

Titan Tribune

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Students participate in \$100 million global competition to reduce carbon emissions

By S.G.
Titan Tribune staff writer

Mr. Jeffrey Rudd, our science teacher, organized the students to compete in the XPRIZE Carbon Removal competition. Funded by Elon Musk and the Musk Foundation, the \$100 million competition invited innovators and teams from around the globe to demonstrate solutions that can pull carbon dioxide directly from the atmosphere or ocean.

Below is a one-on-one interview with Mr. Rudd.

Q: What solutions did the students come up with for the project?

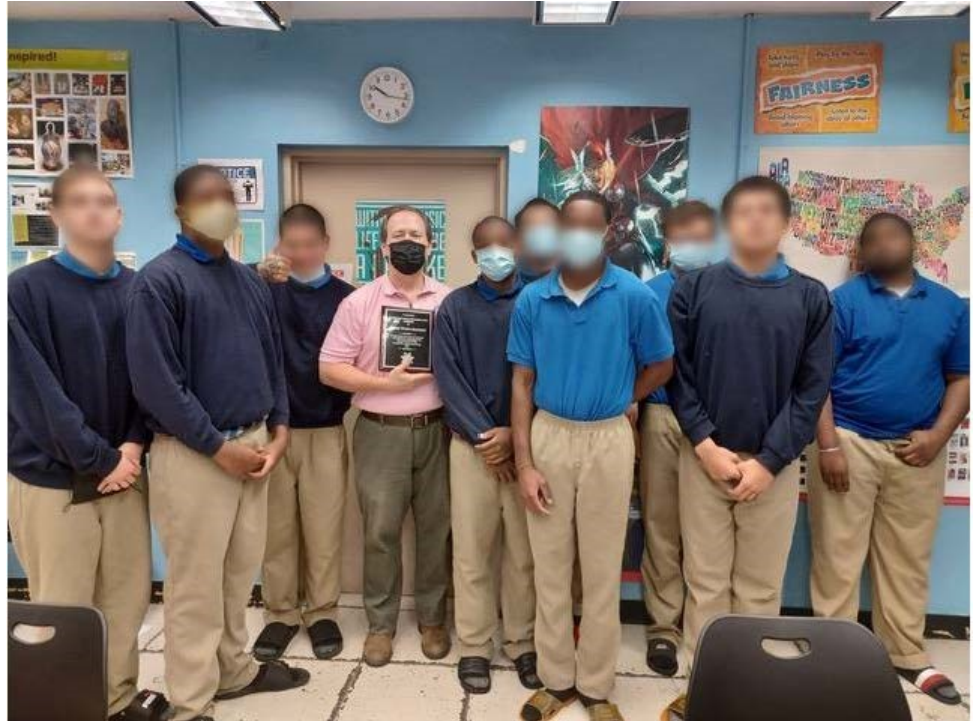
A: The students came up with a lot of ideas, like edible carbon dioxide and a giant carbon-dioxide vacuum cleaner to suck it out of the air. They even came up with making carbon dioxide into a fuel source, but after research they figured out we don't yet have the resources to do that.

Q: Why did you get the students involved?

A: I think the project focuses on a very important subject to solve in today's society and for our future. We all have a connection to the world we live in.

Q: Why did you receive a plaque?

A: It's an award for participating in the worldwide



J. Q., M. P., H. S., Mr. Jeff Rudd, S. G., D. R., J. W., D. T., D. L., and M.D

solution for carbon dioxide.

Q: Do you feel your class could win?

A: It's possible, but it will be challenging since our students are competing against universities and other high schools around the world. Even if they don't win, they'll learn a lot.

Q: Do you have another project coming up?

A: At the moment no, but we would love to get involved in another one. In the past, we had an agricultural project where the students planted lots of vegetables and flowers.

GED is the way to go

By D. T.
Titan Tribune staff writer

There are a lot of reasons to get your GED if you don't want to finish high school, if you're too behind in school or if you're an older person looking for a better education.

For me, I took the GED tests so I don't have to return to high school and so I could go straight to college.

I recommend that the other students here strongly think about the GED path because returning to high school could be a tough thing to do.

Completing the GED was one of the most important things I've done in my life. I was able to pass with a high score and I know other kids here can do the same thing if they believe in themselves, too.

I did not pass by myself. I have to give huge praise to the education department and floor staff for all their encouragement to keep going. Even on some of my bad days, they told me that I can do it.

The program here also pushes us to excel when we leave, either by continuing our education or getting a job. I didn't even know I wanted to go to college before the spectacular Mr. Rudd taught me about what the different programs offered at different colleges in the state. Also, the wonderful Ms. Sanchez taught me how to pay for college expenses and answered all the miscellaneous questions I had.

