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Top of the Rock Observation Deck At Rockefeller Center

Student and youth travel is a large and lucrative industry with many different types of business coming together to facilitate the movement of student groups around the country and the world. On the surface, this is a decent explanation of what this market is. However, upon further examination it becomes clear that this industry is about much, much more. In a world where we find increasingly more division and segregation of ideals and

beliefs, student travel is an effective tool to cut away the negativity and promote a more understanding and unified world. It provides a real world education, encouraging student to think outside of their preconceived notions and beliefs.

We know it to be true that every student who travels is irreversibly changed from that point forward. Exposure to new neighborhoods, states and countries provide these children with new perspectives of the world and a better understanding of their place in it. Travel makes reality - real; it forces student to engage and explore a world that can never fully be comprehend from a classroom. It gives them an opportunity to see and be changed by experiences that are otherwise unavailable to them and makes them more likely to continue to engage with the world in a more positive and open-minded way. In short, travel forces student to be true citizens of the world.

Though the benefits of student travel are clear and substantive, it can be very difficult to make travel a reality for all students. Some decision-makers don't see the need for travel and even more are simply hamstrung by the lack of funds needed to help students go on these life-changing trips. The Student and Youth Travel Association (SYTA) has emerged as the most prominent advocate for student travel, bringing tour operators, attractions, restaurants, etc. together with the common goal of improving the state of student travel and making travel a reality for all. This is a group of people committed to the idea that travel changes young lives for good and, furthermore, that these young lives will then go on to improve a flawed world with the lessons they have learned from the diverse experiences they have been exposed to through travel. SYTA members are, more often than not, in the business for this mission as much as they are for any monetary gain. Membership is full of stories of how their own lives were changed by travel, inspiring them to do the same for future generations.

From the tour operators that market, sell and produce the trips for the groups to the attractions, museums, restaurants and tour guides that execute them, the student and youth travel industry is a multi-million dollar machine that only continues to grow and evolve. With the help of industry leaders, SYTA chief among them, there is growing hope that one day all children will be able to experience travel in some significant way. Until then, travel will continue to enrich the lives, minds and educations of the student who are fortunate enough to experience it.