational talks about volunteerism, cleanliness, and the environment, while other students prepared discussion questions. They also had aprons made for them, to use whenever they decide to volunteer to clean their school or the environment. On the day of the project, the Saida class visited the school and delivered their message to the kids. The kids were ecstatic and wanted the class to return and talk to them again, and the Access class felt more confident, more responsible and proud of themselves for influencing their younger peers in a positive way.



## Always Beside Deprived People

During the leadership training, the students wanted to learn more about orphans in their community and how to help. First, they led a three-day fundraiser at school where they sold juice and cake to collect extra money. Then, the class invited 25 orphans from the Tebneen orphanage to have lunch in an amusement park, where they played with them and gave them gifts. The Access class was amazed at how sweet and well-mannered the kids were, and they promised to visit them again. Now, they are raising funds again to buy books when they visit the orphanage. The class saw they are capable of making a change and positively influencing their peers.

*Tolerance is the important issue I learned from Access. Although we are from different countries and cultures, by accepting them we can share our interests and learn from others. Zainab Al Jarmaki*

*The first reason to attend Access class was to learn English. But frankly speaking, the glory of this step was the social changes that I had during participating in the activities. To be honest, it was the most prosperous step in my life. Ali Shami*

*It taught me how to be more mature in deciding what would be my future better. It taught me to be more creative in my society. Not only this, Access made me to have ambition to always be the best. Rana Youness*

*I have learned that friendship is a very important thing which made us so close to each other. We felt that we are like a family. It enriched my self-confidence and I have discovered my talents. Fatima Aried*

*I learned that our community is a mirror for ourselves, we should work hard to change and develop our community more and more. As far as I'm concerned, I feel that the true success and the turning point in my life was the community service project. We understood more that the youth of a nation are the trustees of posterity. Batoul Manana*

*Access made me live American's life although I am in Lebanon. Rola Mshawrab*

# TAMNEEN AL TAHTA



*I am more confident in myself. My English language is better. English, and Access, opened new ways and horizons for me. Hisham Mortada*

*In the past two years, I learned many things. First, I studied the English language and I learned many things about American culture and habits. In addition I learned about volunteering and community service, and Access helped me work in groups. Ali Raya*

*I felt happy after the project because the children felt happy when they saw us. I'd like to do this project again to help the people and to be happy. Zahraa Khatib*

*Access helped me in my life because this language is very interesting in my life. It changed more things in my personality. Badih Ali Hassan*

*I am proud when someone speaks to me that I would understand. This difference will be very important in my new life. Yolla Semaan*

*We felt very happy because we helped disabled people and we made them happy and we entered hope into their hearts. Douaa Charaf*

*I learned a lot of vocabulary and after two years, I can speak English. Aya Drouby*

## The Hope

With many disabled people being ostracized in their communities these days, the Tamneen Al Tahta class wanted to help change people's attitudes. The students arranged with Al Insan and Moustaqbal Association to spend a day there. On the day of the project, all the Access students devoted their day to the disabled and handicapped people at the residence. The 51 residents were filled with joy and the town's citizens were proud of the students' effort. The students finished the project having learned to be helpful, kind, and committed, and the project impacted them so much that they wanted to join the association and help out again in their community.



## Hand in Hand for a Better Future

The girls from Tripoli decided to spend a memorable day with around 90 very needy children from the Tebbaneh neighborhood. Believing that community development is best achieved through education, the young women planned a jam-packed day filled with educational activities. Each area was organized by six girls, whereby the children rotated around the center, learning about handicrafts, planting, technology and playing educational games. The children were given small rewards and gifts for winning. At the end of the day, the girls made an impact on the needy children but also on themselves by learning about responsibility and teamwork.

