BROOKLYN DEBATE LEAGUE

October 2023

Dear parents/guardians,

My name is Angie Khadijah. I'm thrilled to be working with Achievement First Brooklyn High School this year and to support your students as they put into practice the values of speech and debate. I joined the Brooklyn Debate League as a coach and tournament judge five years ago as an undergraduate studying philosophy at Barnard College. Back in high school, I was a state champion in Senate Congress and went on to compete at (and win) national and state level tournaments almost every weekend. Debate is my passion - I truly believe that having a voice is an invaluable blessing, and that using it for good is an obligation.

In 2017, the Brooklyn Debate League ("BDL"), a nonprofit organization that offers support to public schools trying to build Speech & Debate teams, was built by my amazing mentor K.M. DiColandrea. The Achievement First debate team, previously led by 'DiCo', has been featured on Fox5 News, on MSNBC, in the New York Daily News, in Time Magazine, and more. The BDL has since gone to build debate programs to new schools across New York City, which allowed students to travel to UPenn, a national championship tournament in Kentucky, and more than a dozen competitions across New York City. Our alumni have attended top schools including Yale, Stanford, Princeton, Johns Hopkins and Columbia.

As a BDL staff member, I will be coaching at Achievement First to help build the congressional debate program. We can't wait to see what amazing accolades your student adds to the accolades of the alumni above.

I will be working alongside Achievement First's Speech & Debate coach, Papo Morales. Coach Morales is currently the AP Literature/ELA IV teacher and AF Brooklyn High School Alum from the Class of 2017. During his time at AFBHS, Coach Morales was one of the Founders of the Speech team in 2014. While he was on the team, he served as the Speech Captain for three years. Coach Morales is beyond excited to rejoin the team as a coach and is ready to build a nationally ranked team!

Achievement First Brooklyn High School's debate partnership with the BDL is a year long program that includes:

- Weekly congressional debate lessons with Coach Angie from 2:45-4:45 on Tuesdays
- After-school practice with Coach Morales on Thursdays from 2:45 - 3:45
- Online scrimmages from 5:45-8pm on: 10/19, 11/2, 11/16, 11/30, 12/14, 1/18, 2/1, 2/15, 2/29, 3/14, and 3/28.
- Optional online Brooklyn Debate League practices every other Thursday (when there isn't a scrimmage) from 5:30-7pm
- Weekend tournaments through the Brooklyn-Queens Catholic Forensic League
    - 10/21 MELS
    - 11/11 Xaverian
    - 12/16 Berkeley Carroll
    - 1/20 Location TBD
    - 2/3 Location TBD
    - 3/3 Grands - Location TBD
    - 3/23 Regionals - Location TBD
    - 4/12-14 States @ Hofstra
    - 5/24 Nationals in Chicago

P.S. These tournaments always need judges and chaperones! We welcome all parents/guardians, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and other adults to come support the kids in person as well as to see what tournaments are like. **If you're interested in getting involved, reach out to Coach Morales**.

If you have any questions about the team, feel free to reach out to Coach Morales at papomorales@achievementfirst.org

I'm looking forward to a great year together!

Angie Khadijah Lytle

**Why Speech & Debate: Student & Family Testimonials**

“For me, it was mostly about coming out of my shell. I knew I was smart but I used to be scared about what people would say when I opened my mouth, but Speech & Debate makes me not care about what other people think. Also, everyone is supportive. It’s like a family. And at tournaments we get to meet new people from across the country.”

- Mfon (Bowdoin College ‘24)

“As a parent, the main concern for our children is to be safe and protected, be kind and well rounded and to be successful. Speech & Debate has assisted my son Papo to succeed in all of this. The Speech & Debate Team is a second family for Papo. He has created bonds with his fellow "speechies" as well as bonds with the speechies he competes against. Papo has become one of the leaders of the team and I am proud to say his dedication to the others has made me so proud.”

- Lissette, mother of Papo (Lawrence University ‘21)

“Speech and debate means an opportunity to change the face of leaders in society today, the ability to immerse yourself in an event, create your niche, and find an outlet for your interests and talent surrounded by people joined with this common passion. Speech and debate means the ability to develop long lasting skills, like learning to use my voice effectively, confidence and much more.”

- Raani (University at Buffalo ‘24)

“Mis hijas estan en speech y debate en su escuela, el cual les ayuda mucho a perder el miedo de hablar en publico, lo cual considero muy importante para nuestros estudiantes que son el futuro de esta nacion. El equipo participa en prestigiosos torneos como Harvard y Yale. Tambien lo hacen en local en Brooklyn y Queens. Realmente he visto el beneficio de este programa y lo recomendo a todos los padres.”

- Esther, mother of Ariella (Wesleyan ‘20),
Esther (Yale ‘21), and Esmeralda (Stanford ‘23)

“Speech has allowed me to stand up for my people in a way that I never thought imaginable. It has given me the strength to give a voice to my often silenced community. Speech has taught me how to survive a white, male dominated world so that I can walk into those spaces with confidence.”

- Esther (Yale ‘21)

“Speech and Debate has allowed me to express my frustration towards the victory of white supremacy in America. The non-stop traveling and the palpable anticipation at Speech tournaments around the country not only fascinates me, it thrills me because I feel as though I am given an insight into reality outside AF walls.”

- Seyi (Williams ‘22)

**Please tear off and return this page to Coach Angie**

I have received the Debate Team schedule for this semester, and I understand that my child is expected to regularly attend all practices and tournaments.

Student Name _____

Student Email _____

Grade _____

Parent/Guardian Name _____

Parent/Guardian Email _____

Parent/Guardian Phone # _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

**To compete in tournaments, students MUST have a release form on file.**

Scan this code or visit [www.brooklyndebateleague.org/liability-release-forms](www.brooklyndebateleague.org/liability-release-forms) to complete

: