





# **The 38<sup>th</sup> AMBYESE Conference**

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**Saturday November 13, 2021  
@ The UConn Stamford Campus in Stamford,  
CT**





[www.ambyese.org](http://www.ambyese.org)

### Affiliates and Resources

Company Name	Logo	Websites
<p><b>American Express</b> The American Express Company, also known as AMEX, is an American multinational financial services corporation headquartered in New York City.</p>		<p><b>americanexpress.com</b></p>
<p><b>PepsiCo</b> PepsiCo Inc. is an American multinational food, snack, and beverage corporation headquartered in Purchase, NY, with interests in the manufacturing, marketing, and distribution of grain-based snack foods, beverages and other products.</p>		<p><b>pepsico.com</b></p>

## Affiliates and Resources

### Websites for Corporate Sponsors and Other Resources

Universities/AMBYESE/US Dept of Labor	Student Resources	Websites
<p><b>Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Students</b></p> <p>Find careers that relate to your interests and learn fun facts about the economy.</p>		<p><b>Type:</b> US Department of Labor  <b>Select:</b> Bureau of Labor Statistics  <b>Select:</b> Students</p>
<p><b>University of Connecticut</b></p> <p>The University of Connecticut is a public research university in the U.S. state of Connecticut. UConn was founded in 1881 and is a Land Grant and Sea Grant college &amp; member of the Space Grant Consortium. The university serves more than 30,000 students on its six campuses, including more than 8,000 graduate students in multiple programs.</p>		<p><b>Uconn.edu</b></p>
<p><b>University of Notre Dame</b></p> <p>The University of Notre Dame du Lac is a Catholic research university located near South Bend, Indiana, in the United States. In French, Notre Dame du Lac means "Our Lady of the Lake" and refers to the university's patron saint, the Virgin Mary.</p>		<p><b>.ND.edu</b></p>
<p><b>AMBYESE</b></p> <p><i>We've mentored thousands of culturally diverse high school students throughout Connecticut and New York, helping to prepare them for college and beyond.</i></p>		<p><b>AMBYESE.org</b></p>



At Linde, the more we leverage our diverse talent, the better equipped we are to serve our diverse customers and impact our global community.

Linde is a proud supporter of AMBYESE for preparing multicultural secondary school students for the challenges of a more diverse workforce in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Linde is proud to be recognized for its partnership with AMBYESE, Congratulations.



**Annual Multicultural Business Youth Educational Services  
Embarkment**

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Michelle J. Wheeler, Entrepreneur  
Angie Yugo, University of Notre Dame**



Annual Multicultural Business Youth  
Educational Services Embarkment

## **The 38th AMBYESE Conference Steering Committee**

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The 38th AMBYESE Conference Steering Committee Membership Team

- Vanessa Abrahams-John, Esq. Linde / Member of AMBYESE Board of Directors
- Dr. Jayme Beckham, Assistant Principal CT Vocational/Technical Schools / Secretary of AMBYESE Board of Directors
- Crystal March Brinkley, M.D. / Distinguished Mental Wellness Advocate / Dean Y.E.S., I Can Institute / Member of AMBYESE Board of Directors
- Dr. Paulette G. Curtis, Tulane University / Member of AMBYESE Board of Directors
- John H. Howell, CPA, Retired Partner, Ernst & Young / Member of AMBYESE Board of Directors
- Wendell L. Johnson, CEO of AMBYESE Board of Directors
- Julia Nable, Sandor Max / Member of AMBYESE Board of Directors
- Dr. Colin Parris, GE / Member of AMBYESE Board of Directors
- Terry Reilly, UCON-Stamford Campus / Member of AMBYESE Board of Directors
- Dr. Brenda L. Smith, United Nations / Retired Superintendent, Mount Vernon Public Schools / Member of AMBYESE Board of Directors
- Esperanza Teasdale, PepsiCo / Member of AMBYESE Board of Directors
- Michelle Johnson-Wheeler, Entrepreneur / Member of AMBYESE Board of Directors
- Angie Yugo, University of Notre Dame / Member of AMBYESE Board of Directors
- William Phillips, Associate Software Engineer, L3Harris Technologies / AMBYESE's Media Coordinator / Distinguished Member of AMBYESE Alumni Association
- Jaleesa Harrigan, Mistress of Ceremony, U.S. Naval Officer / Distinguished Member of AMBYESE Alumni Association
- Dr. Bailey Brown, Assistant Professor, Spelman College / Post Graduate Fellow, Princeton University / Distinguished Member of AMBYESE Alumni Association
- Spiro Milas, Guidance Counselor, Westhill High School / Distinguished Member of AMBYESE Steering Committee

