October 2026
Monthly Newsletter
CTeen Changemakers

It took 183 days to bring CTeen Changemakers to life. High school students from Connecticut, New York, New Hampshire, Ohio, and Texas devoted hundreds of hours to uniting as one team behind a single mission: making leadership opportunities more accessible to students around the world.

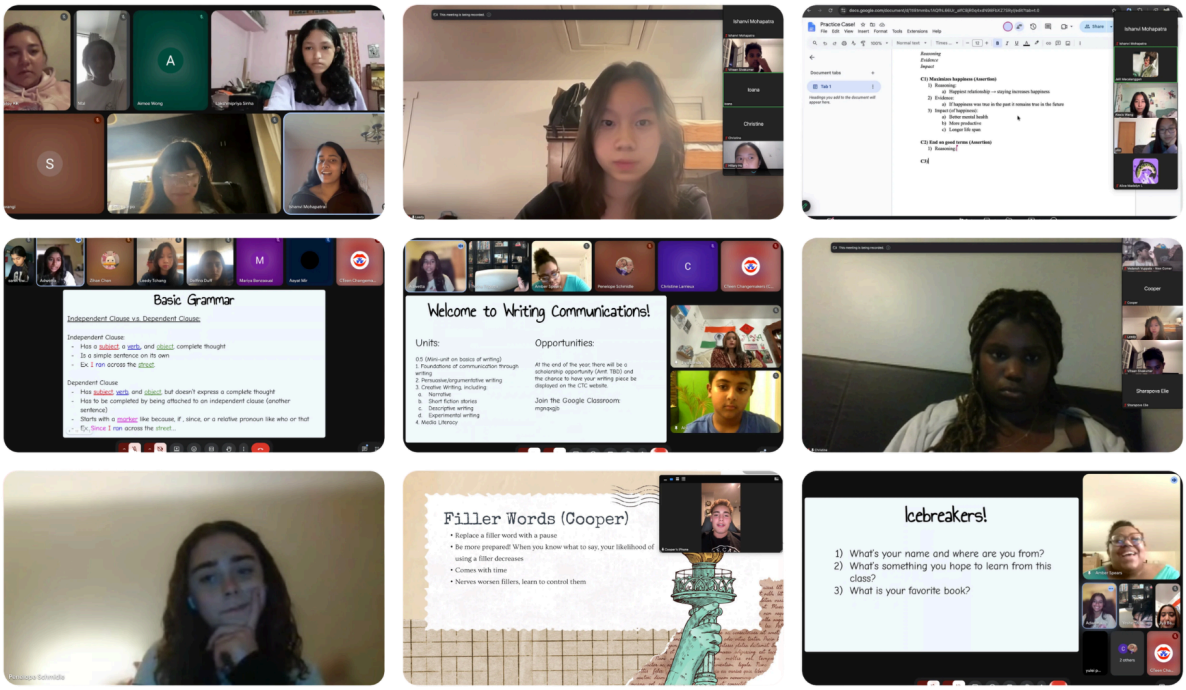
"Students are not clueless. We may not know everything yet, but we deserve the chance to learn and share our ideas. We're more than just young people; our voices do not deserve to be suppressed when they could be revolutionary….If, through accessible leadership and communication opportunities, thousands of students can grow their confidence, the younger generations will have a better chance of stepping into the world and making an impact," says Ishanvi Mohapatra, mentor of the passion projects class. Lead writing mentor Adwetta Bhattacharyya adds, "My goal as a mentor is to help students find their unique voice through writing, whether that means crafting a compelling persuasive essay or exploring creative narratives." Mysha Husain, a debate teacher, reflects, "debate has strengthened my ability to think critically, communicate effectively, and engage with diverse perspectives."

Each member of our team has spent years developing their skills in debate, writing, or public speaking. Over that time, they also noticed that online classes and in-person events were rarely affordable for the average American household. "Confidence shouldn't depend on what you have or where you are," our website declares in bold red font. That statement became the central principle of our nonprofit, which is currently in the process of registering as a 501(c)(3).

