



UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION

United States of America
Greater Philadelphia Chapter



Re: Invitation to your students to participate in a Model United Nations Conference on Water Management, scheduled for MLK day 2015, Monday, January 19, 2015 as a community service event.

Philadelphia, September 26, 2014

Dear educator/principal,

I am writing you to invite your students to participate as a school team in our Model United Nations Conference on Water Stewardship. Students who participate in our Model UN Conference (MUN) combine education with activism. Through the MUN, we hope to address issues of water and sanitation and promote human rights and environmental justice. Participation in our Water Stewardship Program begins with seminars online, involves mentoring at your school where needed, and culminates with the MUN Conference. This year our focus of the conference is developing a universal template for hygiene in schools, using a woman/girls perspective. We expect your students to continue their involvement with water and sanitation issues by developing and or participating in H₂OforLife chapters.

Water is essential to many aspects of human health, development, and wellbeing. The United Nations Water Conference (1997), the International Conference on Water and the Environment (1992), and the Earth Summit (1992) have all focused on this vital resource. Water and Sanitation are major components of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. As of July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly has recognized the human right to safe water, recognizing that every individual should be able to access sufficient, safe, and affordable water.

In collaboration with the Philadelphia Global Water Initiative (PGWI) and the Fairmount Water Works Interpretive Center (FWWIC) we will convene a Model United Nations (MUN) conference on Water Management on Monday, January 19, 2015, in celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Day of Service. Our MUN aims at bringing high school students from the Philadelphia region to participate as delegates from non-governmental organizations such as Engineers without Borders, Water For People, OXFAM, etc. The conference will be organized and staffed by volunteers and students from the Philadelphia Global Water Initiative, FWWIC, and the United Nations Organization of Greater Philadelphia. Our Model UN format involves a preparatory phase at the participating schools. This phase includes seminars meant to engage students in conversations about water and sanitation, school design in relation to health, gender and water, and the use of modern technology in global health. The facilitation of these seminars and our conference guide is meant to prepare students to have meaningful, intellectual debates during the conference. The lessons are designed to educate the students in a creative and engaging fashion and further spark their interest in global health. The basic text from which we will work is a PAHO/WHO report about a school hygiene project in Suriname, published in 2001. We assume that recent technological developments warrant an update of this text.

1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102 Phone: 215-241-5738. www.una-gp.org. info@una-gp.org

Our Model United Nations Conference is free of charge for the participating students. The conference is an all-day event, to be held at the University of Pennsylvania. The conference will be capped at one 100 students. We are reaching out to a mix of schools, some charter, some from outside the school district, and some parochial schools. We are recruiting individual students, groups that are enrolled in after school programs and, if a teacher is so inclined, a whole class. We expect participation not so much on the basis of academic excellence but on the basis of interest, global curiosity, strong convictions and a willingness to expand horizons. Do realize that we will provide training for students (up to 4 sessions) and also offer one Saturday morning seminar for participating teachers in November 2014, and for which Continuing Education Credits will be available.

If you are interested, please confirm your interest by **November 19, 2014 by email to info@una-gp.org**. Upon confirmation, we will reach out and coordinate dates in November and December on which to facilitate the seminars. At the end of November, we will formally begin registration for the conference in January.

For more information, we can visit your school and explain the project with any group of teachers and students that may want to learn more. I also encourage you to reach out to us if you have any questions to morssink@una-gp.org, or the student coordinator Nathalie Figueroa at nfig@sas.upenn.edu.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Christiaan Morssink, MPH, PhD
Executive Director UNA-GP

Cc. Nathalie Figueroa