

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 knew 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 terrible story of women's suffering in West Africa. Hearing Leymah Gbowee speak at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) this year inspired me to read her book and follow her successes. More recently, I was honored to meet Shirley Sherrod and hear her story of

being fired from her federal job after being misrepresented as racist in the press, but that event pales in comparison to her life story. These are the women we need to support and fight for ... they are the real heroines of this world."

"UN Women is a great institution hamstrung by lack of resources to do what it needs to do as the global champion for female rights. Around the world, women and girls still suffer from human trafficking, 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 multi-national 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.



Letter from the President

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

UN Women-USNC Board of Directors

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Join USNC during the annual 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence Campaign, November 25 - December 10, for inspiring daily online content.

Participate via Twitter: #16DaysUSNC as well as on Facebook and our website. You won't want to miss this global conversation!

Commission on the Status of Women

by Francine Cerami

The 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will be held at United Nations Headquarters in New York from March 4-15, 2013. The theme is: Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls.

The Commission on the Status of Women is a functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It is the principal global policy-making body dedicated exclusively to gender equality and advancement of women. Every year, representatives of the world gather at United Nations Headquarters in New York to evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges, set global standards and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment worldwide.

USNC will be sponsoring a panel discussion for the first time at this year's CSW, an extravaganza that consists of multiple simultaneous sessions, held in a variety of locations, sponsored by a wide range of organizations.

Further information on registration and housing will be available in the winter newsletter and on the USNC website.

Chapter News

SoCal Chapter

by CeCe Sloan, Joy Adams,
Lucy Parker, Kim Salter,
Lori Vandermeir



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/endviolenceday.

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 the chapter, is working closely with her board members on planning their first annual event on Climate Change. The event, called "Women, Climate Change and Human Rights," will take place on December 8th in Santa Monica and will feature speakers from the fields of academia, politics, education, entertainment and activism. There will be food served from local organic restaurants, as well as booths showcasing eco-friendly arts, products and ideas. The money raised through this event will support UN Women and its programs. Join us online at: <http://www.facebook.com/UNWOMENLA> and @UNWomenLA.

Metro New York Chapter

by Katherine Garcia

2012 activities: On January 10, the Metro NY chapter hosted a private salon evening with filmmaker Abigail Disney to discuss her personal journey in creating the award-winning film, Pray the Devil Back to Hell. Disney's film documents the activities of Leymah Gbowee and a group of highly dedicated Liberian

let kept 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 as 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 profession 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 drastic changes taking place the world: accelerated technological and scientific advances, financial crisis, the uprising of the Arab world, climate change, human rights viola-

tions, war and peace, deep poverty and humanitarian needs. These world transformations called for a change in leadership. Communities wanted 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 along the way, 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 all can find a platform to serve and a niche to listen. USNC applauds Michelle Bachelet, Director of UN Women, for her work in joining others in a spirit of cooperation and hope for a better world.

Source: Michelle Bachelet 2012 Commencement Speech at Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. Retrieved on October 5, 2012

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. While 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



Kay Colson

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, Kay earned an MBA at the University of Houston and expanded her circle of influence to include executive women's groups in Houston, where a solid base of professional women, 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 the ability to get things done! In the late 90s, 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.

But 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 some 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 the Lido Beach Hotel, 1 800-441-2113. 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 a \$20 resort fee). Early booking is highly recommended.

Have Your Say in 2013

Every week, UN Women's Say NO - UNiTE to End Violence against Women YouTube Channel features a different video that speaks on the issue. Say NO is always on the lookout for compelling and insightful videos addressing violence against women to feature in its weekly slot.

Have a suggestion? Send the name of the video and YouTube url link directly to: jessica.taudte@unwomen.org.

"Walk a Mile in Her Shoes" and Pride Winston-Salem (both of October 13th), and a campaign to ratify CEDAW at Wake Forest University, with a goal to have signatures of over half of the student body.

For the spring semester, we are planning the "This is What a Feminist Looks Like" campaign and will co-sponsoring a few events such as the Hunger Banquet with Amnesty International and Love Your Body Week with Gender Equality Allies.

SNC-UN Women Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW) Chapter Successfully Launches on United Nations Day!

United Nations Day, October 24th, 2012 was a very special day in Dallas, Texas when the USNC-UN Women DFW Chapter successfully launched at the prestigious Park City Club. The new 14th Chapter inaugural luncheon hosted 50 women from corporate leaders to home makers to future leaders.



USNC-UN Women DFW Chapter Luncheon

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.

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

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 VanMeek

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 Bache-



Katherine Garcia and Leymah Gbowee

President of the Gbowee Peace Foundation Africa, head of the Liberia Reconciliation Initiative, and Co-Founder and Executive Director of Women Peace and Security Network Africa. Guests who attended the reception received a copy of Leymah Gbowee's new book, *Mighty Be Our Powers*.

