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UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

UNA: BIG CHANGES and OPPORTUNITIES

by Herb Behrstock, President,
East Bay Chapter

October 2010 has already become a historic month for the United Nations Association-USA.

UNA -- with origins in the 1940's due to initiatives by Eleanor Roosevelt and other visionaries -- enters an promising new phase. Following more than a year of extensive consultations, leaders of UNA-USA voted nearly unanimously earlier in October to create a "New UNA" -- to be joined in a "strategic alliance" with the United Nations Foundation and its arm, the Better World Fund.

Partners of the alliance share a virtually identical mission to build support for the ideals and vital work of the United Nations. We also pursue common objectives, administer similar types of activities, and possess complementary attributes.

UNA's strengths include its unmatched national network of chapters and members, local educational and advocacy activities, adaptability and diversity, and linkages with community partners. UNF and the Better World Fund offer a strong financial base and fund-raising capability, a large national staff, excellent communications particularly with young adults, strong advocacy activities with Congress, and participatory national campaigns supportive of the UN and its work.

Other factors affect the desirability of a strategic alliance. While the East Bay chapter is counted among UNA's largest and strongest in programs, mem-

bership and other activity, our national organization has confronted increasingly difficult challenges. The recent economic crisis caused further stresses -- including the decline of revenues, necessitating the reduction of UNA's national staff, programs and support services. UNA's alliance with UNF and its Better World Fund is therefore all-the-more opportune.

Both UNA's and UNF's national Boards of Directors twice endorsed the alliance, citing the "excellent fit." Additionally, at UNA-USA's national conference in Washington D.C. in June 2010, after much deliberation about potential synergies, and pleased by UNF leaders' explanations and commitment to "bring UNA to a higher level," UNA's grassroots leadership unanimously supported the partnership concept that would transfer most UNA-USA programs, its chapters and membership, to become part of UNF's Better World Fund.

Our East Bay chapter's Board has discussed this prospective merger each month since late 2009, and we've held two meetings in 2010
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MDG #1: Eradication of Poverty and Hunger

For the past four years, the UNA-USA East Bay chapter has focused on the eight MDG's (Millennium Development Goals) adopted by the United Nations a decade ago committing nations to a new global partnership. In recognition of the importance of these goals, the East Bay chapter has instituted several programs designed to educate, support and celebrate efforts and achievements.

During 2010, priority has been given to MDG#1, the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger. Between August and October outreach to the local community has included a dinner forum focused on the work of the World Food
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Run for Peace Sparks Splendid Spirit

More than 200 runners and walkers at the annual Run4Peace on September 19 raised thousands of dollars that will go a long way towards sustaining UNA's educational and advocacy programs highlighting the United Nations leadership in combating poverty and hunger, protecting human rights, preventing disease, protecting the environment, and stimulating economic development, all in the pursuit of peace.

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Big Changes, UNA-UNF: at which members of the chapter’s Advisory Council participated – leading to the decision to support the partnership.

The UN Foundation, for those not familiar with it, was established by Ted Turner’s historic \$1 billion pledge in 1998 to support the United Nations when the US government was faltering to pay its share of UN dues. Since its founding, UNF has broadened its base of financial resources, enlarged its scope of activities, and built an effective team to sustain its competency and impact. Check out www.unfoundation.org.

By the end of this year, legal requirements to establish the New UNA ought to be concluded, and additional senior staff recruited. Meanwhile, operational policies and detailed arrangements remain to be worked out and gradually implemented, based on close consultation among the New UNA and Better World Fund of UNF – with chapters’ and members’ voices well-represented.

A key step lies ahead: each UNA chapter will have the opportunity whether to affiliate with the New UNA-USA. Chapters affiliating will retain the name “United Nations Association,” tax-exempt status, use of the logo. Chapters aren’t expected to experience alterations in their programs and diversity, but will become eligible for support and national benefits as they are phased in (e.g. improved policy and advocacy support, marketing/outreach assistance, leadership development, and increased financial resources). Those chapters, if any, declining to affiliate will accordingly lose those rights and opportunities.

Though the final decision hasn’t been made, UNA East Bay expects to affiliate with the new alliance. This is not simply because the alternatives are inauspicious. Chapter Directors have consistently felt that the partnership with UNF and its Better World Fund will enable UNA to better achieve its goals and sustain its strength and dynamism both nationally and locally. For those wishing to comment or consult with me and chapter leadership, please email unaEastBay@sbcglobal.net or phone 510-849-1752.

