



## PRESS RELEASE

### **EAST HARLEM SCHOOL TOPS THE COMPETITION AT FIRST HARLEM DEBATE LEAGUE TOURNAMENT OF THE YEAR**

**New York, NY-** Nearly 250 middle school students braved Saturday's showers to compete at the first parliamentary debate tournament of 2016 at PS 180/Hugo Newman College Preparatory School. After a morning welcome by PS 180 debate coach, Lelsey Simmonds, students feverishly prepared for the tournament, combing through notes and practicing their public speaking skills. As debaters awaited the topic announcement, community judges attended an orientation to equip them with the tools necessary to decide individual debate rounds. Jaquan McClure, a long serving volunteer judge and college parliamentary debater, said he continues to attend each tournament because "participation in debate offers students the opportunity to enhance their communications and research skills which are critical for college readiness and success."

Parliamentary debate topics change each round and the well prepared group of ten to thirteen-year-olds debated topics ranging from a ban on animal testing to reinstating the draft and banning homework in elementary schools. Following an exhaustive day of debates, Success Academy Harlem East took home top prizes in the beginner division with students Kate Gomez, Hailey Lopez and Emely Martinez-Pichardo winning the coveted 1<sup>st</sup> place team award. Emely also claimed the 2<sup>nd</sup> place speaker award at the tournament. In total, Success Academy Harlem East saw three undefeated teams place in the top 10 at Saturday's event. The team, coached by mathematics teacher Jun Yoon looks forward to competing at the February 6<sup>th</sup> middle school parliamentary debate tournament at the Bronx High School of Science.

For more information about the NYCUDL or to volunteer please contact Tiara Moultrie at 929-341-0089 or [tiara@debate.nyc](mailto:tiara@debate.nyc).

**About the New York City Urban Debate League:** The New York City Urban Debate League (NYCUDL) is the largest debate league in the nation with debate leagues in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Harlem, Manhattan, and Queens for all age levels – elementary school, middle school, and high school. We believe every school should have a debate team and every student should have access to the best debate education opportunities. Today, over 1000 students and 100 schools participate in our monthly debates. Every day we support debate practices. Every week we offer Saturday workshops and our debaters travel to local, regional, and national tournaments. We also host monthly public debate nights. For more information visit our website [www.debate.nyc](http://www.debate.nyc) or find us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/nycudl> or Twitter [@nycdebateleague](https://twitter.com/nycdebateleague)

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