

## OCTOBER 2011

### Looking Back on Peace Day Philly

Tuesday, September 20, 2011 marked, for some, an early beginning to the United Nations International Peace Day. Members, friends, and fans alike joined the Brothers In Harmony as they harmonized for peace. The event was organized by the North Philadelphia Madrugadores Rotary club and sponsored by the United Nations Association of Greater Philadelphia, Society of Ibero Latin American Medical Professionals, and a few others.



The Brothers in Harmony performing on International Peace Day

The Brothers in Harmony are a chapter of a much larger male a cappella group based out of Hamilton Square, NJ and perform under director Jack Pinto. The group of around 30 performers joined in singing ten or so old classics that all directly relate to the idea of world peace; a few to be mentioned are "Imagine" (written by John Lennon), "When I lift My Head Up," and "Up a Lazy River." Each song was preceded by small anecdotes that were not only humorous but gave the audience an insight into why the songs had

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been chosen. One of the most exciting performances of the night was the Quartet-Docapella group, who sang a few of their own selections. The Quartet-Docapella is a group of 4 doctors within the larger Brothers in Harmony.



The Philadelphia-Egypt Video Conference at UPenn

The next day, Wednesday, September 21, continued the quest for peace as students from the Bodine International School, University of Pennsylvania, Drexel University, St. Joseph's University, and advocates from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, as well as Alexandria, Egypt, met via video chat to discuss multiculturalism in their separate countries. Originally this videoconference was supposed to also include representatives from Trondheim, Norway. However due to some scheduling problems, they were not able to join the conference. The Trondheim representatives did, however, send their apologies and support to the cause. The discussion began 9 am EST and continued on until 11 am EST, which in Egypt is from 3 pm to 5 pm. The conference began with 5-minute introductions from both sides, then led into open discussion. In the discussion

**“How does your political climate support your peace efforts?”**

students from both sides attempted to understand how the other's political and social climate affected their view of peace and cultural awareness. One of the most common themes in the discussion was “How does your political



## The 6th World Water Forum

It is a great pleasure for us of the International Forum Committee to issue this second announcement of the 6th World Water Forum, Marseille 2012.

This is the Forum of solutions and commitments, and as such, we are looking for concrete actions towards solving the water problems around the world. We invite proposals that will be feasible under financial, social and environmental boundary conditions.

The possibilities offered to the water professionals, water users and the NGO community to interact with high-level political decision-makers make the Forum an ideal platform for discussing the way forward.

We foresee a very lively Forum in the charming city of Marseille. The four commissions of the

climate support your peace efforts?” a question American student Lisa asked the Egyptian group. They responded by inferring that their current political climate was in fact supportive of their efforts; however, time was needed to really get anything done. To some American students it seemed odd that Egyptian elementary schools do not have classes or assemblies to teach racial tolerance. The Egyptian students explained that because Egypt is such a culturally diverse area, acceptance and tolerance are naturally learned.



The walk against illegal guns

Peace Day continued with events on Drexel Campus. At 1 pm Sharon Katz, leader of the South African musical group “Peace Train” and Dean Ravizza gave performances regarding the need for awareness about the crisis in Africa, especially the problem of child soldiering. These talks and musical performance by Katz, were followed by a Q&A session. Another forum followed, focusing on small arms and nuclear non-proliferation, sponsored by the Project for Nuclear Awareness. Bill Hartung, of the New America Foundation, and Jacqueline Reich, from Chestnut Hill College, were great speakers. Simultaneously occurring elsewhere in the city were: Dr. Alan Barr (of the University of Pennsylvania) dedicating his International Law class to the demand for peace; the walk against illegal guns; and the cupcake fight for peace.