*Being an Access student means being an active student. Joumana Aouf*

*Access was the greatest experience I had in my life until now. I became more serious, more excited to work. Also, I started to believe in the power of youth after the projects we did. And I can't say that Access didn't only open me to the U.S. community but also to the Lebanese one actually. Because of Access, I have now a lot of friends from different areas of Lebanon. Soumaya Jheir*

*I learned to share the joy, the entertainment, and the work with others. I learned patience and the most important thing is that every class I was learning. In all activities, Teamwork was our leader! Mira Khouja*

*Access is a very important and useful program and I saw its importance not only during the classes or the meetings but also when my others friends graduated from Access 5 and they're still connected to Access. Marwa Saleh*

*Meeting new people from other cities in Lebanon and people from a new country helps me to be more sociable. My English is getting better. And now I have more self-confidence. Suzanne Mrad*

*Learning English is the most important thing I had and this of course will make me more confident in myself since I know the most important language in the world. Liza Fadi Afyouni*

# ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

A lot of fun, sometimes challenging,  
but mostly, educational!



The Access activities and events are the most anticipated part of the program, and for good reason. Each one is taken directly from the American experience and brought directly to the Lebanese students here, from carving a pumpkin into a spooky Jack 'O Lantern with your classmates to learning how to make a real difference in your community by implementing a community service project. By interspersing fun and exciting activities with education and leadership training, Access students learn about American culture while at the same time develop themselves personally, becoming the young adults they are today.

So, whether it's working together to pull your team to victory in tug o' war, or pushing your community to accept a new public policy for the better, either way, you will always remember that you got a taste of something new and interesting, and came out from it a little changed, a newer, more improved version of yourself.

# CERTIFICATE CEREMONY



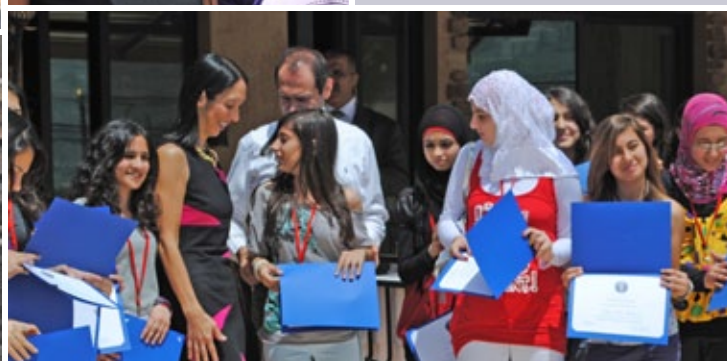
*This event was full of excitement. I felt that it's a dream that came true and it's the door of opportunities that opened up suddenly to improve my life and organize my future. Lara Abbas, Beirut*



*It was the first time we met all the Access students from different regions as well as different religions, which gave us the opportunity to learn more about each other and to be on the same table with students who belong to different parties in Lebanon. Hiba Harbi, Sarafand*



*It was my favorite Access activity because it gave us a chance to meet the American Ambassador and know her more. Really, she was very lovely with the students. Lama Othman, Ghazieh*



THE FIRST EVENT  
OF THE PROGRAM  
WELCOMES THE  
STUDENTS AND  
ALLOWS THEM TO  
MEET THEIR PEERS  
FROM ACROSS  
LEBANON.

Access 6 students were officially welcomed into the U.S. Department of State's English Access Microscholarship Program at Pineland Resort in Hammana. As students arrived, they reveled in the beautiful scenery before sitting down at the tables, where they interacted with students from other centers, making new friends and learning more about each other.

U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Michele Sison began the ceremony with a speech welcoming them into the program, noting that the following two years would be fun and educational. Fadi Yarak, Director General of the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education spoke, emphasizing the value of the program and wishing each student success.

The highlight of the afternoon was the distribution of the certificates. All the students enthusiastically received the certificates and posed for class photos with the Ambassador, making sure to chat with her and take more photos afterwards.

After lunch was served, a hike in the forest rounded out the afternoon. Guides took the students through the forest, where they took full advantage of their time outside, walking and soaking in the beauty of their country. All in all, the students had a memorable and exciting day, one that certainly would be the beginning of a challenging but interesting new experience.