If you actively listen to the staff, I promise that you will go further than you ever thought possi-

WELCOME

This is the 13th issue of the Titan Tribune, a newspaper about Miami Youth Academy that is reported and written by the journalism students here.

The class and newspaper are a collaboration of MYA, Exchange for Change and Miami-Dade County Public Schools Division of Educational Opportunity and Access. Exchange for Change is a non-profit that teaches writing classes in youth-commitment and adult-correctional facilities.

The paper is edited by retired newspaper reporter Mr. Henry Unger, an Exchange for Change volunteer. He is assisted by MYA teacher Mr. Jesus Gonzalez. The paper's layout and design were done by Miami-Dade teacher Mr. Daniel Wynne.

New Zoom class focuses on building relationships

By D. R. and D. T.
Titan Tribune staff writers

We learn a lot of life skills in a new, weekly Zoom class called Hope For Miami.

The two hosts, Ms. Crystal Harley and Mr. Joseph Sheldon, teach us about how to have proper relationships and how to stay emotional-

ly strong. We learn about developing and maintaining relationships with family and friends.

The hosts make us feel comfortable to express our feelings. They talk in a calm tone and don't force us to participate. They show slides that help us understand different ideas and issues.

It's been a really good experience.

Should Community Service Be Required for Graduation?

By J. W.
Titan Tribune staff writer

In my opinion, all students should have to complete a certain amount of hours of community service to graduate.

Mandatory community service improves social skills, such as strengthening friendships and following through on things.

Students can develop new passions, like for social justice or helping an organization.

In addition, teens and students who participate in volunteering are actually showing that they are determined to do better in school.

At the same time, they are not engaging in risky behavior and they're having a positive impact on the community.

They also are learning something new, while feeling better about themselves and what they can accomplish.

Family Day is a big hit

By S. B.
Titan Tribune staff writer

Family Day was great. All the families had fun with their sons.

S. G.'s mom said she was happy to see her son with his three sisters and little brother.

"They miss him," Ms. G said. "We can't wait for him to come home because they constantly ask about him."

J. O.'s family, including his two little brothers, played football and basketball.

"I came down here for the Nike camp for quarterback, man," O.'s stepdad joked. He had everyone laughing.

It was all smiles the rest of the day.

The kitchen staff, including Mr. Samuels, made food for the families. Then, on the patio, they played this song and Mr. Samuels came out and started cutting up. He got everybody started and it was a dance-off between J. Q. and M. P. O.'s little brother started dancing, too.

We also played a little football game for our parents. We had fun from the beginning to the end.

Going Deep with Mr. Samuels

By D. L.
Titan Tribune staff writer

Below is a one-on-one interview with the kitchen manager, Mr. Desron Samuels.

Q: Why did you choose to work at MYA?

A: This job provides the ability to make a difference within the community. There is not an opportunity like this in other culinary careers or restaurants.

Q: What was your work experience before you came here?

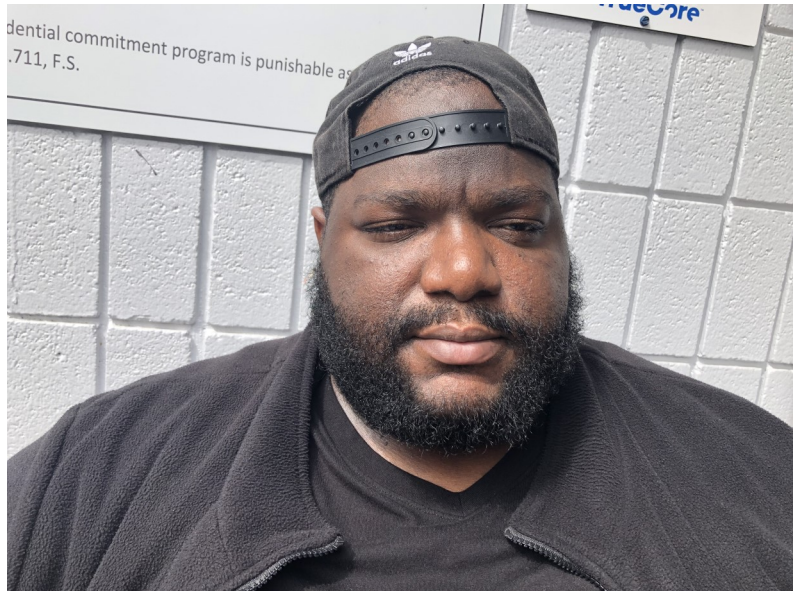
A: I worked as a caterer for airplanes that flew the Miami Heat, Miami Dolphins and New England Patriots. I met players, including LeBron James, Dwayne Wade, Dan Marino, Tom Brady and Shaquille O'Neal. I even did Antonio Brown's private jet once.

