

Het Laatste Nieuws, Thursday 21 February 2013

Important Visitors in the Region.

Ibis Welcomes US-Ambassador.

By Leen Belpaeme

Bredene – US Ambassador Howard Gutman yesterday visited the Royal Werk Ibis in Bredene. The students had invited him themselves.

The boys at this school are getting used to receiving important visitors. Among others, King Albert and Princess Mathilde have visited. Still, the students were pleasantly surprised with Howard Gutman's visit, because he had responded to their invitation. "In English class, the students of the third year wrote a letter to the ambassador to wish him a Happy New Year. It became a playful letter about American culture and my bond with the country," says teacher Frank Borrey.

"Fabulous"

The playful letter clearly attracted Ambassador Gutman's attention, who himself said that he could not refuse. "It is the best letter that I have received since coming to Belgium. It was really 'fabulous.' You guys are the best," said Gutman. The Ambassador learned more about Ibis during a talk with the principal, but also sat down with the students themselves. They each could ask him a question, to which he each time elaborately responded, to the delight of the boys themselves. Gutman talked extensively about the US, his career, and his bond with President Obama. When the sports topic came up, the Ambassador's knowledge of basketball did not prove completely accurate. He thought that Johan Vande Lanotte was the owner of the basketball club Ostend. Afterwards, the students appeared impressed. "We never thought that he would actually come. He is very hip and relaxed. In contrast to the Royal family, he really took his time to listen to us. It is also nice to hear that we are the best," said David, Jens, Michael and Joran.