



UNA★USA

NEWSLETTER

EVENTS

JOHNSON COUNTY CHAPTER
SEPTEMBER 2022

International Day of Peace Event

Tuesday, September 20th, 5:30 p.m.
Mercer Park (1317 Dover St., Iowa City). Program includes a performance by Family Folk Machine choral group.

Sponsors: JCUNA, Peace Iowa, Veterans for Peace, Iowa PSR, UI Center for Human Rights, Iowa City Office of Equity and Human Rights

International Day of Older Persons Event

Friday, September 30th, 10:00 a.m.
Senior Center (28 S. Linn St., Iowa City). Workshop: “Building a Dementia-friendly Community”
Sponsors: JCUNA, UI School of Social Work/Aging and Longevity Studies Program, Senior Center, Csomay Center for Gerontological Excellence

UN Day of Observance

Wednesday, October 26th, 12:00 p.m.
In-person at Midwest One Bank (102 S. Clinton St., Iowa City), lower level and live-streamed. For information on live-streaming, please check the ICFRC website: icfrc.org.

David Cwiertny, Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering, “Using the UN Sustainable Development Goals to Train Tomorrow’s Sustainability Leaders”

Sponsors: JCUNA and Iowa City Foreign Relations Council

JCUNA Annual Meeting

Sunday, November 13th, 1:30 p.m.
Via Zoom. After a short business meeting, Barbara Eckstein and Mercedes Bern-Klug will share perspectives on UNA-USA meetings in June.



Focusing on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In her article on pp 2-3, our Vice President Barbara Eckstein writes, “We need to roll up our sleeves, pull up our socks, and get those three UN pillars [peace and security, human rights and sustainable development] and the 17 SDGs in front of the public for the sake of all.”

The events listed at the left focus on the SDGs: the International Day of Peace event on September 20 relates to Goal #16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions); our September 30 event to mark the International Day of Older Persons touches on several goals, including Goal #10, Reduced Inequalities; and our United Nations Day event (October 26) will showcase how the SDGs are a framework for a new University of Iowa program.





JIM OLSON

Thank you for your ongoing support.

The Board and committees have been busy over the summer preparing for an especially active 2022-23 program year. Our work is increasingly focused on the UN Sustainable Development Goals. I am excited to report that the Board has endorsed an initiative to monitor the implementation of the SDGs in our community. More details will follow in coming months.

Our 2022 virtual annual meeting will be Sunday, November 13 at 1:30 p.m. Prior to the meeting you will receive a ballot with candidates for election to officer positions and the Board. That mailing will also include information on new international opportunities to complement our community-based work.

I look forward to seeing you – either in person or on the screen – at the events listed on page 1

Thank you for spreading the word about the UN and JCUNA and helping us expand our visibility in Johnson County.

The UNA-USA Leadership Summit

June 5-7, 2022, Washington, D.C.

BY BARBARA ECKSTEIN

After interruptions from COVID, this year the UNA-USA Leadership Summit was again inviting face to face interactions of chapter leaders, seasoned and new. COVID wasn't entirely out of the picture. The summit was hybrid with many attendees listening, watching, and posing questions on-line. At least two proposed speakers were delayed or absent altogether because of the virus. Not to be outdone, climate change asserted itself as well: a representative from Miami told of a harrowing trip to the airport, swerving amidst vehicles washed off the road by torrential rains. Public health, climate change, women's and children's well-being, displaced peoples amidst violence in Yemen, Ukraine and elsewhere: all lent urgency to our presence together in Washington in June.

The summit's organizers offered sessions with knowledgeable and articulate employees of the UN, UNA, the U.S. delegation to the UN, and the Better World Campaign, a UNA-USA partner leading fundraising and lobbying efforts. For a first-time attendee like me, there were ample opportunities to get clear on the structure and foci of the UN and the centrality of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in its mission now. I didn't have to ask, "What should UNA chapters and their members do to help?" Opportunities for action were offered at every turn.

Even if you are an old hand at UNA work, it might be good to have the reminder that the three pillars of the UN are peace and security, human rights, and sustainable development. Its five principal organs are the well-known General Assembly and Security Council, but also the Economic and Social Council, the key managerial body of the Secretariat, and the International Court of Justice. There are, in addition, funds and programs such as the World Food Programme; specialized agencies, such as the World Health Organization and UNESCO; and other entities and bodies, such as the UN High Commissioner on Refugees and UNAID. In a variety of other ways—some we see and some we don't—the UN, through special political missions, special envoys, and diplomacy, builds peace.