Our Programs

To bridge this gap, CTeen Changemakers offers free online courses in public speaking, passion projects, debate, writing, and English as a Second Language to more than 150 students from over 30 countries. Based in Connecticut, we are a direct partner of CT Speech & Action, a nonprofit that organizes free community service and leadership events for local students. Several of our team members,

including Ishanvi Mohapatra, Audrey Kim, and Hillary Ho, help run these events, and CTeen Changemakers will connect local students with these free in-person opportunities. During the academic year, we will also host online workshops and competitions for students worldwide, featuring Supreme Court plaintiffs from *Tinker v. Des Moines* (1969) and *Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier* (1988).



Passion Projects Class Updates

Our passion project class, Local Changemaking: Navigating Passion Projects, provides guidance and small grants to students developing community service initiatives. Their ideas span the globe, from Comfort Coloring Packages for children in California experiencing the loss of parents due to ICE raids, to student-led mental health clubs in India. In partnership with CT Speech & Action and the Journal of Student Science, students create action plans, form and lead teams, build websites, and market their work. Next year, they will also take part in weekly check-ins with the students running these projects. Below are some of the projects taking shape.

Brianna, a senior from Texas, hopes to start the Young Ladies of Christ, "a youth-led Christian organization dedicated to encouraging, supporting, and

empowering young women through faith, fellowship, and personal growth. Our mission is to create a safe, welcoming environment where young ladies can receive encouragement, strengthen their relationship with God, and connect with others who want to see them succeed…. Our primary goal is to grow YLC from a church-based initiative into a community organization that reaches young women throughout the Rio Grande Valley and, eventually, beyond our region."

Caralyn, a junior from Guam, aims to "Empower my island (Guam)'s youth through accessible, evidence based education that explores the psychological factors behind vaping and other health related behaviors." Because Guam has a high vaping rate, she plans to "reduce the level of vaping and drug [abuse] among the youth of my community" with support from local professionals, while also researching where young people turn for mental health support.

Soliana, a tenth grader from Ethiopia, writes, "I am deeply interested in finance, investment banking, private equity, business, and how financial systems contribute to economic growth and opportunity." Her mission is "to make financial education more accessible to students by creating opportunities for them to learn about finance, business, leadership, and career pathways in a practical and engaging way." She will begin with a Finance Club at her school, though "my long-term vision is bigger than a single school club."

A local middle schooler from South Windsor, Connecticut, founded CareKits, whose mission is "to support people who are going through severe life challenges." The kits are "bags packed with travel-sized hygiene items like toothpaste, toothbrushes, floss, mouthwash, wipes, lotion, soap, and hand sanitizer," along with canned food and "cards with kind, uplifting quotes." The project also gives teenagers hands-on volunteering experience.

Mariya, a sophomore from Ohio, leads OpenBook Health, "a global, youth-led nonprofit based in Columbus, Ohio. We teach kids and teens (ages 6–18+) about health, physical fitness, mental wellness, biology, and anatomy through free, fun online classes mentored by high school tutors, college pre-med/biology students, and adult health professionals."

Hailey, a junior from Hawaii, is creating The Beyond the Box Project to "Allow communities equal access to career knowledge and materials to reach their ambitions." She explains, "I want to organize events for elementary students to help them find careers they are interested in, and hosting meet-ups for high school students to help them reach their post-high school goals." She hopes to build an international team through the class.

Anarghya, from Karnataka, India, founded The Maya, whose mission is "to help everyone, mainly students learn and improve their creative skills." She wants to "Make creative fields approachable for beginners of any age, not just students," and plans to host free workshops that build creative confidence without relying on AI.

Farrah, an eleventh grader from Jakarta, Indonesia, describes Yoution as "a youth-led, virtual-first initiative establishing an accessible platform where young people merge scientific knowledge, human experience, and tangible action." The project works by "connecting biology, psychology, ecology, art, and philosophy to real-world challenges outlined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)."

Looking Ahead

These are only a few of the many remarkable ideas emerging from our community. In our writing classes, students begin with grammar practice before progressing to more complex analytical and creative writing. Public speaking students refine their persuasion and their use of ethos, pathos, and logos, while debate students at every level build their first cases and prepare for their first rounds and online tournaments. We look forward to seeing where this journey leads.

With gratitude,
The CTeen Changemakers Team