



**American
Red Cross**

**Int'l Humanitarian Law
Youth Action Campaign**

American Red Cross' International Humanitarian Law Youth Action Campaign: Leadership Bootcamp

International Humanitarian Law Youth Action Campaign Summit Representatives attended an interactive presentation with team-building activities by Rachel Oni and Ashley Sheehy.

Wednesday, July 23rd, 2025, 10:00-12:00 AM ET

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SUMMARY: During the in-person Summit, Rachel Oni and Ashley Sheehy presented to Summit Representatives on leadership. The captivating presentation taught the students the characteristics of good leaders, and how leadership skills are improved over time. They then led a number of fun activities for Summit Representatives to practice the skills attributed to good leaders.

On Wednesday, July 23rd, Ashley Sheehy and guest speaker Rachel Oni held an interactive presentation and activities, aimed at developing leadership and team-building skills for the Summit Representatives. The speakers began by asking the group, "What makes a bad leader?" Responses included adjectives such as selfish, closed-minded, disrespectful, and more. The speakers then shifted the focus to "What makes a good leader?" Most of the Summit Representatives agreed that a good leader was dependable, open-minded, empathetic, respectful, good at communicating, etc. However, the speakers then emphasized how people aren't just "bad" leaders or "good" leaders. Bad leaders can be coachable, and characteristics of good

leaders are developed over time. The presenters explained how, in order to build good leadership skills, it is important to practice being a good leader in every setting. This can be done by fostering genuine relationships with people you work with, being accountable, practicing active listening, encouraging open communication and feedback, and appreciating the hard work others contribute.

After the presentation, good leadership skills were practiced through interactive activities. One notable activity was using Pictionary to work on communication skills. The group was divided into pairs, which consisted of a drawer and a describer. The describer knew the word and had to explain it using anything but the word so that the drawer could draw it. Most people were able to complete the challenge, demonstrating effective communication skills. In one group, a Summit Representative asked if the object was an item you use daily. His team member responded, "I use yours every day." The drawer was then able to deduce that the object was a water bottle, signifying the importance of connecting with the people you work with. If you know people on a level deeper than just the project at hand, you will be able to use the members' strengths and weaknesses effectively to have an even better end result.

Another activity was Silent Line Ordering. This challenge proved a bit more difficult. The advocates had to arrange themselves in order of shoe size without speaking to one another. During this activity, leadership was shown as initiative was taken, and some of the Summit Representatives started helping direct people. Body language and physical cues were also used in order to communicate, demonstrating that strong leadership extends beyond verbal communication, relying heavily on understanding and interpreting non-verbal signals to build trust and alignment within a team.

Additionally, Summit Representatives participated in an activity called Bridge the Gap. Representatives were divided into two groups seated at opposite sides of a table, separated by a

cardboard box that blocked their view of each other. The two groups were then timed to build half of a bridge with solo cups, Legos, and other arts and crafts supplies. The goal was for the bridges to be able to connect after the cardboard box was removed. The teams couldn't directly talk with each other, which made it even more challenging as well.

In the end, Summit Representatives had a blast developing essential life skills through these engaging activities. The students learned how to communicate more effectively, step up when needed, and work together to solve problems. They were able to identify what traits make a good or bad leader, and now have the knowledge to improve their own leadership skills even further by practicing being a good leader in every setting.