Our club, Downingtown STEM UNICEF, was founded in August of 2020 by Michelle Hong and Shannon Shih. The club is managed by a 7 member officer team and a teacher advisor: Noella Idem (VP), Caci Ramiscal (VP), Jonathan Luu (treasurer), Abhi Verma (treasurer), Mehek Lakhani (secretary), Ria Rege (secretary), Troy Ramiscal (communications officer), and Mrs. Feehery (teacher advisor). The officer team of UNICEF Club are all very passionate about bringing awareness and aid to children who are at a disadvantage, and we hope that little by little our club can bring major impacts and aid to those who need it the most. UNICEF’s motto of ‘For every child’ deeply resonates with us as we here at the Downingtown STEM Academy are given lots of opportunities to expand on our potential, and we strive to give the same opportunities to children around the globe.

UNICEF is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to advocate for the protection of children’s rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential.

Each month, UNICEF has a different theme and we hope to bring some insight onto the important themes of this month in the following information brought to you by our officer team.

World Water Day (March 22nd)
By Noella Idem & Heena Berwhal

World Water Day celebrates water and raises awareness of the 2.2 billion people living without access to safe water. It is about taking action to tackle the global water crisis (water scarcity). World Water Day makes it so people are in touch with what is going on in the world, and makes a Sustainable Development Goal. On World Water Day, one can engage in many activities to celebrate. More than 70 percent of Earth’s surface is covered in water, yet lack of access to clean water is one of the most pressing challenges of our time. As of 2015, 29 percent of people globally suffer from lack of access to safely managed drinking water. Poor water quality affects various aspects of society, from the spread of disease to crop growth to infant mortality, which is why it is extremely important for individuals to have access to clean water.

Sanitation & Hygiene
By Sakshi Jain, Hannah McGinty, Camille Covatta, Ritsika Chekuri, & Taarana Jammula

Proper sanitation is necessary for childhood survival and development, developing children’s education, increasing productivity, and building up an immune system to disease and disaster. More than 35% of the world lacks resources for proper sanitation. Some 827,000 people in low- and middle-income countries die as a result of inadequate water, sanitation, and hygiene each year, representing 60% of total diarrheal deaths. One-third of Caribbean and Latin American is polluted as a result of lack of sewage treatment. The severe water pollution is a threat to the economy and public health while disproportionately affecting women, children and those in poverty the most. For example, Brazil contains 96 rivers, creeks and lakes, but 40% of the water is terrible quality. Only 37.5% of sewage is treated in the country, contributing to the poor water quality. There were over 340,000 hospitalizations for gastrointestinal diseases, most likely caused by the poor quality of water, in 2013; 170,000 of which were children younger than 14. It is important to take-action soon because approximately 700 children under the age of 5 pass away every day due to a lack of proper hygiene and washing systems.

International Women's Day
By Caci Ramiscal & Anousha Jaie

International Women’s Day globally celebrates the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. It was first officially honored in 1911 in four European countries on March 19th. Later in 1913, it was officially agreed to be celebrated annually on March 8th! It was not until 1975 that International Women’s Day was celebrated by the United Nations for the first time. Today, groups worldwide come together to celebrate women's achievements, raise awareness about women's equality, lobby for accelerated gender parity, and fundraise for female-focused charities.

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This month is all things related to water, from preservation, equitable access to cleanliness, and the uses of water in sustainable and equitable hygiene! Come learn about this fascinating topic and future topics at our next club day meeting!

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