was elected to the USNC board in 2005. She describes her experience: “I wanted to give back to the community and because I thought I had first-hand what it meant to struggle as a woman, I wanted to support other women. Bluntly put, I had no idea of the reality of the issues women face around the globe. I realize now I was, and still am, privileged and protected, not unlike many of us who care but get caught up in our daily lives, oblivious to others’ suffering. Seeing the movie Pray to the Devil Back to Hell just three years ago made real the unspeakable violence, feminized poverty, the ravages of HIV/AIDS, and so much more. Two years ago I agreed to take on fund development only if the USNC was ready to raise real money for real change. My passion is to build the USNC’s capacity to a point where we can have true impact in women’s lives. Since it was founded, the USNC has not given more than $50,000 annually to UN Women. The U.S. government gives the lowest per capita donation of any of the supporting countries. The U.S. is a country of far greater compassion than this represents and should be the world leader in caring for women. I am committed to help change this.”

Kay lives in Atlanta with her husband, Ellery McLanahan, and her sister, Liz Colson. She operates her own consulting business providing services in workforce planning, recruiting, and retention to multinational companies seeking to better deal with the workforce changes of today’s global business environment. Her personal passions are maintaining strong mentoring relationships with younger colleagues, gardening and UN Women.

Dear U.S. National Committee for UN Women,

Once again, it’s the year of the woman here in the US. Women voters are a key demographic to this year’s presidential election and women’s issues have framed much of the national debate. While women in the US enjoy many more rights and freedoms than most of our sisters around the world, we still have work to do. Pay equity is still elusive, women remain underrepresented in boardrooms and elected offices across the country, and gender-based violence persists across all socio-economic sectors.

This situation is not unique to the US. During the UN Women Global National Committees Summit in September in London (see article below), corporate and government speakers addressed the need to support women professionals and promote equity at the highest levels. Fortunately, we have an ally in Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director of UN Women. While UN Women’s programs and funding mechanisms are found only in developing nations, as the global body on gender equality and women’s empowerment, UN Women advocates on behalf of all women. Michelle Bachelet represents all women when she calls for greater women’s leadership on corporate boards, prods the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) member states to increase the number of women in their parliaments, or talks about the need to reduce violence against women in all nations.

As we work within the US to increase awareness of and support for UN Women, it is good to know that UN Women is in our corner as well, speaking out on our behalf.

Best regards,

Maggie Forster Schmitz
President

Letter from the President

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UPDATE
FALL 2012
Chapter News
SoCal Chapter
by CeCe Sloan, Joy Adams, Lucy Parker, Kim Salter, Lori Vandermeer

The film will be shown on November 25, International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Women activists have marked this day since 1981 and the UN designated it as such in 1999, so it’s a good time to speak out in support of both the Violence Against Women Act and the international Violence Against Women Act, both of which have been mired in the U.S. Congress. www.un.org/en/events/endviolenceaday.

Joining us as hosts for the screening of the film are several women’s and humanitarian organizations in our community including AAUW-Laguna Woods, Concerned Citizens of Laguna Woods, National Council of Jewish Women, Laguna Woods, Orange County: NOW, UNA-Orange County, Women For Orange County Working for a Better World and Gather The Women SoCal.

Greater Los Angeles Chapter
by Ariana Menon

In the span of just 9 months, the newly formed thirteenth USNC-UN Women chapter has already hosted several events. The chapter organized a Peace Walk on June 2nd in Santa Monica, attracting 100 participants, speakers and performers. On August 12, at Mount St. Mary College, the chapter hosted a screening of the documentary Taking Root, about the Green Belt movement founded by Wangari Maathai that featured a Q&A with the director, Lisa Merton via Skype. On September 8, 2012, in Culver City, the new chapter held a Music Night with local bands; later that month, we participated in a Justice Jog organized by the Greater Los Angeles Association of Legal Administrators. In addition to monthly meetings, our chapter has offered “salons” about the history and role of the United Nations.

Cathy Hillman, co-founder and president of Pacific Epoch, is working closely with her board members on planning their first annual event on Climate Change. The event, called “Women, Climate Change and Justice,” will take place on December 8th in Santa Monica. The film will be shown on November 25, International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Women activists have marked this day since 1981 and the UN designated it as such in 1999, so it’s a good time to speak out in support of both the Violence Against Women Act and the International Violence Against Women Act, both of which have been mired in the U.S. Congress. www.un.org/en/events/endviolenceaday.