Past generations of UNA leaders, members and friends have contributed toward enormous accomplishments, representing the largest and probably the most loyal national constituency for international cooperation and fulfillment of the UN’s ideals. As the current transition and strategic alliance evolves, we are optimistic that the New UNA will enhance its already-special role – becoming even more effective as an organization in which individual membership and community involvement will productively, enjoyably, and meaningfully help make the world a better place for ourselves and future generations.

Program, USA, and the Run4Peace.

On Sunday, October 24th, in celebration of the UN’s 65th anniversary and the 5th annual Global Citizens Award, a dinner event is planned with presentations by three notable figures active in the global campaign to reduce hunger.

The theme of the UNA-USA East Bay anniversary dinner, “accomplishments and future challenges,” resonates with the September Summit meeting of the United Nations on the subject of the MDG’s. In The Millennium Development Goals Report 2010 (www.mdgs.un.org), the “promise” of the eight goals committed to in 2000 were acknowledged for its substantial progress and its real disappointments. A major target has been that of halving the number of people living on less than \$1 a day. There has been enormous progress overall and in some regions, but it is estimated that more than 920 million people will be living under the poverty line (\$1.25/day) in 2015, the final year of the MDG vision.

Global hunger is reported on the decline in every region, but is assessed as “unacceptably high.” Citing FAO statistics, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (www.fao.org/hunger), the undernourished of the world total 925 million, and developing nations represent an overwhelming proportion (98%) of that number. Continued population growth, on the one hand, erodes some of the progress made over the past decade but “better access to food” decidedly improves opportunity for the undernourished to be fed and to become productive members of their communities.

Bono, of music and advocacy fame, commented in a recent N.Y. Times op ed column on the vital importance of the MDG’s: “We have a lot to prove, but if the M.D.G. agreement had not been made in 2000, much less would have happened than has happened. Already we’ve seen transformative results for millions of people whose lives are shaped by the priorities of people they will never know or meet...”

United Nations 65th Anniversary Celebration
Sunday, October 24th, 2010

United Nations-USA East Bay

UNA's 5th Annual Global Citizens Awards

Honoring exemplary achievements in support of Millennium Development Goal #1's
Target - Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger

UN MDG Accomplishments and Future Challenges

Remarks by: Allan Jury, Director, UN World Food Program in USA
Michael Beard, Director, Better World Campaigns, UN Foundation
Ramu Damodaran, Partnerships with NGOs, United Nations

Co-sponsor and Host: UC Berkeley's International House

Honorary Sponsors: UN World Food Program and World Food Program USA, and
Michael Pollan - national food policy expert, author

International House, UC Berkeley
2299 Piedmont Avenue at Bancroft

Advance reservations required

\$35 (students \$15)

5:00 PM Registration and Reception
5:45-8:45 PM Dinner and Evening Program

Reserve now: UNDayEvent@gmail.com or 510-642-9461

Bring a group or support a table for students: sponsor invited
UN Day celebrations have been sold out in the past 4 years



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It was a lively day celebrating the UN-designated International Day of Peace, the City of Berkeley-designated Week of Peace, and the global Stand Up campaign to eradicate poverty. Students from Oakland spoke up about the poverty and violence in their neighborhoods, bringing the worldwide cry for peace home to our local communities.

Some participants also raised funds for the World Food Program, the largest humanitarian agency in the world, active in 75 countries and feeding millions of people left helpless and starving by war and natural disasters. We thank those who took this opportunity to raise more than \$1,500, demonstrating that as individuals we can

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Join the UNA-USA EastBay: www.unausaeastbay.org

Calendar and Announcements

Parade of Nations and UN Flag-raising Ceremony: Saturday, October 23, 11:00 a.m.
Jack London Square, Oakland (at Franklin & Walnut Streets)

An East Bay tradition for more than 50 years to celebrate UN Day and the UN's humanitarian and peacekeeping work. Program includes: Oakland students' parade of 192 UN member nations' flags, Music and remarks by city and UNA East Bay representatives Kathy Pham, national winner of the UNA National Essay contest.

UN-65 in San Francisco: October 22-24

UNA-USA San Francisco Chapter, and UNA-USA East Bay & Northern CA Division offer a weekend celebration of free and low cost events focused on the UN Millennium Development Goals, including nuclear disarmament discussion, Saturday Inter-generational Model UN and UN celebration concert. Details of program: www.una-sf.org

October 24 UNA-USA East Bay: 5th Annual Global Citizen's Awards

Program includes dinner, and focus on MDG #1 eradication of poverty and hunger.

December 8th UNA-USA East Bay Dinner Forum featuring Rita Maran in discussion of International Criminal Court at Plearn Restaurant. Information on web: unausaeastbay.org.