UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Pasadena Chapter

November '26 *Chapter Updates









UN Day '26

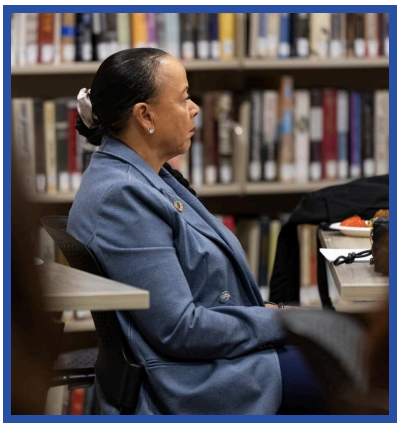
On Monday, October 26, 2026, UNA Pasadena celebrated UN Day 2026: Empowering Youth for a Better Future. Held in the Polytechnic Upper School Library, the event brought together students, educators, community organizations, volunteers, and Pasadena community members to celebrate local action and its connection to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

The celebration began with an empowering and inspiring conversation with Sophia Alicea, the current UNA-USA Youth Observer to the United Nations. A leading advocate for youth in foreign policy, she stressed the importance of using one's voice to uplift local communities and encouraged young people to speak out on their own convictions.

Following the talk was a deeply insightful dialogue with former UNICEF representative Khin-Sandi Lwin. During her presentation, she delved into the intricacies of international







humanitarian work, especially about children's human rights in Myanmar, and expanded on her mission to promote gender equality through youth mentorship.

Additionally, UNA Pasadena also recognized high school juniors Ryan Kim, Aidan Shih, and Abigail Vasko as this year's Youth Action Ambassadors. Launched for the first time, the initiative recognizes and supports the outstanding work of youth working to make an impact on one or more of the UN SDGs in our community and beyond.

The event concluded with an advocacy workshop by UNA Pasadena's Advocacy Chair Charlotte "Char" Bland, which outlined unique opportunities for leadership and involvement within UNA-USA.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who helped make this event such a success! We are especially grateful to Polytechnic School, the UNA Pasadena Board, current members and interns, UNA-USA and Sophia the Youth Observer, KhinSandi and her family and friends (who came all the way from Orange County), and all of you who contributed your time, energy, and support. We couldn't have done it without you!

For more about Khin-Sandi Lwin and her work, listen to her conversation with Matt Vasko, UNA Pasadena Board Member, on his podcast,

It Matters How We Treat One Another

Featured Episode:

UN Day 2026 | Guest: Khin-Sandi Lwin on UNICEF, Myanmar & Youth Empowerment | It Matters Show | S4 E4



Matt Vasko

matthewvasko.com



A Great Friend to UNA Pasadena!





The UN Day ‘26 could not have happened without the unwavering support of Polytechnic School, specifically Richard “Rick” Caragher.

It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of Richard “Rick” Caragher. A dedicated champion of global education, Rick led Polytechnic School’s PolyGlobal program for over two decades and served as the devoted faculty advisor for the UNA Poly Chapter. His passion, leadership, and unwavering dedication to our community left an indelible mark in our hearts.

Mr. Caragher was one of those rare people who exemplified genuine kindness on a daily basis. Though he only directly taught the seniors’ Global Scholar course, his reach extended far beyond the classroom. He made a point to connect with everyone, often greeting students and colleagues with a warm smile as they stepped onto campus. He championed the phrase “Be a panther, not a parasite,” making a consistent effort to attend musicals, games, performances, and of course, UNA events. From sending personalized emails to his students and faculty on their birthday to offering a heartfelt hello in the halls, he made an effort to cultivate unbreakable relationships with everyone he met.

In the words of his daughter Shaelyn:
"Live life like Rick - love others deeply, be curious and slow to speak, walk everywhere, ask for people's names, celebrate the marginalized, laugh a lot, and hold your family so close."

Mr. Caragher, as you read this in heaven, it is an honor to have known and worked with you. At UNA-Pasadena, we will remain committed to building a legacy you would be proud of.



--Lauren Poplock
Polytechnic Class of 2028

Rest in peace, Rick. You will be deeply missed.



Our chapter looks forward to honoring Rick's legacy and his lasting contributions to global education. We are excited to share more about this special initiative soon. Stay tuned for updates!



YWCA's 24th Annual Women For Justice Breakfast

Keynote Speaker:

Michelle Gaskill-Hames

Regional President, Kaiser Foundation Health Plan and Hospitals Southern California and Hawaii

Three UNA-Pasadena board members, Paige LaCombe, Charlotte "Char" Bland, and Beverly Goldin, attended the YWCA Glendale and Pasadena's 24th Annual Women for Justice Breakfast on October 22 at the Hilton Pasadena. As a proud Community Sponsor, UNA-Pasadena joined community leaders in celebrating the YWCA's 100 years of service and its continued commitment to eliminating racism, empowering women, and advancing justice and equality for all. The morning featured an inspiring keynote by Michelle Gaskill-Hames, Regional President of Kaiser Permanente for Southern California and Hawaii, and the 2026 Women for Racial Justice Honoree. Drawing on her distinguished career in healthcare and commitment to health equity, Michelle shared a powerful message about leadership, community investment, and creating healthier, more equitable communities. It was a meaningful morning of inspiration, connection, and renewed commitment to making a difference in our community.

More information about YWCA: click here.

Upcoming Events

UNA Pasadena Board/Member Meeting

All Welcome!

Focus: Next Year (2027) with UNA Pasadena

When: Monday, November 16th at 6 PM

Where: Online

Click here to register and receive the Zoom link

Keep an eye out for a HUMAN RIGHTS DAY in December!!

No December Member/Board Meeting.

Stay tuned, as we might host a party!

Welcome, New Members of the UNA Pasadena Chapter!

Thank you to all the new members of the UNA-USA Pasadena Chapter. We're so grateful for your support and involvement.

TheodoreWilton
JamesRawitsch
DevonOgden
ZoeYang
AbigailVasko
ErinShih
BelindaChan
EmiliaWu
TeoKashper
JohnNorian
CarlaSlepak
WilliamPan
AlanAlexander
HeatherFrisch

Welcome to your local UNA-USA community!

Not a member yet? Get your UNA Pasadena membership today!

Membership Types

➡️ **Standard: $50**
The standard membership makes up the backbone of our movement. Gain access to all of our events, opportunities, and networking.

➡️ **GenUN**: ***FREE***
Ages 14–17. As a GenUN member, you'll gain access to incredible benefits that help you grow as a leader, connect with others, and take action for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

➡️ **Young Professional**: **$25**
Members ages 18 to 30 may choose this membership to unlock benefits related to advancing their career and professional portfolio.

Why become a member?

Being a member of UNA-USA Pasadena comes with many benefits, including...

- UN career development opportunities and skill building
- Opportunities to serve as a UNA-USA delegate at high-level UN events
- Discounts on tours of UN Headquarters in New York City
- Subscriptions to *PASSPORT* and *UNA-USA Today* publications, and more!

Click HERE to join UNA-USA Pasadena today!



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