The finale for Peace Day Philly 2011 was a wonderful and well-attended event at the Ethical Society: Bridges to Peace. A program of music and dialogue, Bridges to Peace was a concert held by

International Forum Committee (thematic, regional, political and grassroots & citizenship) have done an excellent job in proposing a week long World Water Forum with a variety of sessions unveiling thematic priorities and commitments from all stakeholders involved (politicians, NGOs, public and private sectors, universities and professional associations).

Come and join us at the largest event about water in the world.

For more information, visit [www.worldwaterforum6.org](http://www.worldwaterforum6.org)

- Ben Braga

*President of International Forum Committee and Vice-President of World Water Council*





The performance at Bridges to Peace

Intercultural Journeys, a peace-promoting performance group. Joining IJ's artistic director and Philadelphia Orchestra cellist Udi Bar-David were Farah Siraj, an acclaimed vocalist from Jordan, Hanna Khoury, an Arab-Israeli violinist, Tzvia Wexler, an Israeli vocalist, and Hafez El Ali Kotain, a percussionist of Syrian-Venezuelan descent, to complete the ensemble. The evening provided beautiful music for the attendees to enjoy, as well as dialogues encouraging listeners to connect to their humanity and create opportunities for peaceful connection.

By Pat Medeo

## World Food Day 2011

The UNA-GP commemorated the 30th celebration of World Food Day on Sunday, October 16, 2011, with a symposium and seminar, followed by a reception. More than sixty people attended the event to listen and learn. The symposium covered political, scientific and practical approaches to the world food situation, which is rampant with inequality, food scarcities next to abundance and where the need for innovative new practices is very high.

Keynote speaker Marion Nestle, author of Food Politics and Safe

## UNA-GP at Andrew Jackson Elementary School

"So, does anyone know what the United Nations is?" Kelly asks the 5th graders of Andrew Jackson Elementary, expecting no response.

But to her surprise a timid yet brave young boy raises his hand. "Yes, you. What do you know?" His voice trembles a bit as he says, "Well, I don't know what they do, but I've heard the name."



Above: 5th grade class of Andrew Jackson Elementary School; Below: Edith teaching about the UN

Food, addressed issues of prices and obesity. A trend starting in the 1980's illustrates food prices rising along with American obesity. In a world where approximately 925 million people are currently suffering from chronic hunger, food is still being treated as a commodity more so than a life's necessity. America's growing



Attendees at World Food Day symposium

obesity problem is directly related to the fact that we are actually eating more, but the wrong foods, the foods that can be processed cheaply and be sold in large quantities. When the farms in the US are being paid by subsidies to produce more and the companies that are selling food need to show – by Wall Street current measurements of success – growth every 90 days, marketing techniques emphasize larger portions, more marketing to children, and a neglect in the food industries' concern for public health. In order to reverse these problems, Dr. Nestle argues that we must reduce population growth, promote income equity, use sustainable energy, ensure political stability, regulate commodity speculation, and address climate change.

Scott Poethig's presentation "Genetic Engineering: Then and Now" reminded us that humans have been genetically engineering food since the advent of agriculture. By choosing which food to eat and then growing it year after year we slowly emphasize which genes are more desirable: an example being lettuce, broccoli, cauliflower

Recently Kelly Franquemont and Edith Mia have been working with the 5th graders of Andrew Jackson Elementary to educate them on what exactly the United Nations is, and does. Kelly and Edith represent the United Nations Association of Greater Philadelphia in a four-week program designed to give kids interactive exposure to the actions and themes of the UN.

The program's main goal is to educate the students on the current goals of the United Nations and cultures different from their own. The school already has a strong intercultural base, educating students from various foreign nations. Kelly believes that through having the kids do research projects using the Internet, writing assignments, and posters that will be displayed proudly in Andrew Jackson the kids will be shown a fun way of learning about other cultures and accepting cultural differences. The United Nations Association of Greater Philadelphia hopes to host more programs such as this throughout Philadelphia.

