

Global Young Academy
Young Scientists Ambassador Programme



Ambassador: [Julia Baum](#)

Country of Origin:

Canada (developed country)

Country of Destination:

South Africa (developing country)

Time of Visit: May 24, 2012



Ambassador: [Yael Hanein](#)

Country of Origin:

Israel (developed country)

Country of Destination:

South Africa (developing country)

Time of Visit: May 24, 2012



Ambassador: [Maryam Matin](#)

Country of Origin:

Iran (developing country)

Country of Destination:

South Africa (developing country)

Time of Visit: May 24, 2012

Ambassador: [Evelyn Runge](#)

Country of Origin:

Germany (developed country)

Country of Destination:

South Africa (developing country)

Time of Visit: May 24, 2012



Ambassador: [Caradee Wright](#)

Country of Origin:

South Africa (developing country)

Mission Report

YSAP Activities Overview. Excite and encourage two grades of secondary school students to pursue a science-based career.



Background. This YSAP activity entailed a *non-traditional educational initiative*. In September 2010, Caradee Wright was asked to be the Patron of Geography at a local high school, [St. Mary's Diocesan School for Girls \(DSG\)](#), in Pretoria, South Africa. This role entails engaging with school teachers as well as linking school learners to the 'real world / real science through different activities.

The [Global Young Academy General Assembly](#) and International Conference held during 20-23 May 2012 brought international delegates to South Africa. These delegates were asked to participate in various outreach activities, including participation in events at local schools.

YSAP Activity: St Mary's Diocesan School for Girls Visit - Pretoria, South Africa

Four GYA conference delegates agreed to take time on Thursday, 24 May 2012, the day after the conference, to visit a high school, St Mary's Diocesan School for Girls, in Pretoria and share something about their career and their science.

The teacher, Ms. Jacqui Brown, arranged for two sessions, each with a different grade of learners, first Grade 12 learners (aged approximately 18 years) and second, Grade 11 learners (17 years).

Each of the GYA conference delegates gave a 10 minute talk or presentation to the two groups of learners and then engaged in an energetic and interesting series of questions and answers between the learners and themselves.

Below are some of the insights about this experience from each of the Young Scientists, as well as from the teacher and co-ordinator of this event.

Insights from each of the Young Scientists (GYA-GA conference delegates)

Yael Hanein (Israel)

Presenting the path I took over the past several years as well as discussing my academic research to the girls was an experience I was not ready for. I could not imagine prior to my meeting with them the excitement I would feel. To begin with, it has been a while since I reflected on this long and difficult path. While talking with the girls it became very apparent to me how much my current life is aligned with my natural inclination. Moreover, the

reactions of the girls, as reflected in their questions made it very clear that at least some of them found my current work very exciting. I can genuinely say that beyond the effect my presentation may have had on the students it affected me and energized me profoundly.

Julia Baum (Canada)

I am a marine ecologist and conservation biologist based at the University of Victoria. My goal for the outreach talk was to get the students excited about science, and to demonstrate to them that becoming a scientist is a viable career path, and a richly rewarding one at that. I also wanted to let them know that there is no 'correct' single path that must be followed to achieve success. What is required is persistence and hard work. I think all of these points came through in each of our talks, and the four talks worked really well together. I found Yael, Maryam, and Evelyn's stories all inspiring and they were such engaging speakers!

What I wasn't prepared for about the experience was how incredibly inspiring and energizing I would find it. Our jobs are demanding, and it often is easy to get bogged down in the mundane details. This outreach was a valuable opportunity to reflect on how much I love being a scientist. The students' lively response to our talks was really rewarding. I would have liked to spend more time with the girls - the only downside about the event is that it was over too fast.

Maryam M. Matin (Iran)

I was very excited to meet the girls in school; it was a new experience for me. I talked a little bit about myself, my country, and my research in biology and stem cells which I truly love. It was a different experience from the usual scientific meetings. It was nice for me to think and talk about my past and my achievements. I found the girls very friendly and eager to learn. It was quite obvious from their questions that they are very passionate about science. The school was also very beautiful with lots of different activities. It was also a good opportunity to learn about the biography and experiences of my friends in the GYA, a short but fruitful outreach activity. These meetings give us the chance to know other cultures, make them familiar with the realities in other countries and also may have a big impact on the young students who are about to decide what to do in the future. It is easier to climb a mountain when you can see the light. I am grateful to the GYA, Caradee, and Jacqui for making such an exciting event possible.

Insights from the teacher and learners, and the event co-ordinator

Jacqui Brown (St. Mary's DSG Teacher)

Having our School, St. Mary's Diocesan School for Girls, being able to host the delegates for the morning was a learning experience that seemed to open the doors to women in science for our pupils. Not only were our girls blown away at the diversity of the women, but their impressive CV's and job descriptions.

The delegates were spontaneous, vibrant and enthusiastic - a quality which made the girls warm to them and relate to them almost instantaneously. The fact that the delegates

showed such passion for their jobs enabled the girls to witness first-hand a real love for science, discovery, and research. Their eyes were opened to the fact that science is a wide field with many opportunities as well as being a dynamic, ever-changing discipline.

Comments from the girls...

- “It was extremely interesting and enjoyable. They can come again anytime!”
- “Women + Science = Inspiration for the future”.
- “I really liked the fact that the scientists were all women. It helped in building my confidence when approaching a field of study which has been male dominated for so long.”
- “I was amazed by the stories the scientists told... their journeys along their career path. It showed me that a career path is not a simple straight line, but rather a walk of stops, goes, and detours. I have realised that I will get to my final goal in the future but the road there is not straight forward.”
- “Loved learning about out of the box careers. The scientists were awesome.”

Caradee Wright (Event Co-ordinator)

Engaging with a diverse group of young female learners is an inspiring experience. During all four talks/presentations made by young scientists, the learners were completely enthralled by what they were hearing. This became especially evident during the question and answer sessions, when many learners had questions to ask, ranging from details and explanations about science and technologies, to career questions, such as how to pursue a career in science journalism. The value of this YSAP activity must not be underestimated – young scientists talking to future generations makes science in society real and relevant, and inspires young minds!



St. Mary's Diocesan School for Girls (DSG), in Pretoria, South Africa

Julia Baum
Yael Hanein
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Evelyn Runge
Caradee Wright

July 11, 2012, Pretoria, South Africa