

GETTING CONNECTED WITH YOUNG DIVERSE LEADERS IN THE FIELD OF DISABILITIES

Eduardo Ortiz • Judith Holt • Eric Packenham

CHALLENGES/ OPPORTUNITIES

By 2020 (less than five years from today) more than half of the population under 18 years are expected to be part of a minority race or ethnic group (USA Census Bureau, 2015.)

Many potential leaders are coming from a more diverse group they are interacting with and the information they are receiving now will influence in their shaping and thinking.

PROCESS

As part of a collaborative work with a youth educational program, we (URLEND and GEAR-UP) have developed joined efforts to provide early leadership experiences for middle/high school students.

A coordinated series of leadership messages for students is reaching thousands of students regularly.

The messages couple with self-efficacy skills and are designed to find creative solutions to the complex problems and issues related to disabilities facing their generation.

We (adults) have been active listeners and learners trying to understand better new generational paradigms.



RESULTS

POTENTIAL IMPACT REACHES BEYOND 6,000 GEAR-UP PROGRAM STUDENTS. IT IS BECAUSE THEY WILL SHARE THEIR KNOWLEDGE WITH SIBLINGS, FRIENDS, PARENTS, AND OTHERS

WE HAVE MOTIVATED YOUNG SCIENTISTS AND SOCIAL THINKERS PARTICIPATING DURING THE MONTH OF MARCH CREATING/SOLVING/REFLECTING ON PROPOSED DISABILITY CHALLENGES AND ACTIVITIES. SOME PRODUCTS DEVELOPED INCLUDE POWERFUL VIDEOS AND ESSAYS.

ADDITIONAL COLLABORATIVE AND EXPANDED OPPORTUNITIES ARE CURRENTLY BEING PROPOSED AND DISCUSSED.