*By Pat Medeo*

are all mutations of *Brassica oleracea*, which humans bred. Many people who do not know much about genetically modifying food, in a way, fear it. This fear stems from the belief that everything we as humans modify is unnatural because it has been modified by something other than nature. Yet, since 1996, everyone has been eating GM food because 100% of soybeans that are being grown are GM and there are no known health effects. Dr. Poethig is not entirely supportive of the GM food industry; in fact he finds that the worst issue with GM foods is not a matter of health but a matter of business. The farmer's power to grow independently has been taken from him or her by large corporations such as Monsanto, who allow only a one-time use of their GM seeds. This one-time use policy forces farmers into a state of dependency.

The final presentation of the afternoon was by Roxanne Christensen, who introduced the audience to "the promise of SPIN farming". SPIN stands for Small Plot Intensive farming and promotes farming on a commercial level within an urban environment. There are three major draws for this style of farming. The first being that most people do live in an urban environment, so by growing produce where they live, farmers can market to their customers more directly. The second is that it takes very little space and capital to begin this style of farming. SPIN farming can usually be done in under an acre

**"Small Plot  
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and is entirely green with no soil-tilling or modification. The third reason is that all of the profit goes to the farmer, thus making the food more affordable, as it can be sold at wholesale prices. Roxanne and many others believe that this could be a way to help rebuild the food system.

The event was organized by Charlene Compher, Jackie McLaughlin and Christiaan Morssink. The staff for the event was drawn from our pool of work-study and co-op students and volunteers; a sincere thanks to them and to the speakers for a successful event.

*By Pat Medeo*

## UNA-GP Financial Committee

On October 17, 2011, board members Nick Sanders, Mary Day Kent, Jessica Lee and our administrator Kori Heavner met to take a hard look at our administrative processes, which will have to be rearranged to reflect the intention to have our fiscal year coincide with the calendar year.

The intention is to develop a budget-based financial system, create a format that reminds us early of the legal reporting obligations and provide a better insight into our operational activities and the financial impacts from it. Eventually we intend to use our improved financial administration to underscore our requests for outside funding and our intent to apply for grants. Thank you all for spending your volunteer energy on this necessary task.

### Next Board Meeting

The UNA-GP Board will meet on Monday, November 14, from 5:30pm to 7pm at 3401 Market Street, suite 202. An agenda will be posted on our website on November 7.

# The UNA-GP

## Student Workforce

Starting on September 19, 2011, five Drexel University co-op students joined our team to help build and expand the work of the United Nations Association of Greater Philadelphia. Our new student workforce, which will be under contract until March 30, 2012, comes from different backgrounds of study, ranging from English to graphic design.

Jenny Chi, a junior graphic design major, is excited about working with an organization that works to make a positive difference in the Philadelphia community. As a graphic designer Jenny develops and improves visual communication for the UNA-GP. After graduation, she aspires to work as a graphic designer for non-profits and ultimately work for the United Nations.

Elise Miedwig is a junior, International Area Studies student, whose goal during her co-op time at the UNA-GP is to campaign for increased understanding about world food problems. She will specifically promote knowledge about urban farming, while also working on the Youth Building Roots project.

Patrick Medeo is a sophomore communications major with a concentration in global journalism, working with Kelsey Heath, a junior English major, on the monthly Newsletter and other matters of written communication. Through writing, they are contributing to the growth of the organization and working towards furthering our causes. They will handle communication with other organizations and help organize events and fundraisers.

Our hopes for the new co-op team is that they will contribute to the expansion of our organization with the development of projects such as the Youth Building Roots project and the Global Focal Point project. With their help, The United Nations Association of Greater Philadelphia will continue advocating the work of the UN.

*By Kelsey Heath*

Also joining us from the University of Pennsylvania:

Cameron Browne is currently serving as the Membership Outreach Coordinator for the UNA-GP. While he is recruiting new members



of the UNA-GP around the city, he is also working on increasing the involvement and participation of both active and inactive UNA-GP members. He also plans to increase the number of benefits associated with being an active member of the UNA-GP. He will present a membership recruitment and retention plan at the upcoming board meeting on November 14.