# DISCOVER LEBANON DAY



*I'll never forget my visit to Jeita Grotto. It was a day that we all enjoyed. We didn't imagine that our country has all this beauty. Thank you, Access, for giving us this opportunity.*

Ali Daher, Bint Jbeil



*It was the first time I visited and I was surprised. It's amazing what a drop of water can do!*

Mohamad Bawar, Nabatieh

*The scenes that I saw were stunning and impressive. The stalactites and stalagmites are a wonderful creation of God. Hisham Mortada, Tamneen Al Tahta*



Every year, the Access Program takes the students to discover the country they live in. Access 6 went to Jeita Grotto, home to an extensive set of caverns, and boasting a lower and an upper cavern, the latter of which has the world's longest stalactite. Visiting this national symbol for their first time, the Access students realized that they have a lot to be proud of as Lebanese.

The cable car ride to the caverns' openings gave them a panoramic view of the Nahr El-Kelb valley. Starting with the upper cavern, the winding walkway took the students deep inside, the breathtaking view of the natural limestone formations stunning the students. After exploring the upper cave's impressive stalactites and stalagmites, the students descended into the lower grotto, floating along the underground river in small boats, the shimmering aqua water reflecting off the cave walls. A video documentary about the creation of Jeita and its discovery educated the students, and the day ended with lunch. The day had another surprise in store: Jennifer Williams, from the U.S. Embassy, and Dhani Jones, a U.S. National Football League player, came. Dhani shared his experiences, particularly how he channeled his negative energy into sports, and the students asked him plenty of questions.

Visiting Jeita is always an immensely pleasurable experience for the students, and each time, they return home with more pride and appreciation for their country.

THE TRIP TO  
JEITA MIMICS  
THE AMERICAN  
TRADITION OF  
DISCOVERING  
NATIONAL SITES  
AND PARKS EVERY  
SUMMER.

# DRAMA WORKSHOP



*It helped me improve my acting skills and discover that acting is an amazing way to express ourselves. Acting can make skilled people show their feelings and emotions, and can impress others and make them feel the same feeling.* Rita Fahed, Qobayyat



*I spent an amazing couple of hours with Robert who taught us how to express ourselves and feelings.* Sara El Arab, Qobbe



*This helped me learn many things about creativity and about myself. I liked how I could concentrate and learn better.* Abbas Ali Halal, Abbassieh



STUDENTS GET THE  
AMERICAN HIGH  
SCHOOL DRAMA  
EXPERIENCE AND  
LEARN HOW TO  
USE ENGLISH  
IN NEW AND  
CREATIVE WAYS.

This perennial favorite, taught by Robert Iyer, an American English teacher in Lebanon, introduced students to the basic exercises and scene study work that professional actors engage in. Everyone had to speak English in a new way and throughout this process, gained more self-confidence using the English they already knew in addition to what they learned.

The students worked in groups, with partners, and by themselves. The work forced students to think on their feet and work with their bodies and imagination. Beginning with basic motivation and concentration exercises, followed by a round of theater games, the students practiced and presented entrance and exit scenes. They also worked on content-less scenes, in which a scene imposes no context. The ultimate challenge was to be as imaginative as possible, so no two interpretations were the same! While rehearsing, Iyer taught students how to build the characters they had developed and improvise scenes.

Every year, the workshop challenges students to think creatively. The students become more aware of body language, facial expressions, and vocal expression, and how they utilize these components to communicate with others. Because it gives students a chance to experience a different and, ultimately, more enjoyable approach to learning English, the students evaluate the Drama Workshop as one of their all-time favorite activities.

# YELLOW BIRD PRODUCTIONS



*The trip to EL Rancho was long and hard. It was Ramadan. But when I saw the Native Americans, I forgot the difficulties. The Native American people were performing in a very nice way. The dance represented their traditions and social life. They taught me that I should keep my culture and origin.* Hasan Saleh, Abbassieh

*All the people there succeeded in captivating our sights with their traditional dancing and singing. That made me watch every movie I see on TV about cowboys and such things.* Rayan Harbi, Sarafand



*The dance showed the strength of the culture, the community, and the traditional ties, where history and heritage are celebrated.* Rowayda Aslan, Beirut



Have you ever seen an eagle dance? If you saw the Yellow Bird Production show, you'd know what it looks like. Access 6 students had the chance to learn about Native American culture from Yellow Bird Productions, a group of dancers who have been sharing American Indian heritage for over 25 years.