The theme of the annual meeting was "The Three Pillars of Sustainable Development: Social, Economic & Environmental." On May 8, the chapter hosted a program that featured the election of five new members to the Board of Directors, a wine reception, and a panel moderated by journalist and professor, Ann Goodman, PhD. Expert panelists included Anna Falth from UN Women, Aaron Baum from Community Lab, Heather Potters from Pharmajet, Christy Scazzero from charity: water, and Lara Crampe from International Institute of Rural Reconstruction.

The Young Professionals Committee hosted the 3rd annual "A Night to Say NO to Violence Against Women" fundraiser on May 16. Over 250 guests packed the bar and dance floor of the Hotel Chantelle to show their support. Through ticket sales and an outstanding 30+ prize raffle, the event raised \$10,000 to support the elimination of violence against women.

On September 24, our chapter hosted a screening of *What's Your Point Honey*, an inspiring documentary that puts a new face on political leadership. After the film, TV journalist Roz Abrams moderated "Do Women Count?" - a panel with Mary Baglivo, Saatchi & Saatchi Latin America Chair, Beverly Neufeld, NYWA president and the filmmakers Susan Toffler & 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.metro> and @UNWomen_MetroNY.

Metro New York Chapter's 25th Anniversary Celebration

by Cheryl Benton

The New York chapter celebrated its 25th anniversary on October 24, 2012, at a cocktail reception at the National Arts Club in NYC. The event, honoring 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 Womensphere, and two organizations: Business Professional Women International and Soroptimist International. Special guests included Ms. Lakshmi Puri, Deputy Executive Director and Assistant Under Secretary General, UN Women. The evening was emceed by Valerie Smaldone and included a special music performance by award winning singer Morley.

Strength in Numbers: 16 National Committees Working Together

by Maggie Forster Schmitz

From September 11-14, representatives from 16 of 18 UN Women National Committees met in London for the annual UN Women Global 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. Mitushi Das and Kristin Hetle 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 Cooper 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 Foster-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 multiplied once they took on additional staff, even part time staff. As one of the greatest powers on the earth, the US is one of the lowest per capita in terms of our level of contribution to UN Women (both government and private sector support). UN Women has often reinforced the need for National Committee sustainability. I would love to see us put much more effort in following the lead of our sister committees in this matter.



2012 Women's Equity Day Celebration" hosted by Florida Atlantic University's Center for Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies at their Boca Raton Campus. "Voting is Power" was the theme and the East Florida Chapter, represented UN Women USNC at a table with visuals and various hand-outs. Attendees were from left to right are Mihi Basaria, 1st V.Pres; Mary Jane Saunders, President, F.A.U., Siobhan Adams, student; Rep. from Sierra Leone University; Skeets Freidkin, Co-chair event, Lalita Janke, President, E.FI. Chapter; and Punita Jhaveri, member at large.

East Coast, Florida Chapter

by LaLita Janke

Board members participated in "2012 Women's Equity Day - Voting is Power" at Florida Atlantic University's Center for Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies. The event commemorated the 92nd anniversary of women's voting rights.



Thursday, Sept 20th, at the beautiful home of Punita Jhaveri, where 20 women from Broward, Palm Beach and the Treasure Coast gathered for a delicious Indian lunch, viewed and had a discussion on the impact of the documentary "Pray The Devil Back to Hell". Attendees had such a good time that Punita already has responses from 30 women to attend the next lunch, movie and discussion of one segment of the documentary "Half The Sky" at her home.

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 women 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 America," commented Maggie Forster Schmitz, President, U.S. National Committee for UN Women.

In addition to Feito, the founding board members of the Miami Chapter are: Deborah Mayo, Lourdes Alvarez, Ana Oliveira, Sandy Gonzalez-Levy, Lianne Acebo, Cristina Blanco, Gabriella Adessi, Maria Mas Blet, Mary E. Davis and Adriana Vega.

Gulf Coast Chapter

by Shirley Miller

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



atee County High Schools who are interested in developing leadership skills and broadening their knowledge and awareness about global issues impacting women and girls. Students are required to spend a minimum of two years in the program and participate in a variety of learning activities including: Walk to End Violence, Rally to End Genocide and other Mass Atrocities Worldwide, International Women's Day, Through Women's Eyes Film Festival, UN Women's Spring and Fall Breakfast Events, Florida Creativity Weekend. The L2L program and activities broaden members' knowledge about international issues and foster activism.



join us online here: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Gulf-Coast-Chapter-of-the-US-National-Committee-for-UN-Women/134205976686323>

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

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 payment 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 Circle 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 - give 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 members and reaching out to lapsed members.

Remember, we are a volunteer organization, so your dollars, at whatever level you can 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 office space in Washington, DC. We are subletting from a non-profit organization whose purpose is aligned with ours, International 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 information is:

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

Telephone: 202-469-8732