Cameron Browne is a junior at the University of Pennsylvania where he is majoring in Health and Societies and minoring in Sociology. Upon graduation, he intends on pursuing a career in international health and development.

Evan Black, a work-study student for the graduate school of education at UPenn has started in mid-September with the UNA-GP. She has been asked to coordinate the different communication activities and processes of UNA-GP and has already activated Facebook and Twitter accounts. Evan will create a team from among the current crop of volunteers, co-op and work-study students and prepare a communication plan in time for the next board meeting on November 14. A workshop on new communication technology is tentatively planned for the morning of Saturday, November 19.

Kelly Franquemont, our new work-study student from the graduate school of education at UPenn, has taken on the team leader role for the Global Focal Point program. Beyond that, she has decided to use the UNA-GP for her academic community outreach work. In that capacity, we are the beneficiaries of her attempts to set up a strategic plan for the UNA-GP. Her ongoing discussions with Manisha Patel and others are geared towards implementing a SWOT analysis, and we hope that soon some early results can be reported to the board.

## The Burma-ASEAN Dilemma: Releasing Political Prisoners Is Not Enough

In the last decade, Burma's regime has gone through policy shifts that have renewed several controversies in the global community. The dominant western view of Burma is typically affiliated with images of military dictatorship, refugees, child soldiers, and a



## Earth Summit 2012

The United Nations is holding an earth summit in Rio de Janeiro next year to seek positive and proactive steps towards reducing the human impact on global warming. Next year's earth summit marks the 20th anniversary of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). It is also the 10th anniversary of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002.

It will be held June 4-6 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

To learn more visit [www.earthsummit2012.org](http://www.earthsummit2012.org)



shackled Aung Sung Suu Kyi. The United Nations has become used to the revolving 'free' and 'enslaved' Aung Sung Suu Kyi, a Nobel prize laureate who is portrayed by the regime as a criminal. However, starting with the inauguration of Thein Sein in early 2011, the regime's tight grip has loosened up, not in the least because of the sting resulting from economic sanctions. With last month's release of political prisoners, Burma is attempting to ease tensions in ASEAN, yet the regime is still harshly criticized by human rights groups for ignoring democratic demands and accused of simply window-dressing some slight reforms.

Initially ASEAN admitted Burma because of its past successes and tried to include the country as a Southeast "Tiger" economy in order to counter-balance China's economic influence. This admittance caused a tremendous uproar from western powers who opposed Burma's military regime and from Malaysia. Malaysia opposed Burma's bid because of the military regime's past massacres of the minority Muslim population. However, Singapore became a large supporter, because it stood to gain from the profitable industry of manufacturing weapons for the military regime. Subsequently, in 1997, Burma made a public gesture of 'monetary happiness' towards its Muslim minorities and in turn Malaysia approved the admission into ASEAN.

Since being admitted to the ASEAN, the level of oppression in Burma has increased. Burma's regime has profited greatly from the ASEAN membership; foreign investments expanded, and trade liberalized. Recently, a gas trade agreement between Burma and India was signed which promised Burma \$500 million credit for infrastructure projects. The economic expansion did not change the oppression and the government has continued to engage in human rights violations and minority cleansing. Recently, Thailand and Indonesia have begun "constructive engagement" talks with Burma aimed to stabilize and democratize the political situation while still preserving 'cultural values'. The current release of political prisoners in Burma can be understood in that context, but for many countries and groups like Human Rights Watch, this is simply not enough. Aung Sung Suu Kyi herself has been consistent in calling

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out Burma's economic choices and political strategies as a cover-up for the true persecution of ethnic minorities.

