

## **Thinking Globally with the Middle School Model United Nations Club** by *Megan Fink*

Where can you find middle school students discussing global issues such as the use of armed and unarmed military drones? This Friday and Saturday, fourteen students from Charlotte Country Day Middle School attended the third annual local CHARMUN (Charlotte Area Middle Model United Nations) conference and engaged in debates about current event issues such as: the use of armed and unarmed drones, human rights/preventing human trafficking, using sports for peace and development, and the prevention of the global spread of the Islamic State.

As a Model UN club advisor, I love helping the students tackle a complex international issue with research and then explore outside their comfort zone of public speaking and ultimately rise to the occasion by presenting at the conference. Model UN teaches students to be flexible, critical thinkers, and challenges the students to gain insight and empathy for global views of current problems.

For the Model UN conference simulations, students sign up for a country and also a topic. Then, students research their topic through the perspective of that country. Country Day's students represented countries such as India, Bolivia, Argentina and Turkey, among many others. The MS Model UN club includes these seventh and eighth grade students: Mary Hayes, Owen Yuhas, Hannah Baumgartner, Emma Taylor, May McDonnell, Ryder Cone, Janae-Rose Fageyinbo, Jackson Smith, Dhruv Khurjekar, Celeste Denny, Ryan Kochan, Addison Hyde, Alex Price and Jack Puchalski.

We are so proud of our students for pushing themselves and becoming leaders by learning about global issues. The students enjoyed a successful UN simulation with students from Charlotte Latin, Providence Day, Cannon and Marie G. Davis Middle Schools. Congratulations to Jack Puchalski for winning Best Delegate and Best Paper for his committee Disarmament & International Security! Honorable Mentions were won by May McDonnell for UNHRC (UN-Human Rights Council) and Jackson Smith for UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)!

The CHARMUN middle school conference also includes Upper School students participating in Model UN who are the chairs of the committees. These chairs are responsible for mentoring the students and guiding them through the process. Zoe Connor and Hangling Liu, Upper School Class of 2019, were chairs of the UNHRC committee this year. In addition, Logan Yuhas, sixth grade, and Riley Reddinger, fifth grade, were volunteer runners at the conference. This year's middle school conference was hosted by Providence Day School.

The CHARMUN conference began three years ago out of an idea from Mr. David Lynn, Director of International Studies at Country Day. The five schools, Charlotte Country Day School, Charlotte Latin School, Providence Day School, Cannon School and Marie G. Davis Middle School, wanted to collaborate and give their middle school students an opportunity to learn about the Model UN process. Next year's 2018 middle school CHARMUN conference will be hosted by Charlotte Country Day School, February 9-10, 2018.

google album: <https://goo.gl/photos/qt29kNsqtLF7oCJ7>