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Metropolitan New York Chapter
by Katherine Garcia

2012 activities: On January 10, the Metropolitan New York chapter hosted a private salon evening with filmmaker Abigail Disney to discuss her personal journey in creating the award-winning film Back to Hell. Disney’s film documents the activities of Leymah Gbowee and a group of highly dedicated Liberian let her lifelong dream alive. She became a medical doctor to make a difference in the world. In the process, she discovered three principles that guided her life and shared those principles for us to emulate: be an agent of change through service, listen widely to people’s needs and never give up.

As a pediatrician, focusing on the children and the mothers she supported, it became clear to her that she could treat her patients for pneumonia or diarrhea, but they would go back to a house with no sanitation or no water. Thus, only half of the treatment was done; the other half was beyond medicine. She decided then to devote her life to public service.

Without plan for higher office, Bachelet started at the Ministry of Public Health. Her knowledge of public health and epidemiology, coupled with her medical experience in the Chilean communities, led her appointment as the Minister of Health and later election as the first female President of Chile. When she recognized that the principle of “doing no harm” derived from the Hippocratic Oath was applicable beyond medicine and public health, she extended it to social issues. Bachelet notes that, in the same way doctors identify treatments to bring back health, equality and justice and leadership based on the pursuit of human rights and human dignity for all are the prescription for a healthy society.

The process she chose and the experiences she encountered made Bachelet a good listener and observer of matters profoundly affecting people’s lives. As she laid out her principles, she raised awareness of the pressing challenges taking place in the world: accelerated technological and scientific advances, financial crisis, the uprisings of the Arab world, climate change, human rights violations, war and peace, deep poverty and humanitarian needs. These world transformations called for a new kind of leadership. She met many leaders who listened and consulted widely before taking action; communities wanted to be part of the solution.

“Listening,” Bachelet says, “is a very powerful form of communication and absolutely essential to problem solving and good decision-making.”

Finally, she advises us to never give up. The world is fluid and social change is hard. There will always be disparity, inequality and injustice, but alongside the organizations like the United Nations and all its agencies, including UN Women, philanthropy, NGOs and community efforts are present everywhere to work for the well-being of humanity. We can all find a place to serve and a niche to listen. USNC actively engages with UN Women, for her work in joining others in a spirit of cooperation and hope for a better world.


Know Your Board Members

USNC Vice President for Fund Development, Kay Colson was born in Salzburg, Austria and grew up in the United States south in the 60’s and 70’s, a time of significant change for US civil and women’s rights. Working at a YWCA sponsored conference in 1964, she met African-American girlfriends for the first time and sat with their racially mixed group in Congressman Charles Bennett’s office in Washington while he explained his vote against the Civil Rights Act. Working her way through Florida State University, she was active on campus and named to WHO’s Who in American Colleges and Universities. After graduation, she took her first job in the trucking business at a time when women were gaining more options but few opportunities for advancement. Moving to a job in oilfield services, she earned an MBA at the University of Houston, became a senior business professional, surrounded by oil and the men who drilled for it, were keenly aware of a need to take care of each other.

For her, this experience reinforced the importance of female friendships, networking and mentoring, and also led to fundraising and its power. Money ensures influence and voices are heard. In the late 90’s, Kay returned to the southeast to fine-tune her expertise in project and change management where she was named Manager of the Year, led fund development for the United Way and established her own personal brand as a business professional.

The stage was set for her introduction to UN Women (then UNIFEM), where she managed fundraising events at the local level and
2013 Annual Meeting & National Conference: Save the Date: June 8, 2013
By Carol Buchanan

USNC will hold its annual meeting and national conference on June 8, 2013 at the Lido Beach Hotel, Sarasota, Florida. All are invited to attend and enjoy the beauty of this beach paradise. The theme of the conference is the Power of One. You will hear from incredible individuals, groups and corporations who have devoted their time and money in supporting and promoting gender issues. You will also hear directly from UN Women representatives about the work being done in the field and hopefully will be inspired to do more in your individual communities.

It is not going to be all work. Sarasota is beautiful. The weather will be sunny and warm. The hotel is right on the beach. And we also have a very special sponsor, a wonderful entertainment for you.