The larger point here is that ASEAN has created a serious imbalance between free markets and liberal forms of governments by admitting Burma. Allowing authoritarian, fascist style rule to be manifest in a free market bloc is a major miscalculation on ASEAN's behalf; globally investing firms have become hesitant on investing



A supporter of Aung San Suu Kyi holds a sign with her famous quote, "Please use your liberty to promote ours."

in their domestic markets due to Burma's political situation which will create a dilemma for Burma's future. Either Burma will have to both reduce its role in ASEAN and continue operating their country via an authoritarian regime, or – the more realistic scenario – Burma will have to undergo liberalization and private socialization policies such as what China has done post-1978. The second option, of course, implies that economic socialization will lead to the eventual breakup of the military regime. For ASEAN's sake, as well as the population of Burma, the members of ASEAN should invest heavily in diplomatic and economic pressure to steer the country towards the latter option, so that they can reach parity with other regional organizations such as the European Union, Organization of American States, etc.

by Talha Malik

Image Source: Underrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization



Ban Ki-moon (facing camera) takes the oath of office administered by Joseph Deiss, President of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, as he is sworn in for a second term as Secretary-General.

## Second Term for Ban Ki-Moon

In September, Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, was voted in, unanimously, for a second term. The 67-year-old South Korean will start his second term on January 1st 2012.

Though he has been criticized occasionally for not reprimanding member countries like China and Russia for human rights abuses, S.G. Ban Ki-Moon has been credited with widening the United Nation's global vision in a time of international uncertainty, and with better collaboration the many NGOs that support the United Nations system. Global hope for progress remains strong with him in the secretary-general's position.

To read more about Ban Ki-Moon go to [www.msnbc.msn.com/id/43484373/ns/world\\_news/t/ban-ki-moon-gets-second-term-un-chief](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/43484373/ns/world_news/t/ban-ki-moon-gets-second-term-un-chief)

## Supporting The United Nations

UNA-USA is always working to promote US policies that reinforce the United States' positive and constructive involvement in the United Nations. As we all know with budget cuts and the current economic climate, one of the places the US is looking to cut costs is the expenditures related to annual dues to the United Nations. We need to make sure that the US abides by its obligations stemming from the treaty that established the UN Charter.

Join us in our support of the United Nations and learn more by visiting [www.issuu.com/unfoundation/docs/112thcongressionalbriefingbook/60](http://www.issuu.com/unfoundation/docs/112thcongressionalbriefingbook/60)

# Celebrating the life of Wangari Muta Maathai (1940-2011)



The late Wangari Muta Maathai

Hosted by the Unitarian Society of Germantown.

On UN Sunday, October 23, 2011, join us as we celebrate the life of Wangari Muta Maatha, who believed in these spiritual values: Care, share and ensure that others are not suffering.

A Letter from Wangari Maathai

*Dear Friends,*

*This is a wonderful time for the Green Belt Movement (GBM). There has been overwhelming interest in our work over*

*the past few years. Our message has spread faster and farther than we could have imagined. Today, we can hardly respond fast enough to invitations from around the world to share the message of hope. In Kenya, the environment remains a central issue in the political agenda thanks in a large part to GBM.*

*The planting of trees is the planting of ideas. By starting with the simple step of digging a hole and planting a tree, we plant hope for ourselves and for future generations. Through the process of mobilizing people to action, GBM addresses a wide range of issues that directly affect the lives of individuals, particularly women, and their families, including education, access to water, equity, and reproductive health. People then begin to stand up for their rights and those of their communities. It is their empowerment that truly leads them to decide to prioritize the environment, good governance, and cultures of peace....*

*Our challenges are great: Africa faces continued deforestation and increasing poverty. Yet, we know that there are many good practices going on in Africa, both by governments and civil society. It is critical that these be scaled up so that we expand our reach and effectiveness. The GBMI offers that way. Our achievements are shared ones, accomplished by thousands of Kenyan people with the support of partners and friends worldwide."*