U.S. Embassy Assistant Public Affairs Officer Jennifer Williams introduced the group to the main speaker and director, Ken Duncan. He introduced the students to the Apache, and stressed the importance of preserving Native American culture. He also encouraged the students to let go of stereotypes, and to be more accepting and respectful of new and other cultures, citing his own previously held stereotype of the Middle East.

The team shared their culture through music and dances, explaining that every song has a story appreciating life, and using hoops, told stories about the sun, the eagle, and the seasons. The show got more exciting when Yellow Bird dancers invited students to dance on stage, teaching them the moves and how to sing along. Students then asked the Yellow Bird members many questions about their culture.

The young Lebanese were exposed to Native American culture, and discussed the preservation of traditional cultures within a modern, multicultural society, a relevant issue for the young Lebanese students.

THE EAGLE SOARS,  
THE SUN FLOATS,  
THE SEASONS  
DANCE...  
A NATIVE  
AMERICAN  
VERSION OF  
NATURE'S STORY.

# FIELD DAY



*We enjoyed games, we were introduced to new people and new friends. Also we learned how to have sportsmanship. It was fantastic.* Haifaa Yassin, Majdal Anjar



*It was unforgettable. There was a lot of positive energy, a lot of enthusiasm, and lots of fun, joy and competition. The most important thing is that we acquired sportsmanship.* Mira Khouja, Tripoli



*We had the chance to challenge ourselves and to compete against each other.* Hisham Rifai, Halba



THE COMPETITION?

TOUGH.

HOW DO YOU WIN?

TEAMWORK.

AND IF YOU LOSE?

SPORTSMANSHIP.

ON YOUR MARK,

GET SET, GO!

A battle of strength and wills played out at Field Day held at the American University of Beirut. Students practiced sportsmanship and team building, but more importantly, they stepped into the shoes of American students who participate in Field Day annually at their schools.

Each class started off with breakfast and then the games began! Music energized the students, and teams were sent to one of four areas where games were played in rotation. YES and Access alumni planned and organized the day's events, and also manned the stations. Jennifer Williams of the U.S. Embassy also came, lending a hand (or a leg!) in many of the games. Games included the potato sack race, basketball shootout, and jump the creek. But nothing compared to tug o' war: each class was pitted against another in the middle of the field in an ultimate showdown of strength, strategy, and teamwork. All these games worked up everyone's appetites, so lunch gave the students a well-needed break to fuel up and continue for the rest of the afternoon.

Finally, the much-anticipated championship round ended the day. Winners from each class competed against each other, and the finals for jump the creek and tug o' war got everybody on their feet and cheering for their classmates. Students left the field with a better sense of the tradition that their American counterparts experience every school year.

# HALLOWEEN



*It helped me in learning about modern American culture and also meeting more nice, active friends. I liked the visitors' costumes, the masks, and the pumpkins. Ali Dika, Britel*



*It was so exciting. We felt that there is no difference between every Access student. Also, I changed my mind about American holidays: I found it so good and love this tradition and will celebrate it again. Youssef Abou Daher, Qobbe*



*It was a really amazing party that introduced us to a new tradition combined with the way of celebrating. Mohammad Hodroj, Borj Al Barajne*



Access celebrated Halloween in Beirut with all the fun and scariness that their American peers do each year. Prior to arriving, each class carved a Jack-O'-Lantern, a long-standing tradition in the U.S. Costumes ranged from princesses to monsters to fighters, and non-costumed students had the chance to get their faces painted. U.S. Embassy Assistant Public Affairs Officer Jennifer Williams, dressed as a Sleeping Beauty, came to enjoy the festivities as well.

Six different stations of games kept each class busy, as they rotated and earned candy for winning. Games included Pin the Wart on the Witch's nose, Bobbing for Apples, Bean Bag Toss, Pumpkin Carving and Candy Jar Votes, Donut Catching, Musical Pumpkins, and Halloween Word Search.

At the end, prizes were awarded for best costumes and student votes for best class Jack O' Lantern were tallied. The candy jar – filled with almost 1,000 pieces! – was awarded to one lucky student who guessed the right number.