*The 38th AMBYESE Conference is especially grateful to William Phillips for designing the program journal.*

## **Schools Represented at the 38th AMBYESE Conference**

Danbury High School

Brien McMahon

Immaculate High School

Mount Vernon High School

Stamford High School

Westhill High School

Woodlands High School

Norwalk Early College Academy

Iona Preparatory

Henry Abbott Technical High School

Stonington High School

## Presenters

- Jaleesa Harrigan, Mistress of Ceremony, U.S. Naval Officer / Distinguished Member of AMBYESE Alumni Association
- Dr. Jayme Beckham, Assistant Principal CT Vocational/Technical Schools / Secretary, AMBYESE Board of Directors
- Avery Turton, sophomore, Union College / Distinguished Member of AMBYESE Alumni Association
- Lynn Sanchez, senior, Immaculate High School / Participant Y.E.S., I Can Institute
- Spiro Milas, Guidance Counselor, Westhill High School / Distinguished Member of AMBYESE Steering Committee
- Gabrielle Yamoah, sophomore, Brookfield High School / Participant Y.E.S., I Can Institute
- Jake Windas, senior, Immaculate High School / Participant Y.E.S., I Can Institute
- Taylor Bennett, senior, Denzel Washington School of Arts / Participant Y.E.S., I Can Institute
- Anna Flaherty, senior Immaculate High School / Participant Y.E.S., I Can Institute
- Brandon Wheeler, Director of Business Operations, National Basketball Coaches Association
- Kimberly Bornstein, Admissions Officer, UCONN-Stamford Campus
- Lorena Curtis, Y.E.S., I Can Instructor -Transiting of High School to College / Distinguished Member of AMBYESE Alumni Association
- Farley Santos, Assistant Vice President / Community Development Manager / Bank Ambassador, Savings Bank of Danbury
- Viktoria Wulff-Andersen, Freshman, Duke University / Distinguished Member of AMBYESE Alumni Association
- William Phillips, Associate Software Engineer, L3Harris Technologies /AMBYESE's Media Coordinator / Distinguished Member of AMBYESE Alumni Association
- Rachana Somaskandan, freshman, Northeastern University / Distinguished Member of AMBYESE Alumni Association
- Vanessa Abrahams-John, Esq. Linde / Member of AMBYESE Board of Directors
- Cecilia Coleman, freshman, Smith College / Distinguished Member of AMBYESE Alumni Association
- Carla Brice, Vice President, IBM
- Rejon Taylor Foster, UX/UI Engineering, Web Development / Distinguished Member of AMBYESE Alumni Association
- Mireya Iglesias -Ayala & Matthew Conrado, Global Marketing at PepsiCo
- Maame Efua Forson, freshman, Harvard University / Distinguished Member of AMBYESE Alumni Association
- Angie Yugo, University of Notre Dame, Pre-College Programs / Member of AMBYESE Board of Directors



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## Conference Presenter and Affiliate Biographies

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### **Jaleesa T. Harrigan** **Nuclear Trained Officer,** **United States Navy**



Jaleesa T. Harrigan is a devoted, career-driven and outgoing young professional who has made a name for herself in the field of engineering. She is a native of Danbury, CT and a nuclear-trained Surface Warfare Officer (SWO-N) in the United States Navy. Jaleesa is a graduate of Bethel High School and participated in the Y.E.S I Can summer program for three consecutive years. She is a proud alumna of AMBYESE and continues to contribute to the programs agenda. She is a Howard University Alumna with a Bachelor's of Science in Applied Mathematics and a minor in Computer Science. While pursuing her degree, she was an active member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., Bison Cheerleading, Math Club and Pi Mu Epsilon Math Honor Society.

