



The Princeton Club of Rochester

Mateo Astudillo Senior, Greece Athena High School

When Mateo organized and led Greece Athena last year at the third annual ROC2Change Summit to promote racial diversity in schools, he knew he had tapped an invaluable community resource:

“After the first half of the summit discussing and learning, we had students along with police officers within the community devise action plans to bring back their schools and communities to combat racism. We also told students to bring back another poster to the next summit in the spring outlining how they implemented that plan and what they had accomplished so far.”

After the Summit, Mateo realized something was lacking at Greece Athena. He learned that his was the only school in his district without a MOSAICS presence. Under his leadership, with fellow students and advisors, Mateo established a Senior-led English MOSAICS class where students do research, discussions and readings about racism and other contemporary issues. The MOSAICS English class at Greece Athena will host 50 students in the coming school year. MOSAICS will also receive official recognition as a club next year to provide even broader access for students. As a MOSAICS officer, Mateo now has an established resource to pursue conversations and effect change real change. He has used the group to spearhead Black History Month events as well as Diversity Day -- a day Mateo says allows him to highlight his own Latino heritage:

“Despite how diverse our school is, there is still a lot of ignorance and stereotypes that exist within our school about African Americans, Hispanics and Latinos, Muslims, and Asians alike. This is the point of the Diversity Day, which is to embrace other cultures and understanding. The intent is to make Diversity Day similar to the black history month celebration, except there will be other cultures represented and culturally ethnic food. Often when we think of racial issues or racial tension, we automatically think black and white. I have tried to highlight specifically Latino issues and the immense cultural ignorance surrounding the vast and distinct Hispanic and Latino cultures in discussions.”

Sarah Ross, a teacher and MOSAICS advisor at Greece Athena, says Mateo’s leadership skills come from the heart.

“I have rarely met a student with such high moral character and sincere enthusiasm for learning. As a refreshing contrast to his peers, Mateo is the type of student who is self-directed and driven. He is politically aware and socially adept. He is responsible for his own learning and always is prepared and ready to learn. He has the rare trait of accountability, making him stand out amongst peers.”

Mateo, your passion for opening hearts and minds on issues of inequality and diversity has set a foundation at Greece Athena that will benefit students and the community for years to come. May your activism continue in the future!