The floor cleared, and the students were invited to watch one of American youth's favorite Halloween movies, "It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown." Music was played after, with students dancing and having fun with their friends.

At the night's end, the students went home having had an authentic experience of this American tradition that has kept Americans scared for centuries.

STEP 1: CARVE A  
JACK O' LANTERN.

STEP 2: WEAR A  
COOL COSTUME.

STEP 3: PLAY  
FUN GAMES.

HAPPY  
HALLOWEEN!

# THANKSGIVING



*This event gave me the chance to thank people I didn't think to thank. What I liked more is to know more about other cultures' events and to share them in their occasions.*  
Diana Dahi, Sarafand



*I liked Thanksgiving because it was fun. It gave us the chance to express our feelings and thanks.* Loyal Abdl Wahab, Qalmoun



*It's a holiday that we don't celebrate in our country, actually, but we thank God for all his blessings and gifts. It was a little different and entertaining.* Ghinwa Nasserredine, Hermel



THANKSGIVING  
IS A DAY WHERE  
AMERICAN  
FAMILIES TAKE THE  
TIME TO EXPRESS  
THEIR GRATITUDE  
AND BE THANKFUL  
FOR ALL THEY  
HAVE.

Hummos? Fattoush? Chicken and rice? This doesn't sound like your typical Thanksgiving meal. Celebrated in 4 locations across the country – Tripoli, Bhamdoun, Baalbeck, and Saida – Thanksgiving had a special twist for Access 6: Classes were asked to study the American holiday, including the menu, and then come up with a menu reflecting a Lebanese Thanksgiving.

To get into the spirit of this important holiday, the students wrote short paragraphs in class explaining what they were thankful for. Upon arriving, their paragraphs were collected to be randomly drawn later.

AMIDEAST and U.S. Embassy representatives thanked the students for sharing this holiday with them, and explained the meaning and importance of Thanksgiving, expressing what they were thankful for and sharing favorite Thanksgiving foods, memories and activities.

“What are you thankful for?” paragraphs were drawn out of the bowl, and their authors read them aloud. Afterwards, the meal was enjoyed, and a presentation about the origins of Thanksgiving and the traditionally eaten food reacquainted students with the holiday they had learned about in class.

The celebration wound down with a few rounds of Thanksgiving Bingo. Cupcakes ended the meal on an American note, and students went home with expanded stomachs and even more expanded minds.

# THANKSGIVING



*We were learning new traditions of a new country. I liked it because all the family gathered with each other to share the meal. Nijmeh Fayyad, Moukhtara*



What are Access Students Thankful For?  
In the US, students and family members traditionally tell each other what they are thankful for...



*Thanksgiving was a nice day. We had the chance to practice something that old Americans lived. What I liked the most was that we had to join the table with students from other classes so we made new friends. Lea Salloum, Qobayyat*

*It let us know many things about American culture and traditions. What I liked most was that all the family gathers for a traditional dinner as they give thanks for life's many blessings. Khouloud Hammoud, Jib Janeen*



# CHEN LO & GOSPEL CHOIR

***“EVERYWHERE I GO,  
AROUND THE WORLD...WE  
STRUGGLE THE SAME, IN  
EVERY AREA CODE.”***

With meaningful lyrics and an amazing beat, Chen Lo and the Liberation Family, known for their hip-hop music, got the Access students out of their seats and dancing along to the beat of the music, along with U.S. Embassy guests.

Before they played, the singers held a discussion session about music with the young Lebanese, discussing the students' opinion of music, if music can have a message behind it, and if any positive messages exist these days. They also talked about the difficulties many African-Americans face, and shared their own personal story with a short video.

Then the band performed, touching on world issues and singing songs with messages of peace and environmentalism. When the performance ended, the students went home not only having had fun that evening, but having been inspired by music that wants to make the world a better place.