Jaleesa earned her commission through the George Washington University Navy Reserve Officers Training Corps. She served aboard USS BUNKER HILL (CG-52), developing proficiency in leading teams through various navigation, combat systems, and tactical surface warfare scenarios. Jaleesa successfully matriculated the Navy's post-graduate nuclear propulsion training pipeline, which focused on theory, design, operation and maintenance of naval nuclear propulsion plants.

Ms. Harrigan served aboard USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN (CVN-72) as the production manager for the carrier's reactor propulsion systems and led watch teams through her role as a Propulsion Plant Watch Officer. She provided ongoing expertise in unit-level nuclear energy, maintenance, repairs, planning, crew supervision, quality assurance and compliance. As a Department of Energy and Department of Defense qualified supervisor of Navy Nuclear Propulsion systems, she enforced effective reactor management, radiological controls, and environmental safety while fulfilling the role of a principal assistant to the ship's Reactor Officer.

In February 2020, Jaleesa received the "Most Promising Engineer in Government" Award at the 2020 Black Engineer of the Year STEM Conference. Stationed in Millington, TN as a Nuclear Programs Manager, she prepares potential engineers for the Navy.

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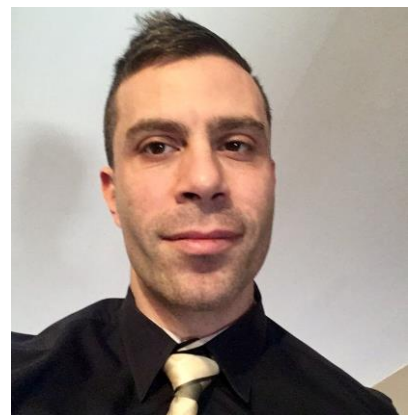
**Jayne Beckham,**  
**Assistant Principal,**  
**Henry Abbot Technical High School, Danbury CT**



Jayne Beckham is an Assistant Principal at Henry Abbott Technical High School in Danbury, CT. She attended Western CT State University and earned an undergraduate degree in Secondary Education with a specialization in English Language Arts in 2005. After that, she continued at WCSU to earn her master's degree in Instructional Technology in 2008. She began her teaching career at Bethel High School in 2006, and during her first few years there earned her 092/6th Year Administrator's degree from Sacred Heart University. In 2014, Jayne left her teaching career to become an administrator with the CT Technical Education and Career System (CTECS). In 2020, Jayne earned her Doctoral degree in General Education from Northcentral University. Jayne has been involved with the AMBYESE organization since 2008 starting as the YES I Can program's English Language Arts SAT prep instructor. Over the years, her role in AMYESE evolved to include being a business and educational consultant and the board secretary. Jayne lives in Sandy Hook, CT with her 11 year old son Liam and her bulldog Jabba.

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**Spiro Milas**  
**School Counselor,**  
**Westhill High School**



Spiro Milas was born in Yonkers, New York. He has a Master's Degree in Guidance and Counseling from the College of New Rochelle. He has been a School Counselor at Westhill High School since 2006 and has been a proud liaison between Westhill High School and AMBYESE since 2008. Spiro Milas also is a Bible Youth leader and a member of Loving Heart for Haiti. Spiro Milas noted, "I decided to participate in Ambyese's Steering Committee because I have come across very few programs in my career which solely desire to provide education and educational experiences to students and not seek anything from them in return. Ambyese is a wonderful organization."

## **Farley Santos**

**Assistant Vice President/Community Development  
Manager,  
Savings Bank of Danbury**



Farley Santos has been employed with Savings Bank of Danbury for nearly 14 years. He is currently an Assistant Vice President/Community Development Manager and Bank Ambassador. He started at the bank as a Float Teller and rose through the ranks as a Senior Teller, Teller Manager, Assistant Branch Manager, Branch Manager and is now in his current role. He oversees sales and customer satisfaction for 2 branches. He has taken every educational opportunity offered by Savings Bank of Danbury including Center for Finance Training courses such as Accounting, Banking 101, and Human Resources. He is also a graduate of the Connecticut Bankers Association's 2 year Connecticut School of Finance and Management Course. Through Savings Bank of Danbury, Farley has volunteered with many non-profits including the United Way of Western Connecticut, Junior Achievement of Greater Fairfield County and Danbury Students and Business Connection. He is currently a board member of the Danbury Police Activities League. He's a former Danbury Board of Education member and current Danbury City Councilman. Farley lives in Danbury with his wife, Kathleen and daughter, Khloë.