With this organization laid out before me, it is easier to answer the criticism that the UN is an unwieldy, money-guzzling bureaucracy with specific assurance that

The UNA-USA Leadership Summit (cont.)

the current Secretary General has been especially attentive to and effective at creating efficiencies and greater transparency in the Secretariat, the largest managerial body of the UN. Or one can tell Americans that the current president of the Court of Justice is Joan Donahue, an American. (One can tell others who would just as soon America had less influence in the UN that her position rotates and that all 15 justices have 9-year terms with no one nation seating more than one justice.). And one can answer the perennial fear that the UN is a world government with the calm assurance that it is not a world government, but it is a place where the world's nations can gather together.

Under the current administration in Washington, the U.S. has paid its UN dues in the current year and regained a number of seats on important UN bodies from which the nation had withdrawn. The U.S. has rejoined the WHO and been granted a seat on the Human Rights Council. (Russia was removed from that same council.) While the U.S. (government) remains the largest voluntary contributor to UNICEF and other crucial UN humanitarian efforts, our nation has still not paid our considerable assessed fees to support the peacekeeping efforts of the UN (1 billion in arrears). Nor has the U.S. Congress removed the law that caps U.S. contributions to the UN below our assessed share. So there is still plenty of lobbying to be done. Those lobbying efforts were the focus of the summit's last day.

Though the summit's trajectory was in the direction of Capitol Hill, chapters also shared their efforts to bring the global Sustainable Development Goals to their local cities and towns. Chapters in San Diego and DC are partnering with local governments, other NGOs, private companies, and academia to monitor local progress on each of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Chapters are partnering with one another within and beyond their regions. Fellow North Central Region

chapter St. Louis expressed an interest in working with JCUNA on a climate change initiative.

The summit revealed that JCUNA is doing a number of things right. For example, our Night of a Thousand Dinners event meets many of the aspirations of the national organization. And we have developed some good means to communicate with our members and the public. But the national organization and its executive director Rachel Pitman share JCUNA's concerns about visibility. We need to roll up our sleeves, pull up our socks, and get those three UN pillars and 17 SDGs in front of the public for the sake of all.

JCUNA Members Virtually Visit Congressional Offices in June

BY MERCEDES BERN-KLUG

On June 7, members of our chapter joined other Iowans in virtual meetings with aides to Sen. Joni Ernst and Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks and with Sen. Chuck Grassley. These meetings were enriched by participation of Iowa UNA College Ambassadors, students from around the state who are advocates for the UN.

The virtual meeting with Senator Ernst's office included a staff member, Spencer Herndon, and 12 Iowans. Iowa UNA executive director Debra DeLaet led the call and shared the microphone with Drake students Luke Clausen and Heather Strachan who spoke to the importance of the U.S. maintaining a leadership role within the UN and the need for continued humanitarian aid—including help with the food crisis that has resulted from the Russian invasion of the Ukraine. Mr. Herndon reported that Sen. Ernst met with David Beasley, head of the UN World Food Program, about the global food crisis and visited the UN to meet with UN leaders regarding the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan.

There were eight Iowans in the virtual meeting with Representative Miller-Meeks aide Caroline Bender. The group discussed the UN's unique role in affirming human rights and its

JCUNA Members Virtually Visit Congressional Offices in June (cont.)

important peace-keeping mission. Central College student member Kaitlyn Isom spoke about the UN's vital role in assisting displaced persons.

Senator Grassley joined the online meeting along with a staff member. Thirteen Iowa UNA members participated. Senator Grassley listened to the presentations by Jackson Gadelmann (Drake student), who asked the senator to support the U.S. paying its share and discussing UN peace-keeping missions; Luke Clausen (Drake student, former intern to former China Ambassador Branstad), who discussed security interest and the opportunity for U.S. leadership; and Eric Adae (Drake Professor), who recounted the economic benefits to the U.S. of the UN especially in terms of UN subcontracts to U.S. companies. Senator Grassley commented: "I see the UN serving a very useful purpose--for the reasons you just gave and more." Adae summarized by saying "Senator Grassley, the UN is your friend."

Brian Massa, staff member with the UN Foundation, was present for all three meetings. At the end of the day, he shared how impressed he was with how well prepared the students were and how effective they were in engaging with the Congressional members and staffers. We have Iowa UNA executive director Debra DeLaet to thank for that. She worked with students to identify their main message, personalize it, and include an "ask" of the member of Congress. They were quite impressive!

Please consider participating in the 2023 UNA-USA Leadership Summit. It is an opportunity to learn more about the UN, bring attention to issues near and dear to you, meet fellow UNA members, and engage with members of Congress. As a participant you have the option of speaking while attending meetings with members of Congress or remaining silent. Your presence conveys support for the UN.

Chapter member Steve Dodge is the faculty advisor for the Model United Nations group at City High School. Below is his report on the participation of City and West students in the Iowa High School Model UN in April. JCUNA is proud to provide financial support for the students' participation, as it has for many years.

