

education
for a better
world

Student Profiles in Achievement



DARRELL BENNETT, Jr.

IB Diploma Programme Graduate
Morehouse Valedictorian 07
Harvard Law
Published Author

“My IB education certainly laid the foundation for many of the successes I am grateful for now. The IB programme taught me how the power to think and the will to act could shape my life.”

Born and raised in Baltimore City, Darrell Bennett completed the IB Diploma Programme at Warwick High School in Newport News, Virginia. Darrell was class president and student government president at Warwick. He then received a full scholarship to Morehouse College where he completed his bachelor's degree in history, published his first book (*Daring to be Different: 25 Tips for a Life of Success*), and graduated valedictorian. Darrell is currently in his second year at Harvard Law School. Upon taking the bar, he plans a career in public service.

“I have found that the power to think is at the very core of the IB's mission. It is more than the ability to guess or ponder or speculate on abstract ideas. The power to think, rather, is the power to create. It is the very real and tangible power to conceive and conceptualize and devise. The power to think, therefore, is what makes something out of nothing. It is what causes us to hope in the face of adversity and believe in the face of uncertainty, and what causes us to look past our natural situation and our supposed short-comings.”

“I know that my personal story would not have been possible had it not been for both the power to think and the will to act.”

Darrell Bennett, Jr.
IB Diploma Programme Graduate 2003

Student Profiles in Achievement



SAFEENA MECKLAI

IB Middle Years Programme Graduate
Educator
Filmmaker
Activist

“Beyond academics, the Middle Years Programme helped me to discover who I am and who I would like to be.”

Safeena Mecklai is a current IB Diploma Programme student and a graduate of the IB Middle Years Programme at Mira Loma High School in Sacramento. For Safeena, the Middle Years Programme provided opportunities for self-actualization she never anticipated. In the course of her community service programme work, Safeena discovered her love of theater craft and her passion for teaching young children. And Safeena’s personal project for the Middle Years Programme awakened a new vocation—documentary filmmaking.

“Throughout the filming I came into myself as a leader and a director. I came into myself as a dedicated, hardworking, and committed individual. I discovered who I am today. These experiences reflect the IB for me—experiences that pull everything I’ve learned together, everything that has been given to me so that I can use them as tools to better myself. The Middle Years Programme has given me more opportunities than I can count. And every day I find myself ever grateful to have finally found a place where I truly belong.”

Safeena Mecklai
IB Middle Years Programme Graduate 2008

“Because of the IB Middle Years Programme, I’ve been challenged, focused, and internationalized. In the Middle Years Programme, I discovered my passion for the Spanish language, which was very useful in the filming of my documentary on family literacy. I am currently president of the Sacramento Jamat Khana Youth Club where I work on developing health and nutrition programmes for the Sacramento Ismaili Mosque. My commitment to community activism comes straight from my wonderful IB Middle Years experience.”

Student Profiles in Achievement



YOURDANOS REFU

IB Diploma Graduate
War Refugee
Scholar

“My passion is education and I owe my discovery of that passion to the IB programme and the IB community. My personal IB education experience was such an awakening, so inspiring that I’ve committed myself to giving others a rich educational experience both here in America and, one day, in Ethiopia.”

Currently a sophomore studying International Political Economy at Idaho College, Yourdanos Refu’s early life followed a trajectory determined by violent conflict in Ethiopia. When she was two years old, Yourdanos and her family fled Ethiopia for Djibouti where the family lived until Yourdanos was twelve. During this period Yourdanos received no formal education. When her family was granted asylum in the United States, Yourdanos entered the Boise Idaho public school system, where her schooling consisted almost entirely of English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. However, in the 10th grade, Yourdanos was given the opportunity to enroll in Riverstone International School—an IB World School. This was a turning point.

“I owe the very fact that I’m in college to the IB. Before the IB programme I was a confused and troubled young girl. The conflicts in my country left me and my family without a home. Now I found myself in a country and culture that was so different from my past experiences in Djibouti or Ethiopia. With that kind of a background the last thing on my mind was to sit in a class and learn, particularly math and science, which I so hated at the time. Thanks to the IB and the dedicated teachers at my school, however, I learned the importance of a good education and how education is really the best and only weapon against the problems facing my homeland, Ethiopia and beyond.”

“The IB encourages a worldly consciousness and seeks to create people who will make great contributions. When my time comes to give back to humanity, it is my hope to pass on the torch of knowledge, compassion, and curiosity.”

Yourdanos Refu
IB Diploma Programme Graduate 2007
Sophomore Idaho College, Boise, ID
Class of 2011