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## **Bailey Brown**

**Assistant Professor of Sociology,  
Spelman College**



Dr. Bailey Brown as an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Spelman College where she researches and teaches on urban sociology, race and ethnicity, and education. Prior to her role at Spelman, Bailey was a Presidential Postdoctoral Fellow at Princeton University. Bailey completed her PhD in sociology from Columbia University. At Columbia, Bailey previously earned a M. Phil. and M.A and was named Paul F. Lazarsfeld Fellow and a Ford Foundation Predoctoral Fellow. Bailey holds a bachelor's degree in sociology with minors in urban education and Africana studies from the University of Pennsylvania. Bailey was a Ronald E. McNair Scholar, a Leadership Alliance Fellow and received top departmental honors for her senior thesis at Penn. Bailey is a graduate of Danbury High School and participated in the Y.E.S I can Summer program and the ASM materials camp during high school. Bailey is a proud alumna of AMBYESE and continues to volunteer for the organization.

## **Rejon Taylor – Foster**

**Software Engineer,  
ScienceIO**



Howdy I'm Rejon, a multifaceted developer-designer captivated with envisioning unforgettable experiences. My specialties lie in UX/UI Engineering, Web Development, and Game Development. I've done work for clients such as Disney, Scholastic, Bose, Harmonix, and many others. By day I'm a full stack developer at the healthcare AI platform ScienceIO, while at night I'm a co-owner of a queer-poc focused video game developer Soft Not Weak, and run my own production studio Maximum Crash. In my spare time, I compose music, fix hardware, teach, and explore fashion design. I received my BA degree in Game Programming and Development with a minor in Audio Production and a minor in Japanese Culture from Becker College.

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## **Kim Bornstein**

**Admissions Officer  
University of Connecticut-Stamford**



Kim Bornstein has over 11 years of experience working in Higher Education in various positions. She has worked at an All-Women's Institution, a Technical Institution and in roles that included living in a Residential Capacity with college students. She has been at UConn Stamford for over five years. During her time at UConn Stamford, she has worked with a team to increase enrollment from 350 new students to over 900 first-year students. UConn Stamford also successfully opened Residence Halls in 2018 and now has over 500 students living on campus. Kim's daily work includes speaking on numerous panels throughout Connecticut, planning large-scale recruitment initiatives and events, as well as supervising a team of 15 student Tour Guides. In addition, Kim Bornstein has presented at various conferences including a Visitor Conference in Portland, OR and an Admissions Conference at the University of Rhode Island. In her free time, she loves to run marathons and be with her dog Jada. Kim attended Quinnipiac University for her Undergraduate Career and attended the University of Massachusetts-Amherst for her Graduate Degree. She is passionate about assisting students on their college journey and is looking forward to working with you.

**Carla Brice**  
**Vice-President and Assistant Controller,**  
**Controls**  
**IBM**



Carla Brice is a growth-minded finance leader with ~20 years of experience in risk management, financial planning, business agility, enablement, and organization capability. She was awarded a US patent for developing IBM's country financial risk methodology. Carla partnered with leaders to implement the finance transformation program that received a bronze Stevie Award in achievements in finance. She is a member of the F&O organizational capability team, a select group of leaders in IBM. Carla is committed to helping cultivate the next generation of leaders. She is the executive sponsor of the IBM-Howard University relationship and mentors people inside and outside of IBM.

Carla started her professional career at Banc of America Investments. She was an investment principal and led a team of sales and trading professionals who serviced high-net-worth clients. After obtaining her MBA, Carla joined IBM. There, she enjoyed learning and developing in corporate finance. Currently, she is the Vice President and Assistant Controller of Controls. In this role, Carla has the imperative to lead the controls framework and support the business in achieving business objectives in an effective, efficient, and ethical manner in all business units and countries.