One time, I did an airplane of just horses. My experience was kind of weird. It looked like a big barn on the plane. They ate fruits, oatmeal and horse feed.

Also, I worked in the Ivory Coast for three years for a gold-mining company. I had to order things on demand because they don't have certain food items in Africa that we have in the U.S.

Q: When working in this career field, how is your life outside of work affected?

A: Doing this job requires you to be very selfish. You have to take the job first before anything. There's no such thing as holidays or time off with your family or by yourself if you have responsibilities here.



Q: What's your advice for someone who's interested in this field?

A: Be prepared to work hard. Your life will be primarily occupied with the people that you work with.

Q: What is your take on fancy food?

A: It's not just the food, it's the environment. It's how you dress the food up. Food is about the preparation.

Q: What are your personal goals for the future?

A: To be able to try to go all 54 countries in Africa, and explore different cuisines and lifestyles.

Q: What are your goals at MYA?

A: My goal is to make a difference in at least one youth's life before he leaves here.

UM exchange class opens our eyes

By J. Q.
Titan Tribune staff writer

Our group trip to the University of Miami for an exchange class is an amazing experience. Many of us get to see new things.

Some of the six kids in our group, who aren't from Miami-Dade County, got to see the beauty of Miami and one of its biggest universities. It was great seeing different people around our age.

Even though, at first, we were all a little anxious, the more we talked to the UM students, the more our anxiety started dwindling. We got along with the students well, expressing our feelings and putting ourselves in each other's shoes.

We were separated into groups with the UM criminology students, discussing many different topics during the semester. We started off with the simple introductions and our hobbies and goals.

As the semester has moved on, we have talked about social relationships, peer pressure, family and expectations.

We all appreciate the students of UM very much. We thank them for not judging us by what we are labeled, but by who we are.

My Red Shirt Experience

By J. W.
Titan Tribune staff writer

My experience as a Red Shirt has been great so far.

This type of position has taught me awesome social skills, like learning how to communicate with my peers about their needs and concerns regarding the program.

Being a secretary for the three-student committee, which talks with the administration about program issues, has also taught me the importance of expressing your thoughts and feelings.

Furthermore, being a Red Shirt has helped me gain positive friendships, with the help of my Red Shirt colleagues, M. T., president, and M.

P., treasurer. Currently, we meet once a month with Mr. William Hanford, facility administrator; Mr. DeJuan Guillory, assistant facility administrator; and Ms. Anyela Garcia, transitional manager.

I feel as if we can make a difference within this community. I hope this experience helps me become a strong, intelligent and outspoken leader who the youth can come and talk to about anything that troubles them.

All in all, being a part of the committee has been awesome. I look forward to the life lessons and fun memories that I know I will have.

MYA Letter Exchange with San Quentin

Students at Miami Youth Academy and men who are incarcerated at San Quentin State Prison in California have been exchanging letters.

The prompt for the letters below was – what do you do when life throws you a curveball?

By Marcus “Wali” Henderson
San Quentin

Dear MYA,

After serving 25 years in state prison, it takes faith to handle life's ups and downs. The dramas of prison riots and cell searches take their toll.

But it's the death of a family member that hurt the most. I lost my wife, who died from a heart murmur. I was crushed. I talked to her on a Wednesday night and she died Thursday morning.

My 9-year-old son had to break the news to me because everybody else was drowning in tears. The pain of losing a loved one never goes away. The guilt of not being there is the price I'm paying for causing others harm.

But it is faith that tells you that you are good enough, that you can bring others joy and live out the dreams that you and your loved one shared.

Reply by S. B.
Titan Tribune staff writer

Dear Wali,

First, I'm very sorry to hear you lost your wife. I can't say I know how you feel. But after being in detention for a whole year, I've lost two of my friends who my mom has raised since they were 7 years old.

When you're inside the system, there's nothing you can really do except cry and keep your head up high. Again, I'm sorry. I can't imagine losing my mom while I'm here and I don't really want to imagine that.

I get it that you messed up and unfortunately you can't go back in time to undo your mistakes. My advice to you is to make sure you drill it into your son's head every time you speak to him to not let people or the media influence him. I'll tell

It's now on us to carry on the dreams of those we have lost while incarcerated. You don't have to be afraid of being “spiritual.”

Religion only means to re-align yourself with something bigger than you. It doesn't matter what you believe in. What matters is that you check in with your eternal self.

There are a lot of things in life we can't control, but we can control how we respond.

