



UNA★USA
Johnson County Chapter

News and Events

c/o JC UNA
308 E. Burlington St. #245
Iowa City, IA 52240

July 2021

Chapter Members Participate in the UNA-USA Week of Action

Several members of the Johnson County Chapter participated in the UNA-USA Week of Action, June 6-11. In non-pandemic years, our national organization convenes a leadership summit in Washington DC which includes a day on Capitol Hill. This year's conference was a virtual event.

On Tuesday, June 8, chapter members Barbara Eckstein, Sandra Eskin, Katy Hansen, Caryl Lyons, Jim Olson, and Nancy Porter took part in online meetings with aides to Senators Grassley and Ernst. The central purpose of these meetings was to ask the senators to support full funding of the U.S. contribution to the UN Regular Budget, UN Peacekeeping, and the family of UN agencies. Joining us on the call were thirteen Iowa UNA student Ambassadors from Drake University, the University of Iowa, and Central, Grinnell and Luther colleges. Several of them described the importance of the UN in international security, health, environment and climate action, and human rights. The Ambassadors are the initial cohort of a new program created and directed by Iowa UNA

Executive Director Debra DeLaet.

Nolan Mayhew, the newly appointed correspondent for national security and foreign relations in Sen. Ernst's office, complimented our delegation on our "professionalism" and "passion" and described our multigenerational delegation as a model of civic engagement. He asked us how we respond to UN detractors and promised to convey our message to the Senator.

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James Rice, Sen. Chuck Grassley's longtime legislative director, affirmed the importance of engagement in international organizations. He raised the point that the threatened or actual withholding of financial support to the UN or its agencies (for example, the World Health Organization) may generate momentum for reform.

The following day, four members from our chapter meet with Caroline Bender, aide to newly-elected Second District Representative Mariannette Miller Meeks. We took the opportunity to introduce UNA and the Johnson County Chapter and to urge full funding for U.S. contributions and assessments for the UN. This meeting was our first contact with Rep. Miller Meeks and we intend to use it as the basis for continuing communication.

Participating chapter members were Barbara Eckstein, Sandra Eskin, Caryl Lyons, and Jim Olson. Our delegation also included two UNA Ambassadors who are students at the University of Iowa: Isabella Mims and Sandrah Nasimiyu

Correction

Our list of Night of 1000 Dinners sponsors in our last newsletter omitted the Iowa City Foreign Relations Council. We apologize for this oversight and thank ICFRC – and all our sponsors, donors, and ticket purchasers – for their support.

From the President

by Jim Olson

The end of the academic and program years is a time for expressing congratulations.



Congratulations to our chapter's

new members and our two life members Sandra Eskin and Mercedes Bern-Klug

Congratulations to the Iowa UNA and Executive Director Deb DeLaet for creating the student Ambassadors — 13 students at Iowa colleges and universities who are organizing UN-related activities on their campuses.

Congratulations to City High students Raven Levitt and Reyna Roach who were recognized as Outstanding Delegates at the Iowa High School Model United Nations.

Congratulations to chapter member John Fraser, chair of the Iowa City Climate Commission, and board member Blake Rupe who is an Iowa City Climate Ambassador.

Congratulations to Carolina Herrera, Suraj Moorjani and other leaders of the 40-member UI Campus Chapter of UNA.

Plans are underway for the fall, including the observances of the International Day of Peace (September 21), the International Day of Older Persons (October 1), and UN Day (October 24).

Model UN Goes Virtual

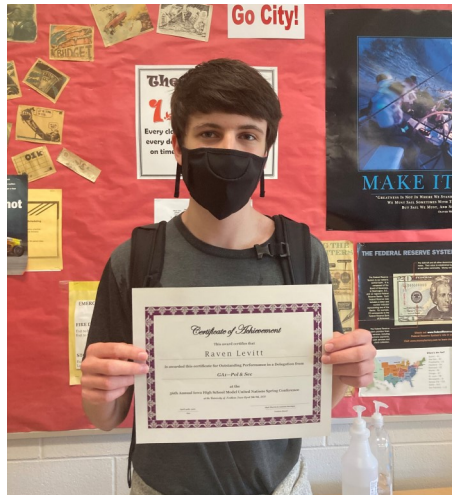
The Model United Nations group at City High School participated in several virtual activities in recent months. Steve Dodge, the faculty advisor, reports that he conducted online mini-conferences to form resolutions on climate change and pandemics.

The University of Northern Iowa hosted an online version of the annual Iowa High School Model United Nations this spring.

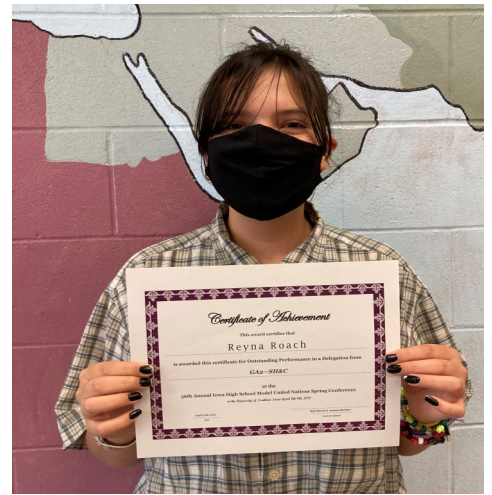
Ten City High students participated: Julianne Berry-Stoelzle, Max Berry-Stoelzle, Adalie Burton, Harper Denniston, Quinter Harvey, Raven Levitt, Lilly Luensmann, Emme Perencevich, Reyna Roach, and Araminta Siegling.