High Schools at Model UN

BY STEVE DODGE



CITY HIGH SCHOOL

From left to right: Brady Guba, Ben Faden, Vince Green, Eli Cotton, Livian LaVine, Elianno Bowen-Burt and Rachel Levitt

The University of Northern Iowa hosted their Spring Model United Nations Conference in person again, for the first time in two years, on April 7 and 8. Iowa City West and City High School attended. West had twelve students with Max Pech winning outstanding delegate honors, and City High had seven students attend. West High had the experience of portraying Ukraine and Sudan at the Conference, while City High represented the United Kingdom. Actions taken at this year's conference mirrored actual events when Russia was suspended from the Human Rights Council. Events in Ukraine have made debates on many of the issues more relevant than ever. The students were also inspired by the keynote address by Umaru Balde. His life story was full of lessons for all who heard it. Iowa City

High Schools at Model UN (cont.)

Liberty High School is working on getting a Model UN program started, and hopefully next year they will also be representing Johnson County at the conference.



WEST HIGH SCHOOL

Back Row: Josie Schwartz, Max Pech, Deeksha Raghavan, Owen Knight, Amie Zerwic, Sadie Friswold, Ella Houston, and Sid Westgard.

Front Row: Jay Sainsbury, Reem Kirja, Jinann Abudagga, Thomas Gibson, and Ben Morrilly.

TRAVEL/STUDY OPPORTUNITY

Sustainable Development: The Kerala Experience

UI professor and JCUNA board member Jerry Anthony is leading a course on sustainable development in India with travel to the Indian state of Kerala, December 27 – January 15, 2023. While primarily for UI students, there is an opportunity for community members to participate. Here is Jerry’s description of the course.

India, like many other developing countries, is in the midst of a prolonged period of economic and urban development. Such periods of growth have historically been accompanied by widespread environmental degradation all over the world. In recent times, the environmental consequences of such development booms have spawned healthy

debates about the cost and benefits of economic and urban development. Globally there is heightened interest in development practices and patterns that could capture most of the benefits of economic and urban development while minimizing harms to the environment. In this course, students will be introduced to economic and urban development trends, in Kerala, the environmental implications of many of those trends and importantly, how individuals and organizations have attempted (and in many cases succeeded) in facilitating environmentally sustainable development – low-cost housing, economic development, and eco-tourism in Kerala.

This course will provide an extraordinary opportunity to travel to India, interact with highly acclaimed sustainable development professionals, and learn about many innovative sustainable development techniques.

For more information, contact Jerry at jerry-anthony@uiowa.edu by September 20th.

JCUNA Board Nominations Sought

In preparation for chapter elections this fall, the Nominating Committee welcomes recommendations for people to serve on our board. Board members serve for two-year terms (with eligibility for re-election), attend bimonthly board meetings, serve on committees and represent JCUNA in the community. Current board members are listed below. Please send recommendations, with contact information, to unajohnsoncounty@gmail.com by September 30.

JCUNA Board

Jim Olson, President
Barbara Eckstein, Vice President
Amal Elmardi, Secretary
Nittaya Burnham, Treasurer
Jerry Anthony
Barbara Badovinac
Mercedes Bern-Klug
Joyce Carman-Baldus
John W Fuller
Katy Hansen
Britta Loftus
Bijou Maliabo
Jean Paul Mugemuzi
Dorothy M. Paul
Blake Rupe
Suraj Moorjani

JC UNA News and Events

Johnson County United Nations Association
308 E. Burlington St. #245
Iowa City, IA 52240

September 2022

GO GREEN

If you would like to receive this newsletter electronically, please email unajohnsoncounty@gmail.com. We will continue to send you a paper version unless we hear from you.

We Can Help the UN Help the World

UN agencies are aiding the 100 million forcibly displaced people in Ukraine and worldwide and assisting the victims of natural and man-made disasters in Afghanistan, Pakistan, African countries, and elsewhere. These essential efforts are underfunded. Thank you for your support.

US Fund for UNICEF. <https://www.unicefusa.org>

USA for UNHCR. <https://www.unrefugees.org>

World Food Program USA. <https://www.wfpusa.org>



UNA ★ USA

Thank You for Your Membership Renewal!

We are most grateful to you for your ongoing support for our chapter. Thanks to you we are working to build support for constructive U.S. leadership in the United Nations. As a UNA-USA member, you are part of the constituency for international cooperation.

If you receive this newsletter by mail, your mailing label indicates when your membership renewal is due. We ask you to make your membership payment directly to UNA-USA Headquarters, either online at <https://unausa.org/join/renew/> or mail a check for \$50 payable to UNA-USA to BWF/UNA-USA, United Nations Foundation, P.O. Box 96397, Washington DC 20090-6397.

Remitting your membership payment directly to UNA-USA is faster, cheaper, and less error-prone. Many thanks!