

2005 ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE CENTRE COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA CHAPTER OF UNA-USA

2005 was a tremendously successful and productive year in the life of Centre County UNA-USA. At our annual business meeting in January, where more than 60 members were in attendance, we elected a new President and Vice President, myself and Bonnie Willey, reviewed our 2004 accomplishments and discussed our plans for 2005. In March, Bonnie Willey and I were privileged to attend the UNA-USA Bi-Annual Conference in New York City, where we learned a great deal from the content of the conference as well as from other chapters. We enthusiastically returned to central Pennsylvania with much energy and many new ideas.

In April, Centre County UNA-USA held a public meeting attended by more than 60 individuals which focused on UN Reform, a topic recommended by UNA-USA in their 2005 Common Objectives. The included a review of the report on UN Reform report issued by Kofi Annan. Following this overview, participants broke into small groups to discuss their reaction to the Secretary General's report as well as to consider what they believed would be the ideal distribution of power within the United Nations Security Council. This public meeting was interactive and enjoyed by all participants. Following the meeting, a social hour was held to encourage informal dialogue among members and guests.

Early in the year, our Chapter was awarded a \$1,000 coalition-building grant to establish a Centre County UNA-USA Council of Organizations. In May we held a luncheon meeting, inviting representatives of 22 local organizations affiliated with the UNA-USA Council of Organizations at the national level. Of the 18 groups that attended, all were enthusiastic about the formation of a local Council and by mid-summer, 15 organizations were seeking approval from their respective boards to join Centre County UNA-USA as Council of Organization members. As their first objective, these 15 organizations appointed representatives to join with our Chapter to carry out activities that were in celebration of United Nation's sixtieth anniversary – UN:60. Through the summer and into the fall, Council members and our Chapter accomplished the following:

- Worked with local newspaper to print two Editorial Page pieces on the United Nations in October
- Worked with public television, C-Net, to televise UN:60 dinner celebration and to show 3 United Nations videos on October 24th
- Produced 200 UN blue "Celebrate United Nations Day" 12 x 18 posters and distributed them throughout Centre County in storefronts, churches, schools, Penn State's international offices, International Hospitality Council and Council of Organizations sites throughout Centre County. The poster contained the names of all fifteen members of the Centre County UNA-USA Council of Organizations.
- Held UN:60 dinner with representatives from Centre County's five school districts and public librarians and presented each of them with Nan Annan's children's book on the UN, *Come Along with Me*

- Provided scholarships for 22 international students from Penn State to attend UN:60 dinner; in all, 25 countries were represented.
- Worked with Penn State's Program on Internationalization to publicize UN:60 activities and display UN books in student lounge
- Local libraries conducted a month long display in both child and adult area of libraries, which featured UN books and posters
- Contacted local churches and faith based organizations to promote "UN Sunday" activities
- In October, made presentations at community group meetings including Rotary Club, Altrusa International and Soroptimists International of Centre County and International Hospitality Council, since renamed Global Connections.
- Created child "coloring project" depicting UN theme and distributed to youth centers across Centre County
- Obtained the cooperation of four local businesses to do two-week window displays with a United Nations and international theme
- Centre County Commissioners proclaimed October 24 United Nations Day and attended UN:60 dinner to read and present proclamation
- Pennsylvania State Senate proclaimed October 24 as United Nations Day and Senator Corman's aide attended UN:60 dinner to read and present proclamation
- Distributed 175 copies of "Our United Nations," a pictorial review, published and made available by the Stanley Foundation

At our UN:60 dinner on October 23rd attended by more than 160 people, we also conducted a highly successful People's Speak Forum which included speakers: Dr. Arthur Goldschmidt retired Professor Emeritus of Middle East History Studies at Penn State, Dr. Lewis Jillings, Executive Director and Associate Dean of Internationalization at Penn State and Dr. Syedur Rahman, former UNA-USA President and Coordinator of the Humphrey Fellows Program at Penn State (see attached program).

At the UN:60 dinner we also paused for a surprise celebration of the many contributions made by our Chapter's founders, Margaret and Donald Sherman. Begun as part of Foxdale, a Quaker Retirement Community, when the Sherman's moved from New Jersey to State College, Pennsylvania in 1992, Centre County UNA-USA has grown from a few Foxdale members to more than 120 members with a diverse and hardworking Board of Directors dedicated to the objectives put forth by UNA-USA. Pennsylvania Senate and State College Borough proclamations were read and presented community leaders.

In October, Centre County UNA-USA learned that it had been awarded a \$ 1,200 grant from the Centre County Community Foundation (CCCF) to provide education on the United Nations in the five school districts of Centre County. The grant application was developed and submitted to CCCF at the conclusion of a countywide survey conducted by Centre County UNA-USA which pointed to the significant lack of education about the United Nations at all levels in local schools. The first step of implementation in the grant was the distribution of 25 copies of the book, *Come Along With Me*, by Nan Annan, for use in the 25 elementary schools in Centre County. The books were presented to school superintendents and librarians of the five local school districts and some public librarians at the UN:60 dinner. Additional grant funds are

available for purchase of United Nations materials for use in secondary schools. This project will unfold in 2006 under the direction of Bonnie Willey, Vice Chair and Chair of the Education Committee.

Throughout 2005, President Norma Keller continued to engage with other individuals headquartered in Washington DC to provide input on an upcoming Summit (conference) to advance the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) toward ratification. Norma was the catalyst for much education and advocacy when she headed up a three-year grass-roots project in Central Pennsylvania from 2001 to 2004, following her education on the CRC at a conference held by the Kansas City Chapter of UNA-USA in Kansas City, Missouri. Through the efforts of Centre County UNA-USA and Ms. Keller, more than 3,000 people learned about the CRC, more than 2,000 people signed a petition in support of the CRC sent to PA Senators in Washington, more than 1,000 letters were sent to our President and Senators and 17 faith-based and community organizations entered into a comprehensive process of formal "endorsement" of the Convention of the Rights of the Child. Because of Ms. Keller's development of this grass roots approach to advocacy, she was invited to present a workshop at American University in Washington in May 2006. This conference will be the first ever national conference devoted to advancing the CRC toward ratification.

In the annual meetings held in June 2006, Norma requested of George Garland that she be appointed to this Washington-based group to formally represent UNA-USA, since there will be considerable activity as the national plan for education and ultimate ratification move forward. Many high level people participate in this process including Meg Gardinier of the USA Children's Fund and UNICEF and the absence of a formal representative of UNA-USA should be attended to. Unfortunately, Centre County UNA-USA has no funds for Ms. Keller's representation and she is no longer able to pay out of pocket expenses to attend meetings in Washington. Perhaps UNA-USA could consider a small budget to support UNA-USA involvement in this process.

Throughout 2005, small contributions were made to the UNA-USA Endowment Fund within the Centre County Community Foundation and at year's end the principal was approximately \$ 30,000. As 2005 was drawing to a close, efforts were underway to bring on several new board members who would take office in January and bring Centre County UNA-USA to even higher levels of productivity and accomplishment.

Respectfully submitted,

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