*It was my favorite activity because I like rock music, especially hip-hop. I liked the dancing and how they sang.*  
Randa Tout, Qalmoun



*I use music to express myself and how I feel, so it was good to know that someone else shared the same thing with me.* Reem Al Bazzal, Douris

***“WHEN THE STORMS OF LIFE  
BEGIN TO RAGE IN MY LIFE,  
I RUN INTO THE MASTER’S  
ARMS.”***

Have you ever heard the “Good News” and clapped and sang along? You have if you attended Oscar Williams Junior and the Perfected Praise Choir. Oscar Williams Jr., a talented vocalist and pianist, along with his three singers, entranced the Access students. The group sang Gospel classics as well as contemporary Gospel music. Oscar Williams interacted with the Access students, asking if they knew any of the songs, and talking about each song and its significance. YES alumni, who spent a year studying in the U.S., also attended the concert, and were able to help explain the meaning of Gospel music as a way to thank God for his many blessings. The students got up, danced, and swayed to the addictive rhythm and sound of the music. At the end of the concert, the Access students went home knowing that the “Good News” is also just simply good music.



# LEADERSHIP PROGRAM



*I had learned about how I could be a good leader and how I can take a problem from my life and solve it and do many projects to progress my community. Azraa Yazbeck, Baalbek*



*We learned a lot about how we could be a real leader. It's the first step to start knowing my skills and abilities in the career preparation.*

Nizam Soufi, Tripoli



*It had been an informative experience for me. I liked about it the ways that they tried to develop our self-confidence. Mohammad Kayed, Saida*



To teach the students much needed skills, AMIDEAST collaborated with Injaz, a local non-profit organization dedicated to providing educational economic and leadership programs to youth. Held at Haigazian University in Beirut, Injaz taught the students well-needed leadership skills and trained them for their upcoming community service projects.

A donut breakfast got the students energized and mingling with others. The workshop started off with an assessment of the importance of leadership, defining leadership and the differences between a leader and a team member. The students then focused on good leadership skills, communication skills, and team work, with the concept of team work put to the test: groups of four tried to build the highest tower in the room using only drinking straws.

The students then put their heads together and thought about the needs of their communities and potential solutions, deciding upon a community service project to be implemented in April. Throughout the training, Injaz trainers got the students to put these principles to the test, giving constructive criticism and pointing out their strengths and weaknesses.

“Leadership Program” is one of the biggest and most enjoyable activities the Access students participate in. Students leave the workshop more skilled, more motivated, and ultimately more empowered to take the reins of their futures and lead them in whatever direction they dream.

“YOUTH ARE  
THE NUCLEUS  
OF THE FUTURE.  
THEY ARE THE  
FOUNDATION  
UPON WHICH  
SOCIETIES  
ADVANCE.”

Kamal Katra  
Vice President, Merrill Lynch  
Chairman, Injaz

# COMMUNITY SERVICE DAY



*If I had the chance to do community service again, I would do it with excitement, because when you're improving your community, that means you're improving yourself, too.*  
Rawan Hamadeh, Beirut



*It was all about bringing some long lasting thing, for us to benefit and for the upcoming generations...of course I'd like to do community service again, because I'll be glad to bring happiness to others.*  
Ali Kabalan, Qalamoun



*I didn't like to do it at first but I said, "Let's try it." When I started working, I felt I'm doing a very good thing. I felt so happy and proud of myself.* Ali Saty, Jib Janneen



“ACTIONS SPEAK  
LOUDER THAN  
WORDS” AND THE  
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Each year, Access classes prepare a community service project for their areas. In many American high schools, community service is a requirement to graduate, but most students discover they actually enjoy the feeling of making a difference. These Lebanese students were no exception, and came away from their projects feeling strengthened and empowered to bring about tangible change in their communities.

Access teamed up with the Association for Volunteer Services (AVS), a local organization devoted to promoting and facilitating volunteering and community service throughout Lebanon. AVS helps Access participate in the annual Global Youth Service Day (GYSD), the largest annual service campaign in the world, mobilizing millions of youth to improve their communities by addressing the world's most critical issues. Access projects in 23 towns addressed issues such as poverty and the environment. Many classes also saw that making a difference starts with youth, and wanted to give underprivileged youth the same experiences that they themselves have had through the Access Program.

AVS held a recognition event on May 8, 2011 at the UNESCO Palace in Beirut, and awarded prizes to the top ten projects in Lebanon, with the Tripoli class receiving first place, and the Burj El Barajne class taking eighth place! The recognition the classes earned for their projects made them feel good, but actually doing the projects was even better.