Official registration materials and conference information will be sent in the spring. Attendees may book their hotel rooms now by contacting their hotel rooms now by contacting the Lido Beach Hotel, 1 800-441-8113. The hotel is holding a finite number of rooms for us at a special rate for UN Women members at $179 per night (which includes tax). A goal to have signatures for the board, members and guests.

The board members shared an overview of the USNC-UN Women initiatives, membership and causes.

The program concluded with a delicious lunch, networking and surprise sponsored gifts. The kick off of the USNC-UN Women DFW Chapter was a great success and we are very excited to be apart of the USNC-UN Women family.

Michelle Bachelet’s Lessons to Live By
by Luz Van Meek

In spite of hardships while her country, Chile, was shattering, while her friends were killed or disappeared as the result of a horrific dictatorship, and while she was destined to exile in Germany, Michelle Bachelet parlayed her strength of will, her commitment to the prosperity and welfare of the people of her country, and her unswerving faith in the worth of women, into a life of selfless service to her country.

Keynote speaker Teresa Frosini, a CBS Arts & Entertainment Reporter, spoke on how women overcome challenges as “Winning Women in the Media.” A panel on Family/Corporate/Cultural Perspectives led a discussion and award winning ceremonial dancer Tanvi Mongia performed.

On September 24, our chapter hosted a screening of What's Your Point Honey, an inspiring documentary that puts a new face on national leadership. After the film, TV journalist Roz Abrams moderated “Do Women Count?” - a panel with Mary Bagliivo, Saatchi & Saatchi Latin America Chair, Beverly Neufeld, NYWA president and the filmmakers Susan Tolffer & Amy Sewell. The League of Women Voters of the City of New York attended the event to register voters during the reception. Join us online at http://www.facebook.com/unwomen.technology and @UNWomen_MetroNY.

Metro New York Chapter’s 25th Anniversary Celebration
by Cheryl Berton

The New York chapter celebrated its 25th anniversary on October 24, 2012, with a cocktail reception at the National Arts Club in NYC. The evening honored women and organizations making a difference towards the advancement of women around the world, recognized past chapter presidents, Norma Levitt, Ruth Zeller, Janet Stovin and Leslie Wright, for the work done to make this chapter strong, Celebrating “25 Years of Empowering Women”, the chapter honored fashion designer Eileen Fisher, filmmaker Abigail Disney; Analisa Balares, founder of WomenFromHere, and two organizations: Business Professional Women International and Soroptimist International. Special guests included Ms. Laksmi Puri, Deputy Executive Director and Assistant Under Secretary General, UN Women. The evening was emceed by Valerie Smaldone and included a special musical performance by award winning singer Morley.

Strength in Numbers: 16 National Committees Working Together
by Maggie Forster Schmitz

From September 11-14, representatives from 18 of 18 UN Women National Committees met in London for the annual UN Women National Coalition Meeting. While the National Committees meeting is always an important opportunity to exchange ideas and share common concerns, the 2012 meeting focused on training in specific areas key to the growth and success of National Committees. Expert presentations were given on social media and crowd sourcing, engaging the private sector, and voluntary sector management, among others. Mitsui Das and Kristin Hette represented UN Women and gave updates on progress and changes at UN Women.

The meeting also marked a further step towards the National Committees working together as a coalition to build global support for UN Women. The Committees are increasing their collaboration with regards to private sector outreach and began discussions on joint projects, including side events at CSW and global media campaigns. Kudos to the UK National Committee and Jan Grasty and Janet Cooey in particular for a wonderful and productive meeting!

Stay tuned for the launch of our new USNC website, coming in December...
Global Coalition of UN Women National Committees: Report from Carol Buchanan

For me it was a pleasure to renew friendships with members of the Global Coalition of UN Women National Committees which met in London in September. More than ever I see the importance of the National Presidents coming together on a regular basis to share their common issues and best practices and to receive the benefit of each others’ experiences. The last session of the meeting was a wonderfully frank give and take between the representatives of UN Women and the Committee Presidents. Each walked away with a clearer understanding of the other’s priorities and, I believe, a greater respect for the work of each entity.