I lost someone truly special to me, but what she wanted is for me to be the best me. I owe her and myself that. I can't control what others may think I deserve. I just have to keep the faith.

So keep the faith and don't let others define you.

you, man, that I'm not a follower, but people and the media fooled me big time. There's nobody out here to blame except myself.

Life is based upon your choices and decisions. If you make bad ones, then you'll get a bad outcome. My mom didn't raise a gangbanger, nor did she raise me to rob or do bad things, but I made poor decisions. It's that simple.

Frankly, I'm happy I made those bad decisions as a juvenile, because I still have a second chance.

The best thing they've had us do in here has been to read letters from you and the others at San Quentin, because now we know we have another choice. We can either take your advice

and do better with ourselves or let it go in one ear and out the other. I plan on staying out of trouble when I go home.

Thank you and the others for taking your time to reach out to me and the other youth here. You

By Edwin E. Chavez
San Quentin

Dear MYA,

As I write to you about this prompt, I am hurt, disappointed and mad at the system for denying me parole again. I have been incarcerated since 1995 and have changed my life.

I have earned college degrees and acknowledged my crime and my past. Gangs were part of my life before. I was looking for love because I felt unloved at home.

I have not broken any rules here, nor have I lied or made excuses. So I became heartbroken and confused about the denial, which will last for five years. I had high expectations that I was going to get out.

I am not a victim. I committed a crime and I should be held accountable for my past actions. But what I'm going through is how a curveball can devastate us all.

Reply by D. L.
Titan Tribune staff writer

Dear Mr. Chavez,

I'm really sorry about your parole denial.

I can relate to what you are going through right now, putting so much effort into something and not getting the outcome that you wanted. It can drive you to the point where you just give up and not want to try any more. But the best thing about being at the bottom is that things can only get better.

I have struggled while I have been here at the program. I have asked for things that I have worked for and I have been turned down. You

guys have really made me reconsider the bad things I've thought about. I want to promise you that I'll stay out of trouble and get a good job.

So what am I doing now?

Surrounding myself with positive people, going to church, talking to my counselors and friends.

I continue to process my disappointments as I write this to you all. The healing process must be based on accountability and responsibility. I can only do this by making sure that I stay the course in my rehabilitation, regardless what the disappointment may be.

It is OK not to be OK. I have asked for help and they have helped me out during these difficult times.

Eventually, I will be released from prison. I will face curveballs out there in the community and in my life. They are part of life and part of being a person.

can call that a curveball, I suppose. The only thing that keeps me going is thoughts of my family and how they need me. That encourages me to keep pushing and to keep trying.

I feel like every day can present a curveball, no matter how big or small it is. The choices we make on them may decide how the next day will go.

I hope your days are improving now. Things will get better.

My first time in the kitchen

By J. Q.
Titan Tribune staff writer

Family Day was a success, but it wouldn't have been possible without the help of our kitchen.

Hours of hard work in the cafeteria, where I helped the staff make enough food for 60 people, paid off. We made lasagna, Caesar salad, M&Ms-stuffed chocolate chip cookies and white choco-



late-covered Oreos.

With it being my first time in the kitchen, I was excited about helping out and knowing that other people would be trying out something that I made.

I enjoyed being taught the magic behind the kitchen and learning new recipes that I will most definitely use once I get home.

Overall, I felt a lot of compassion from all the chefs and from Ms. Sanchez, who would not hesitate twice to give a helping hand.

I suggest that if you have the opportunity to work in the kitchen, take the chance and have some fun.

Poetry

Rainy days lead to sunny skies

By N. L.

Life is like rain
Droopy pours and sunny days
Dark clouds cover my dream
To follow the paths that were shown to me
I have to explore ambitiously
The music I listen to inspires me
I listen with hopes I'll find some peace
When the clouds are dark it's cold and unpleasant
But when the rain clears it'll show the heavens
There's hard times and bad calls
But with mistakes I give my all
Sometimes I don't know what to do
These dark clouds ruin the mood

I will rise to power soon
The rain covers the roads
I try and climb the slippery slope
But with the sun will come success
The road will now dry up
The rain is gone that time is up
It's time for me to step on up
The sun is here my time is now
The rainbow screams with a shout
To show your time is about
Even with these sunny days
You must remember
There will always be rain

A Reflection of ME

By J. W.

