

Nonprofit helps children across the globe

Daniel Israel · April 20, 2021

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Students at Rutgers University, the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT), and George Washington University have come together to help children from economically-struggling communities in Egypt and Ecuador. When they are not writing papers or studying for finals, the students manage Save the Children of the Developing World (SCDW), a nonprofit based in Bayonne.

These college students are dedicated to improving the wellbeing of children living in "third-world" countries, aiming to provide them with the tools to "become the person they dream to be."

The students serve as officers, directors, committee members, or general advisors. They oversee the fundraising of six student chapters that they established in high schools across the state.

The organization was started in 2017 by Abanoub Armanious, then a Bayonne High School student and now a sophomore at Rutgers, double majoring in Public Health and Cell Biology and Neuroscience, with a minor in Religion. Armanious, a first-generation American and aspiring physician, founded the group after traveling to Egypt and Ecuador and observing the dire economic conditions and the lack of social safety nets.

"When I walked along the streets of Egypt and Ecuador, I saw malnourished children working arduous jobs," Armanious said. "If they had access to basic educational and nutritional resources, that would not have been the case, and so I vowed that when I came home, I would try to make a difference."

Since its founding, SCDW has focused on education through its Project Educate, according to Armanious. The program provided uniforms, shoes, and meals to students from three grammar schools in Ain Shams of the Cairo Governorate in Egypt and a grammar school on the south side of Quito in Ecuador.

Project Backpack aims to provide day-to-day essentials. The college students packed up school supplies for children in Egypt in the Qalyubia Governorate in August 2019 and provided children in the Cairo Governorate with personal care products in December 2020 to help prevent further transmission of COVID-19.

According to Armanious, SCDW plans to expand Project Educate and Backpack in both countries and in other nations. Meanwhile, the organization has announced the creation of Project Health and Project Shelter.

The new initiatives aim to improve healthcare services and their home environments. The projects are funded through philanthropic donations from the public.

"We are working on providing families in Egypt with a custom box of nonperishable food items through Project Health and are communicating with the same schools, orphanages, and communities we have assisted before to assist them again, but we cannot do anything without our supporters," Armanious said.

SCDW urges more communities to get involved by donating and or creating chapters, fundraisers, and donation drives, so it can continue to launch projects. For more information, email SCDW Founder and CEO Abanoub Armanious at armaniousabanoub@scdw.online.