Carla holds a BBA in International Business from Howard University in Washington, DC, and an MBA in Finance from the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University. She is an ordained Christian Elder and leader in her local church and a published author of three five-star rated novels in the fiction genre. Carla has a passion for teaching and young people. She believes every child is worth the investment. Carla is blessed with an awesome extended family, a loving husband, and three bright and beautiful children.

**Vanessa Abrahams-John**  
**Chief Diversity Officer and Executive**  
**Director of Organizational Development,**  
**Linde**



Vanessa Abrahams-John is the Chief Diversity Officer and executive director of global Organizational Development for Linde since 2012, after acting as senior legal counsel for 5 years. In her role, she leads the development and execution of global strategies to enhance and leverage diversity and organizational development to enhance performance, inclusion, innovation and business success. Specifically, she designs, leads and scales training initiatives, including unconscious bias, sponsorship and inclusive leadership and coaching across Linde's 100 country global footprint. Further, she collaborates with global human resources teams to build local strategies to attract, develop and retain under-represented talent. Within the United States, she designs and leads courageous conversations and a leadership task force to address racial and systemic inequality. Additionally, she is responsible for Talent Acquisition to promote best-in-class diversity and inclusion practices throughout global recruitment and hiring processes. Under her leadership, Linde has been consistently and annually recognized as a diversity leader by Forbes, Bloomberg's Gender Equality Index, DiversityInc and the Corporate Equality Index for LGBTQ workplace inclusion.

Abrahams-John joined Linde in 2007 as senior legal counsel. Prior to that, she practiced corporate law in New York City and Delaware, and served as an adjunct professor at Pace University.

Abrahams-John earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Western Ontario, Canada and a law degree from Howard University School of Law, Washington D.C. She is a director on the boards of the Bronx Bethany Community Corporation, Women's Business Development Council, and AMBYESE, and serves on the Executive Leadership Council and the New York City Bar Committee on Diversity & Inclusion. In 2014, Abrahams-John was recognized as Diversity & Inclusion Leader of the Year by the Southern Connecticut Chapter of SHRM. In 2017, she was named Top 25 Black Women by the Network Journal and has been named as a Top Executive in Corporate Diversity by Black Enterprise. In 2019, she was named a Woman of Impact by the Women's Business Development Council of Connecticut.

**William Phillips**  
**Associate Software Engineer,**  
**L3Harris Technologies**

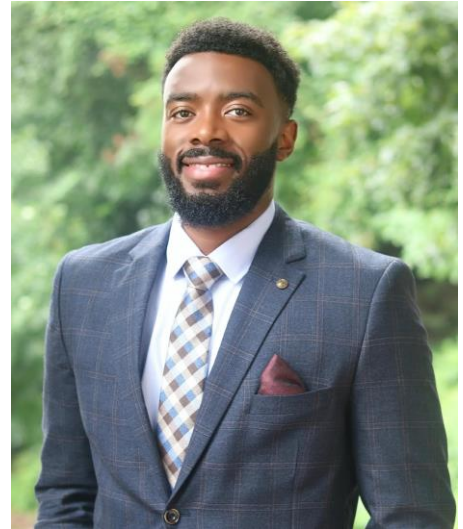


My name is William Phillips. I am a Class of 2016 graduate from the AMBYESE YES I CAN Program, a Class of 2017 graduate from Mount Vernon High School and a Class of 2021 college graduate from the University at Buffalo, acquiring my Bachelors of Science degree in Computer Science. My time at the University of Buffalo was spent in earnest, chasing after my goals and dreams and overcoming any barrier I had encountered.