The influence on my character,
why I act the way I act
part of the reason why I act
the way I act... my surroundings?
The area where I live is like a Venus fly trap
Traps you and sucks your soul.
I say NO!
I'm not product of my so-called environment.
Streets that you may roam,
can turn into shackles that you cannot escape.
What I listen to,
the beats that get my body to move,
Hip hop, or as we should say Hip POP!
words that cause me to want to inflict pain,
sway to a groove or drown in sorrow.
This musical delicacy motivates me.
Inspired to be the best that I can possibly be

It has taught me to never give up or let up,
It has taught me to lead rather than a follow
& Instilled in me the importance of loyalty and family.
This is the backslash of my background
It has made be tough but caring
I'll go out of my way to help anyone I care about!
I'm big on loyalty
others may say that I'm antisocial
yet, a funny person to be around.
Some say I'm protective of those I love
I am, and I do, LOVE
Nevertheless, I am what and who I am,
I mirror reflection of my home, my music and my world.

Mi Am I

By J. Q.

This is me
Feel my tempo,
get my memo
Hear that all my words are lesto.

See the best in me.
I'm the composer to my life,
Adagio, too slow, won't survive
I have to keep going on,
I can't get beat by my own beat

Death lingers like a stray cat,
my heart revs to presto,
if I leave town, my heartbeat slows down,
legato,
A fermata tone
my cries for help

I feel God by my side
Even though my family is small in size
The love we got for each other just multiplies
Their love is what I need

Tires screeching,
children laughing and screaming
Broke and abandoned buildings
still filled with our memories
Miami is a part of me

You could feel the pulse in my words
The determination behind every verse
Dr. King worked so we could come together
Compose our brotherly work
So we may strive and succeed

I've made my mother worry
I tried to grow up in a hurry
I became a man in a scurry
And now I wish I could take it back

But I can't.
I wouldn't be the man I am today,
My character wouldn't be able to have a say,
I prevailed and held my perseverance,
I've made something great.

False accusations,
Losing sleep I'm in frustration,
Emotions scuddling, shaking around, dancing
merengue,
But thanks to my lord I have been saved.

Now it's time to make a change,
Time to think about and fix my ways,
Don't act on anger but act on how it would turn out
A successful organized play

I lost my little brother,
I hear the blues at the sound of his name.
I have to make it out,
show that he didn't go in vain

Only a half note,
I try to scream how I feel,
But you still feel the measure of my love

Loyalty over royalty,
Grown men priorities,
Our actions have authority,
Of what we become in life.

I will not give up on my dreams.
There's too much willingness in me,
Like a guitar,
my string might break if the obstacle is too hard,
But I'll just unwind it and restring the chord

I've become a man,
Responsibilities and pressure enhance,
I grasp them all with my hands

I close my eyes,
try to get a glance,
Of what the world would be
if there was a chance,
Where we would all come together and succeed.

I will be successful,
Discover landmarks I haven't seen,
Travel around, learn new cultures,
From the salsa of my homeland,
To the cumbia of the Caribbean Sea.

I will be successful,
Make up for the times my mom cried,
For the times I woke up sweating,
"Momma they've cut the lights"
For the times we had nothing to have a bite
Hunger was the blanket in my sleep

But I will be successful,
Because like Dr. King
I was young and I had a dream.

Values

By M. P.

Welcome to my life,

Growing up was intriguing and sometimes I ponder,

The beat of the streets is flamboyant like thunder.

You rock and you roll as you slowly get older.

My heart is getting colder and colder and colder.

Maybe if you sit back and let things fall over you'll realize the world is repeating an orbit.

365 days to make a decision,

will you live for your family, or will you live for your riches?

These are all questions we seem to ask,
but in the streets there's no question, only blast.
Will we call a ceasefire?

Children are dying and mothers are tired.
The song we're singing is sad like the blues but
somber like jazz.

Maybe it would be more upbeat if we all take a stand.

Let's be fathers to our children and caring to our women.

If we choose to take a stand it would have a long-lasting effect,

Instead of juvenile programs, let's teach kids respect.

Instead of guns and glory, let's teach protected sex.

Instead of wildin out, let's teach clean the house.

My people, it all starts with values and lessons,

If you come along with me, maybe we'll do a bit better.

Black lives matter, Black lives matter, Black lives matter, yes, they do.

But what are we doing to prove that it's true?
I'll admit I've done some horrible things both white and black,

I chose to not discriminate when looting a stash,

I chose the wrong way of expressing myself,
like a nursery rhyme gone bad.

Now I wanna fix the community, but how will I do it if my enemies want to silence me?

Let's start by making a truce, life is too short to lose it over an argument or two,

Then we could start by helping our elders, the music they sing is wistful and true.

Just like their stories, I also want to help the youth because of the position I've been in.

I've been to 2 juvenile programs and I'm still singing

One day I'll make a change, then they'll understand my sacrifice.

For now, life is a gamble and I'm rolling the dice.