# PROJECT CITIZEN



*Choosing a topic out of the many debatable social issues, working hard to gather information, combining efforts to convince the jury of the importance of our topic and spending hours to prepare ourselves for such competition, have left their impact on me. Fatima Khanafer, Bint Jbeil*



*It proved to me that teenagers can make a difference in society.*

Valeria Tannous,  
Bttram



*It gave me an opportunity to learn more about social issues. It taught me how to do interviews, about legal issues, and about team work and responsibility. It made me trust myself more. Safa Katour, Haddadeen*



Access 6 students had their second dose of community involvement with Project Citizen. In their community service projects, students identified a problem in their communities and implemented a project to help alleviate it. This time, each class analyzed the issues their community faces, selecting one for detailed study. They then researched and proposed a public policy to address the problem, developing an action plan to have their policy proposal adopted by the appropriate authorities. This forced the students to look for more long-term solutions to the problems their communities face.

Classes came together to present their research and policy proposals at the Lebanese American University. Poster boards displayed each class's research and action plans, which were then presented to a panel of judges. Projects ranged from problems with public works to the environment to domestic issues in Lebanon, and judges came from the U.S. Embassy, USAID, the Lebanese Center for Civic Education, Injaz, and AMIDEAST/Lebanon.

Most students came out of the project feeling like they could bring about real change in their communities, and the project helped them understand how to do it. The students also learned more about their communities' problems and how to solve them, learning most importantly how to work as a group and listen to each other. The project inspired some students to pursue careers in public policy; it inspired all of them, however, to make a difference in their communities and in their country.

HELPING STUDENTS  
BECOME ACTIVE  
CITIZENS BY  
INTRODUCING  
THE CONCEPTS  
OF DEMOCRACY  
AND RESPONSIBLE  
CITIZENSHIP.

# BETWEEN THE LINES

*I changed in two ways – as a writer and as a person. As a writer, I really improved my English skills and I learned a lot. As a person, I'll be able to communicate a lot with people. Over there, I said, "I'm Johnny from Lebanon" and people were excited to meet me. Johnny Yacoub, Bttram*



*I felt like I had a craving to write and read more. It changed my perspective to writing. Usually I wrote because I had to write, but then after, I felt like I wanted to write because I wanted to write. Abdel Latif Yaacoub, Saida*



*What I liked most is that how our class was not very strict: we used to laugh, have fun, throw out a few jokes. I loved learning English and writing English while I was in the USA. Abdel Latif Yaacoub, Saida*



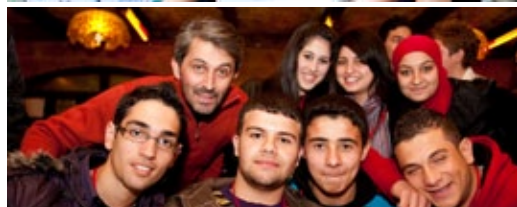
AN OPPORTUNITY  
OF A LIFETIME,  
TWO STUDENTS  
IMPROVED THEIR  
WRITING SKILLS  
AND THEMSELVES IN  
A WORKSHOP IN THE  
USA.

On a hot day in July, two young men departed from the Beirut airport, carrying with them not only suitcases but their ambitions and hopes. For Johnny Yacoub of Bttram and Abdel Latif (Abed) Yaacoub of Saida, the United States was only a place talked about in class. They were happily surprised when they were accepted in the Between the Lines (BTL) Creative Writing Workshop hosted by the International Writing Program at the University of Iowa. BTL, a fully funded grant sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, accepts only 12 writers from Arabic speaking countries.

Each day, Johnny and Abed met with their respective workshop leaders, who gathered them in workshops and challenged them with different subjects. The leaders, professional writers and experienced teachers, taught students how to give constructive criticism to their peers. Johnny and Abed worked both in English and in Arabic; in their Arabic language workshop, they worked with respected writers from the region, and in their English workshop, they wrote alongside American students. They also had the chance to teach their American peers some Arabic!

