



GYEL NEWSLETTER

Volume 5 March 2026

WELCOME TO OUR MARCH 2026 GYEL NEWSLETTER!

Our goal is to keep you updated on our program sessions, guest speakers, and showcase our students' global impact projects related to the UN's SDGs. We will also share helpful tips and insights to make your college application stand out, as recommended by some of the industry's most trusted professionals.

[Read more about our program](#)

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MESSAGE FROM THE LEAD INSTRUCTOR OF PROGRAMS

As we move into March, we're excited to share that the Spring Term at GYEL is well underway and thriving. Now at the midpoint of the term, it's been inspiring to see how much our students have grown since February, both academically and as emerging leaders. The energy in classes remains strong, and students

continue to bring curiosity, thoughtfulness, and commitment to every session.

This month marks an especially meaningful milestone as students begin their capstone projects. These projects represent the culmination of their learning so far, allowing them to apply critical thinking, global awareness, and leadership skills to topics they are deeply passionate about. Early progress has been incredibly encouraging, with students demonstrating creativity, collaboration, and a clear sense of purpose as they shape their ideas into impactful projects.

The Spring Term continues to be a time of momentum and deeper engagement. Through rich discussions, collaborative learning experiences, and guided reflection, students are building

confidence in their voices and strengthening connections with one another. It's been rewarding to watch them challenge themselves, support their peers, and grow more assured in their leadership journeys.

Our mission—to educate, encourage, and empower young leaders—remains at the heart of everything we do. Midway through the term, we're reminded of the power of youth-centered leadership education and the incredible potential our students bring to the community.

We extend our sincere gratitude to our instructors and staff for their ongoing dedication and care. Their guidance and support continue to shape a learning environment where students feel challenged, encouraged, and valued. Thank you as well to our families for your continued trust and partnership, and to our students for the enthusiasm, effort, and openness you bring each week.

As we look ahead to the second half of the Spring Term, we're excited to continue supporting students as they develop their capstone projects and deepen their leadership skills. We look forward to all that's still to come and to walking alongside our students as they continue to grow and lead with confidence.

Sincerely,
Ms. Hannah Kidner, Lead Instructor of Programs

SPRING TERM 2026 UPDATES

- As of this newsletter, we are approaching the midway point of the Spring Term 2026. Our High School Part 1 and Part 2 courses will cover Topics 5–8 this month, while our AI Horizons course will focus on Topics 4–6.
- Please note that there will be no classes on March 28 and 29 in observance of Palm Sunday. We wish a restful and blessed Palm Sunday to our Christian families.
- We are excited to announce the launch of the inaugural Introduction to Global Leadership course in June or July. This introductory course is ideal for students in grades 7–12 who are curious about exploring the GYEL High School Program and discovering whether it's the right fit for them. Don't miss this opportunity!
- Applications for Summer Term 2026 are now open. The term begins in June, and spots are filling quickly, so we encourage anyone interested to secure their place as soon as possible.



Find out more about our Intro
to Global Leadership course

I am Raymond Owusu, an AI & Automation engineer/architect and technical educator dedicated to demystifying the intersection of Artificial Intelligence and operational efficiency. For AI Horizons at GYEL, I design heavy practical curricula that empower students to move beyond theory and into the tangible implementation of agentic workflows and automated systems.

With a masters degree in Advanced Chemical Engineering, and a background spanning high-stakes technical operations in the data analytics, finance, entertainment and virtual reality industries to leading engineering operations, I bring a systems-thinking approach to digital infrastructure. I specialize in building the "connective tissue" of modern businesses, integrating complex API ecosystems, server-side tracking, and identity management to create seamless, scalable environments.

What inspires me most in my work at GYEL is the opportunity to guide students through the rapidly shifting AI landscape. I believe that technical fluency is not just about writing code, but about fostering the problem-solving resilience needed to navigate our automated future. My goal is to equip the next generation of leaders with the practical tools to turn AI from a buzzword into a lever for collective innovation and meaningful impact.



INSTRUCTOR INSIGHTS

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS TIP



[Learn more](#)

- **Think Beyond Prestige:** Seniors should focus on what matters most—classes, campus connections, and real-world outcomes—when weighing college options.
- **Start Campus Exploration Early:** Juniors and sophomores can learn a lot by visiting campuses, observing classes, and noticing what environments energize them.
- **Build a College Roadmap:** Reflect on past experiences, explore summer opportunities, and gather recommendations and essay ideas to guide future applications with confidence.

Tips from from Jeffrey Selingo, author and higher education journalist, as featured on U.S. News & World Report.

GYEL SUMMER 2026

Enrollment Open for Summer until May 31

Generous Financial Assistance Available (see website for more info)

Summer Term set to begin on June

[Apply today](#)

[Hear from our students](#)

SMART READS FOR FUTURE LEADERS

Explore articles that empower students and families to make informed choices about their academic and leadership journey.



WHAT IVY LEAGUE ADMISSIONS ACTUALLY LOOK FOR IN “PASSION PROJECTS”

Ivy League admissions have become more selective than ever. The University of Pennsylvania recently reported a record-low acceptance rate of 4.9% for the Class of 2029, with several other peer institutions also falling within the 4–6% acceptance range. Three years ago marked the first time that acceptance rates across the Ivy League fell below 10%, with an average admit rate of 5.4% across the eight schools.

As competition increases at these top schools, even minor differences in how students demonstrate their interests and involvement can have a significant impact during the holistic review process. In this context, "passion projects" are often highlighted as a means of standing out. However, there is a disconnect between how these projects are executed and what Ivy League admissions officers seek.

Admissions officers seek evidence of genuine curiosity, meaningful impact, and personal growth derived from a commitment to addressing real problems or fulfilling actual needs, rather than just polished, résumé-style accomplishments.

[Read More](#)



Student Spotlight

From Passion to Global Impact – Vibha Hari's Journey

This month, we are thrilled to feature Vibha Hari, a GYEL student whose commitment to educational equity, cultural preservation, and global community engagement brings the GYEL mission to life.

VIBHA'S SOCIAL IMPACT JOURNEY

- Volunteered as a teacher's assistant at Chinmaya Mission, helping children connect with their cultural roots.
- Partnered with the native community in O'ahu, Hawaii through the UCSD Research Scholars program, creating 3D models of a sacred underwater site to support cultural preservation and environmental stewardship.
- Founded Bright Minds, a social enterprise dedicated to making high-quality, immersive education accessible to students from all backgrounds.
- Developed an online platform connecting students with higher education courses and programs through partnerships with universities, vocational schools, and organizations.
- Expanded Bright Minds to include immersive learning trips, inspired by her UCSD experience, fostering global perspective and community impact.
- Launched the CAN Initiative, a campus project promoting recycling and sustainability through bottle and can collection programs.
- Actively participates in community initiatives including supporting single mothers, backpack drives for students, and local clean-up projects.



Through GYEL, Vibha discovered how to channel her passions into projects with meaningful global impact. Her work exemplifies the core of GYEL: empowering young leaders to combine vision, action, and compassion to create positive change.



BRIGHT MINDS

Bright Minds provides underprivileged students access to with access to quality education, mentorship, and immersive experiences. helping them explore courses, gain real-world skills, and pursue higher education and meaningful careers.

WANT TO BE FEATURED IN OUR NEXT STUDENT SPOTLIGHT?

We love celebrating the incredible impact our GYEL students are making around the world. If you'd like to share your journey, achievements, or community project, send us your details at inquiry@un.gyel.org and you could be our next feature!