## Event Information

- Sunday, October 23, 2011
- After Sunday service, around 12:30pm
- Unitarian Society of Germantown
- 6511 Lincoln Drive, Philadelphia, PA 19119

## All Upcoming Events

- Sunday, October 23  
**Celebrating Maathai**
- Monday, October 24  
**UN Day**
- Saturday, October 29  
**Voices of Uganda**
- Tuesday, November 1  
**Philadelphia Global Nursing Journal Club**

For more information, visit [www.una-gp.org](http://www.una-gp.org)



# UN Day 2011

On Monday, October 24, join the UNA-GP for our celebration of United Nations Day: Human Rights, Globalization, and the Arab Spring event at the University of Pennsylvania's Penn Hall of Flags. A panel will feature Dr. Radwan Ziadeh, Dr. Zakia Salime, and Filmmaker Abu Bakr Shawky, followed by a performance by Hip-Hop artist Omar Offendum.

## Voices of Uganda: Children of War Tell Stories of Hope

Penn alumna and actress Melissa Fitzgerald (West Wing) will tell her story of doing theatre with the local population in Uganda. The work is chronicled in the documentary film, *Staging Hope* - [www.filmadelphia.slated.com/2011/films/staginghope\\_bilyoelin\\_filmadelphia2011](http://www.filmadelphia.slated.com/2011/films/staginghope_bilyoelin_filmadelphia2011) (Screening at the Philadelphia Film Festival on Nov. 1 & 2), which tells the story of a cross-cultural collaboration between a group of American actors and 14 Ugandan teenagers (many former abducted child soldiers) as they work together on a theater program in war-torn northern Uganda.



### Event Information

- Monday, October 24, 2011
- Panel Discussion @ 2pm
- Reception @ 4pm
- Performance @ 6pm
- Hall of Flags at University of Pennsylvania

### Event Information

- Saturday, October 29, 2011
- 4 pm
- Claire M. Fagin Hall Auditorium
- University of Pennsylvania
- 418 Curie Blvd. Philadelphia, PA, 19104

The presentation will include:

- A brief history of northern Uganda and the 25-year rebel war in that region
- 2 or 3 (time permitting) video clips from the Voices of Uganda theater program in northern Uganda
- 3 monologues performed by 3-5 Penn students. These monologues are written by West Wing writer Josh Singer, award winning journalist Jimmie Briggs, and award winning playwright Winter Miller and are based on interviews that we conducted with war effected Ugandans while in the field
- An opportunity (for students who are interested) to advocate for peace in northern Uganda and Central Africa by penning letters to their elected officials
- Q & A with the audience

[www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=156490717776585](http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=156490717776585)

Co-Sponsors:

- The Theatre Initiative - A program of the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, The Theatre Arts Program and University Life Arts Initiatives
- The Civic House
- The Greenfield Intercultural Center
- Penn African Performing Arts (PAPA)

## Philadelphia Global Nursing Journal Club Speaker Series

Jefferson Nurses Go Global: A First Hand Account from RNs Who Have Worked Abroad

Interested in volunteering or working overseas as a nurse?

Come and join us on November 1 for a panel discussion as Jefferson graduate students, Breanne Ward and Nicole Henderson speak on their experiences working in rural communities in Rwanda and Kenya.

### Event Information

- Tuesday, November 1, 2011
- 7:15pm - 8:15pm
- Jefferson Alumni Hall
- Solis-Cohen Auditorium

Philadelphia Global Nursing Journal Club is a student-led, city-wide initiative started in September 2010 by UNA-GP members/nursing students from Thomas Jefferson University, and University of Pennsylvania. The club unites students, educators, and clinicians and focuses on raising awareness about the globalization of the health professions, especially the nursing professions. Worldwide there are an estimated 18 million nurses on all levels of expertise working for the health of humankind.

For more information about the event and about the club, please contact [Sofia.Carreno@Jefferson.edu](mailto:Sofia.Carreno@Jefferson.edu).