Their time spent in the U.S. was also spent outside the classroom. Every evening the students went to a literary or cultural activity, and the young men were ecstatic to spend two days in Chicago and discover one of the greatest American cities. They returned to Lebanon with a strong desire to complete their education in the U.S., but more importantly, to share their newfound appreciation for the U.S. with their friends and family.

# ACCESS TEACHERS



**Top row, left to right:** Farida Mazloum, Britel; Rania Dourgham, Baalbek; Peter Brown, Cultural Affairs Officer, U.S. Embassy; Hanan Harb, Burj El Barajne; Fahima Mrad, Saida; Ali Kteich, Nabatieh; Cathy Haber, Beirut; Maya Mestom, Qalmoun; Nathalie Ghosn, Qobayyat; Dania Yamak, Qobbe; Carolina Ghamrawi, Tripoli; Khalil Smidi, Jib Janneen

**Front row, left to right:** Nada Toufaily, Hermel; Hala Riman, Moukhtara; Mohamad El Kassim, Abbassieh; Ghada Farhat, Ghazieh; Zeinab Haj Hassan, Douris; Lubna Salameh, Bint Jbeil; Taghrid Abu Haykal, Majdal Anjar; Abeer Sidawi, Haddadeen

Every year, the Access Program provides underprivileged students access to the English language, as well as the opportunity to learn about American culture and history. Access also gives students the chance to learn about leadership and shows them how to make a difference in their communities. However, one thing is clear: none of this would be possible without the teachers. The Access teachers play an important and integral role in the program, not only teaching the students but in the process, becoming mentors and guides for their students, providing them with the support they might not otherwise receive from their schools or communities.

The teachers found themselves changing, both professionally and personally. As teachers, they found that their teaching styles began to evolve, becoming more student-oriented rather than teacher-oriented. Inspired by the students' journeys of self-exploration and discovery, they too have also learned to develop and explore their own potential. Carolina Ghamrawi says, "I am now always looking for professional development. It is not enough to teach well; I need to be an excellent teacher." Personally, the teachers found themselves becoming more open-minded, and also, surprisingly, getting closer to the students, an unusual development in a country where traditionally distance between teachers and students is the norm. "The Access Program narrowed the gap between us," Mohamad El Kassim says.

Needless to say, it is thanks to the teachers that the Access Program can be implemented across Lebanon, from the highest mountains to the lowest valleys, up and down this small yet vibrant country.

# STAY CONNECTED

Stay connected with the U.S. Department of State and Access alumni by visiting <https://alumni.state.gov> and connecting to the English Access Microscholarship Program - Headquarters Facebook page!

Use this page to write your friends' telephone numbers, email addresses, and anything to keep in touch with each other!



Barbara Batlouni  
Country Director



Claudia Gabriel Farah Abou El Sel Rana Salloum Nazha Sadek Beth Khalil  
AMIDEAST/Lebanon Access Team

Founded in 1951, America-Mideast Educational and Training Services, Inc. (AMIDEAST) is an American non-profit organization playing a leading role in the exchange of education, information and development assistance, working to bridge cultures between Americans and peoples in the Middle East and North Africa.

AMIDEAST/Lebanon opened in 1968, and has continued working non-stop for over 40 years. Each year, it serves over 20,000 visitors at the downtown Beirut office, with many programs being conducted in all regions of Lebanon. Thousands of Lebanese individuals, whether students or professionals, benefit from diverse programs each year.

AMIDEAST is a leader in regional education and training. Program areas include:

- Scholarship and exchange programs
- English language and professional skills training
- Institutional development
- Educational advising and testing
- Outreach programs

AMIDEAST/Lebanon is pleased to work with the U.S. Embassy in Lebanon on the Department of State's English Access Microscholarship Program, which provides English language instruction and American cultural awareness while furthering AMIDEAST's mission of strengthening mutual understanding and cooperation between Americans and the peoples of the Middle East and North Africa.

For further information about our programs or classes, call or visit our office or check out our website!



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Funded by the U.S. Department of State and managed by AMIDEAST since 2004, 2,648 Lebanese youth from all regions of Lebanon have benefited from the English Access Microscholarship Program.