Computer Science and engineering has always been a passion of mine and although I have gained a great deal of knowledge and experience throughout my coursework, outside the classroom is where I have been able to utilize this growing skillset to its full extent. At my university I have worked on an ongoing extensive research project targeted to assist patients diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease to be able to communicate utilizing Alternative & Augmentative Communication devices. The particular device we're utilizing is Brain Computer Interface, a device that reads and records brainwave activity and the objective is to be able to transcribe a user's thoughts into communicative text. During the summer of 2019, I had the opportunity to intern at Ford Motor Company as a Product Development Intern. I was tasked to confirm whether or not it is possible for smart watches to communicate to motor vehicles via Bluetooth Low Energy signals and execute commands. Now as a college graduate, I am an Associate Software Engineer at L3Harris Technologies, a global government contracting aerospace and defense company. I particularly work in the Space and Air-Borne Systems sector where I can apply my engineering skills programming satellites, space stations, radars and surveillance systems. My new position is really exciting as the space sector is starting to gain more traction and attention so there will be a lot of opportunities for career growth.

As productive as my college experience has been so far and acquiring this position, I remind myself daily that all things stem from humble beginnings. If it wasn't from my experience as a YES I CAN student, I wouldn't be where I am today. Prior to my participation in the program, I had both low SAT and ACT scores, I wasn't aware of what LinkedIn is, and how it could be leveraged to network with professionals, as well as being unaware of the opportunities the software engineering field can hold. The YES I CAN program allowed me to grow in aspects that I would have never considered.

**Brandon Wheeler**  
**Director of Business Operations,**  
**National Basketball Coaches Association**



Brandon Wheeler is a graduate of Bentley University in Waltham, MA, majoring in Finance with a minor in Sociology. Upon graduation from Bentley, he completed a two-year finance rotational program at Boston Scientific Corporation; this program included roles in global operations financial planning & analysis, as well as treasury operations.

At the NBA Coaches Association, Brandon manages day-to-day business operations for the Coaches Association. These duties include directing NBCA long-term strategic growth initiatives, driving data, and financial analysis around maximizing salary, incentives, benefits, and marketing opportunities for NBCA members, and evaluating new business opportunities for the NBCA.



**Mireya Iglesias-Ayala**  
**Senior Marketing Analyst,**  
**Pepsi TM Strategy & Innovation**



Mireya Iglesias Ayala is a Senior Marketing Analyst at PepsiCo managing strategy and innovation for Pepsi TM brand. In her prior role, Mireya managed the Bubly Sparkling Water brand by focusing on social and digital communication strategies. Previously, she formed part of the PBNA Hispanic Business Unit, leading Pepsi Hispanic efforts in the US.

A graduate of Georgetown University with two B.S. degrees in Marketing and International Business, Mireya began her career at PepsiCo as a campus recruit where she interned for Mountain Dew. She also serves as PepsiCo's Adelante Hispanic Employee Resource Group Co-Lead and as lead of the Undergraduate Diversity Recruiting efforts for the New York Marketing Department.

Mireya was born in Tucson, AZ and is a first-generation Mexican-American raised both in Arizona and Sonora, Mexico. She currently resides in New York City. She is a travel enthusiast, having been to 13 countries to date and lives by the motto "Don't let small minds convince you that your dreams are too big"

**Matthew Conrado**  
**Senior Marketing Analyst,**  
**PepsiCO, North Division Brand Marketing**



Matthew Conrado is currently a senior marketing analyst on the north division brand marketing team focusing specifically on the New York City market. He leads LGBTQ+ strategy, Hispanic strategy and is responsible for executing 360 marketing programs for partners like Madison Square Garden, Yankees and Pier 17.

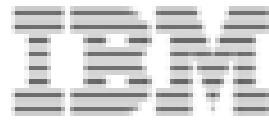
As a former graduate of Fordham University he held a variety of different internships in multiple industries including CBS, Michael Kors, John Varvatos, Group M, and Calvin Klein.

He was nominated for an Outie Award for best LGBTQ marketing for his drag for all flavors campaign and was selected as a 2021 pride star by Ad Week. His work for bubly out at night and DFAF has been featured in Ad Age, Ad Week, Out Magazine, Paper Magazine, Yahoo! and Page six.

He is currently the youngest executive chair for the North Division Equal Team and also has sat on the board of directors for a non profit- organization called Out For Undergrad recruiting LGBTQ+ undergraduates to fortune 500 companies.

The following are the 38th AMBYESE Conference's  
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**Savings Bank  
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The AMBYESE family and organization would like to thank all their sponsors. Without your contributions, our programs would not be possible.