Two of the students – Raven Levitt and Reyna Roach – were recognized as outstanding delegates. When the Iowa High School MUN returns to in-person conferences, our chapter will provide financial support for the participation of Johnson County students as it has for many years.

*This should give us
a good returning group
for next year
for what will hopefully be
an in-person conference.
Steve Dodge*



Raven Levitt



Reyna Roach

Welcome New Members!

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members who have joined our chapter since January 1: Lucero Martinez, Gay Mikelson, Loren Ndremizaia, Zachary Rochester, Deb Schoelerman, Mary Stein, and Jim Throgmorton.

Please share this newsletter with a friend and invite them to join our chapter to affirm their interest in world affairs, their belief in international cooperation, and their support for our work.

Veteran of Foreign Service is New U.S. Ambassador to UN

By Barbara Eckstein

Linda Thomas-Greenfield, a thirty-five-year veteran of the Foreign Service, assumed office as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations on February 25, 2021. Most recently, during the Obama Administration, she was the 18th Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs.



Thomas-Greenfield was born in Louisiana in 1952 and raised in Baker, Louisiana, where she recalls Klan members routine-

ly burning crosses on lawns. She attended Louisiana State University at the same time as Klan leader David Duke who, as a student, spoke publicly in support of anti-Semitism and white supremacy. After graduation from LSU, Thomas-Greenfield earned a Master's Degree in Public Administration from the University of Wisconsin at Madison and completed additional graduate work there.

Before joining the Foreign Service in 1982, she taught political science at Bucknell University. In the Foreign Service she has held many positions: Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (2004-06); Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs (2006-08); Ambassador to Liberia (2008-12); Director General of the For-

eign Service and, concurrently, Director of Human Resources (2012-13). She has also held foreign postings in Switzerland at the United States Mission to the United Nations, as well as in Pakistan, Kenya, The Gambia, Nigeria, and Jamaica. In the Trump Administration 2017 purging of the State Department, hers was among the many positions terminated.

During her 2021 confirmation hearing with the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, questions arose about a 2019 speech she made at the Savannah State University Beijing-backed Confucius Institute. At the time she was working for a consulting firm for strategic commercial diplomacy co-chaired by former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. Thomas-Greenfield headed their African Practice. She agreed with the Senate committee that there were reasons to be concerned about China's "malign" influence in the world and noted especially its tactics in Africa including the laying of "debt traps." Although in the hearing she called the speech a mistake, she observed that she had agreed to give the speech as part of encouraging African American young people to consider careers in the foreign service. The Confucius Institute has since been shut down.

Her nomination was confirmed by the U.S. Senate in a 78-20 vote. She promises "genuine, old-

fashioned, people-to-people diplomacy." She calls this "gumbo diplomacy," the kind of relationships built, she explained, in talking about difficult topics while chopping onions for a gumbo. In its February 23, 2021, story about Thomas-Greenfield's confirmation as ambassador, *The New York Times* picked up her phrase "Diplomacy is Back" as its headline.

When first indicating his intention to nominate Thomas-Greenfield, President Biden noted that, as Ambassador to the United Nations, she would also be a member of his cabinet and a member of his National Security Council.

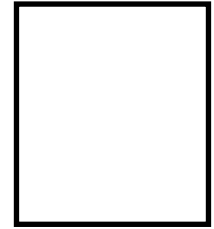
Since her confirmation as U.S. ambassador to the UN, Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield has been actively engaged in diplomacy around the world. For example, earlier this month she was at the border region of Hatay and particularly at Bab al Hawa crossing where Syrian refugees pass into Turkey. After meeting with UN and other humanitarian workers from NGO's at the crossing, she announced in Ankara on June 4, 2021, that USAID is providing almost \$240 million in humanitarian funding for Syrian refugees and for Turkish communities hosting them. In addition to other humanitarian aid, the U.S. will be sending millions of doses of COVID vaccine to sites of need

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Address Service Requested

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strategic stability. She emphasized not only how crucial it is that this border remain open for Syrian refugees but also how great is their need for a second border crossing site in the region. In response to a reporter's question, she stated clearly that if the Bab al Hawa crossing is closed, people will die.

Just three days later, on June 7, 2021, Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield addressed the UNA-USA week of action audience on zoom. In introducing the Ambassa-

dor, Peter Yeo, President of the Better World Campaign, echoed an observation about the ambassador often seen and heard in descriptions of her: she is a "transformational diplomat." The ambassador spoke forthrightly about the Biden-Harris administration's commitment to the United Nations and to a global vision of their work. She pointed, for example, to the U.S. commitment of significant quantities of COVID vaccines to COVAX for fair distribution around the world. She repeated also the welcome news that

the U.S. would meet its financial obligations to the UN within two years. Undergirding these specific commitments was her understanding that in all places and among all people scarcity leads to desperation and desperation to violence. The interruption of this cycle is at the core of the work of the UN and of the ambassador.

You can stay informed about Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield's work at <https://usun.usmission.gov/category/remarks-and-highlights/>.

UNA Membership Renewal Form

Please be certain your membership is up to date!

Membership Rates: \$50 Regular Member, \$25 Introductory Member, no fee for youth 24 and younger

Student memberships are free if application is made through GenUN at genun.unausa.org/

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