Our President, Maggie Forster-Schmidt, made us all proud in her clear delineation of the work of the US Committee. However, I could not help to be a little envious of the support other committees get which enables them to raise much more money than we and do a more powerful job of advocacy. It was clear that we are tremendously handicapped with only one staff person (various committees had a separate fund developer, a specific government advocate, a corporate advocate, and in some cases, other staff such as technological staff, albeit some were volunteers. Several even had an executive director.) Committee after Committee spoke of how their effectiveness was multiplied once they took on additional staff, even part time staff. As one of the newest chapter of USNC-UN Women, I fully understand the importance of the National Presidents DC and in some cases, other staff such as technological staff, albeit some were volunteers. Several even had an executive director.) Committee after Committee spoke of how their effectiveness was multiplied once they took on additional staff, even part time staff. As one of the newest chapter of USNC-UN Women, I fully understand the significance of their work and the value of the support they receive.

The chapter held its first public event of the season with a screening of Pray The Devil Back to Hell. Following the film, the group discussed the film and the new chapter; 20% of attendees joined USNC-UN Women right away! Follow us online here and @East_FL_UNWomen

Miami Chapter by Marisa Feito

A group of South Florida business leaders joined together to form the newest chapter of USNC-UN Women. “We are so honored to join this group of leaders in their quest to bring about progress to women and to society,” said Miami chapter founding president, Marisa Feito. “The empowerment of wom- en across the world is the biggest challenge and opportunity we face in this century. Achieving this goal has great positive ramifications for entire societies and economies.” Feito said that the Miami chapter will support the mission of UN Women by focusing on outreach, advocacy and fundraising.

The Miami Chapter Hosted its Inaugural Event October 3rd at the Coral Gables Museum.

The premier event was fantastic and included the screening of a portion of the moving documentary Half the Sky: Turning Oppression Into Opportunity for Women Worldwide, based on a bestselling book written by acclaimed The New York Times journalist, Nicholas Kristof and his wife Sheryl WuDunn.

“Now, with Miami on board, USNC-UN Women adds another vibrant major city as a chapter and gains a critical voice for UN Women in the US gateway to Latin Ameri- ca,” commented Maggie Forster Schmitz, President, U.S. National Committee for UN Women.

In addition to Feito, the founding board members of the Miami Chap- ten years progresses. Some exciting events we have coming up include a screening of Half the Sky on October 2nd, UN Women booths at

JOIN THE MOVEMENT FOR GLOBAL WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT – BECOME A USNC-UN WOMEN MEMBER TODAY!

by Terry Brackett

Being a USNC-UN Women member has never been easier! Our online system now offers automatic renewal - you don’t have to write a check or fill in your information again. We have also introduced an option to contribute more on an annual basis without greatly impacting your wallet. For example, you can join the Visionary Circle, which is $250. But, rather than a single pay- ment of $250, you may now make regular installments of only $25 a month. There are all levels of Circles, and if you join at a Cir- cle which is $100 or more, you will receive the fabulous and highly coveted USNC-UN Women logo pin. With the holiday season just ahead, a gift membership also makes a wonderful present - the gift of global women’s empowerment!

New chapters have been added in California, Miami, and Texas and a number of others are in the final stages of formation. We are also growing our membership by increasing our communications with mem- bers and reaching out to lapsed members.

Remember, we are a volunteer organiza- tion, so your dollars, at whatever level you comfortably afford, will be used to give women and girls a voice worldwide.

Join or Renew your Membership now at www.unwomen-usnc.org/donate

In September, USNC moved to our new of- fice space in Washington, DC. We are sub- letting from a non-profit organization whose purpose is aligned with ours. Interna- tional Council for Research on Women. ICRW is a global research institute with a mission to empower women, advance gender equality and fight poverty in the developing world.

The new USNC-UN Women contact infor- mation is:

1120 20th Street NW, Suite 500 North
Washington, DC 20036

Telephone: 202-469-8732

Wake Forest University Club

by Alex Hollifield

We have roughly 25 members so far and hope to recruit more as the year progresses. Some exciting events we have coming up include a screening of Half the Sky on October 2nd, UN Women booths at

Gulf Coast by Shirley Miller

‘Leaders to Leaders’ (L2L) This prestigious program created by the Gulf Coast chapter recruits ninth, tenth and eleventh grade female students from Sarasota and Mana-