



**UNA★USA**

Pasadena Chapter

## *May 2026 Newsletter*

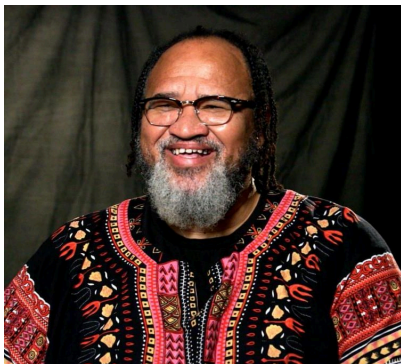
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Read the latest news from the **UNA-USA Pasadena** community and get involved with upcoming events!

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## Reflecting on this year's Global Engagement Summit in New York

*A note from Chapter President, Danny Petersen*



As the newly elected President of the UNA-USA Pasadena Chapter, it was both an honor and a deeply inspiring experience to attend the Global Engagement Summit at United Nations Headquarters in New York this past April. Gathering alongside passionate leaders, changemakers, and advocates from across the country reaffirmed the importance of global cooperation, civic engagement, and local action aligned with the UN

Sustainable Development Goals.

The summit provided meaningful opportunities to build relationships, exchange ideas, and explore innovative ways our Pasadena Chapter can continue expanding its impact both locally and globally. I returned energized, encouraged, and even more committed to strengthening our chapter's role in advancing peace, dialogue, youth engagement, and community collaboration.

## *Upcoming Events & Opportunities*

UNA Pasadena Presents  
She Means Business: Stories of Impact  
Screening on May 26th



**MAY 26th**  
a film screening event

**SHE  
MEANS  
BUSINESS**  
STORIES OF IMPACT

 6-8:30PM | Films & Vendors  
LOOK Cinemas Glendale

 UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION  
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
Pasadena Chapter

 OPALUS

 Auto DCP.

 Watch Films  
Act Local  
Make a Better World  
together

**She Means Business: Stories of Impact**  
A Documentary Screening Event

**Tuesday, May 26th, from 6 to 8:30 PM**  
**LOOK Cinemas Glendale ~ 128 N Artsakh Ave, Glendale, CA 91206**

Step into a gathering woven with love, resilience, and the timeless spirit of women who nurture the world around them.

We invite you to a soulful celebration honoring mothers and women, the quiet architects of community, the keepers of tradition, and the creators of change. Through a curated selection of inspiring documentary short films, we will journey together into stories that illuminate

the strength, creativity, and care that women pour into their families, their communities, and the earth.

### **Film Screenings**

Immerse yourself in ‘Empower’ and other powerful films that celebrate the courage, artistry, ingenuity, and spirit of women from around the world.

### **Live Q&A**

Hear from the filmmakers as they share intimate reflections and the profound lessons learned from the women whose stories they brought to life.

### **Artisan Market**

Discover beautiful textiles woven by Indigenous women artisans from India, along with crafts supporting women-led local businesses, and a chance to uplift and support sustainable livelihoods.

### **Suggested Donation:**

To support our speakers and the UNA's continued mission, we suggest a \$15 donation for attendees who are not UNA-USA members. If you are not a UNA-USA member and you are able to donate, please do so at the link here: <https://donate.actlocalfest.org/product/she-means-business/>

[Reserve to Attend](#)

## Upcoming Chapter Meeting on May 30th

Join us for an in-person chapter membership meeting at the Western Justice Center from 9:30-10:45 on May 30th.

This will be a chance for all to learn about the state of our chapter, including recent activities, upcoming events, and opportunities. Additionally, this is the ideal forum for you to share any thoughts/ideas/questions/concerns with chapter leadership. We hope you will join us!

*If you are interested in attending, please let us know by emailing [unapasadena@gmail.com](mailto:unapasadena@gmail.com).*

## *Additional Opportunities*

**Our American Story Project:** Tell our UN Story

- [Nominate a Chapter Member](#)

- [Tell Your UN Story for America's 250th Celebration](#)

### America 250: The UNA Impact

- [Add Volunteer Hours](#)
- [Share Your UNA Impact Story](#)

### US Futures Forum Hosted by UNA-USA & C4UN

May 19th (12:30-2:00pm) [Register Here](#)

## *In Review*

## Recap of Earth Day Altadena 2026

On April 19th, 2026, the Altadena community came together for the 3rd annual Earth Day Altadena celebration, a free event centered around the theme “Making Change Where We Stand.” Hosted in partnership with organizations including Soul Force Project and Plant Based Treaty, and featuring UNA Pasadena's Danny Petersen as MC, the event focused on healing, sustainability, and community connection following the Eaton Fire.



Throughout the afternoon, attendees enjoyed live performances from artists including Mayeya and the Earthseed Band, Los Cambalache, Baba Onochie Chukwurah, and Danzantes de la Vida. The event also featured educational workshops, opportunities to take environmental action, local community organizations, free plants, fresh produce, and plant-based food from local vendors. During the event, UNA-USA Pasadena board member Char

Bland and student intern Lauren Poplock also spoke about the importance of community involvement and the UNA.



Held in the historic Solvang Garden and surrounded by fire-impacted homes, Earth Day Altadena created a meaningful space for reflection. Community members of all ages came together through music, art, and education to celebrate Earth Day while supporting local environmental and recovery efforts in Altadena.



*~ Lauren Poplock, High School Intern*

## UNA Pasadena in Sacramento



Our delegation came to Sacramento prepared, engaged, and committed to advocacy that reflects the values of the United Nations—human rights, sustainability, equity, and global responsibility at the local level. Each member demonstrated leadership and thoughtful participation during meetings with legislators to discuss issues directly impacting California communities.

One of the most meaningful highlights of the day was our meeting with Assemblymember John Harabedian’s office. We met with his staff and discussed AB 740, as well as opportunities for collaboration on legislation that advances community well-being and aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This important discussion brought together representatives from UNA Pasadena, UNA USA, UNA Berkeley, UNA East Bay, UC Berkeley students, and legislative staff to explore UN-aligned advocacy and legislative priorities.

The conversation focused on critical issues impacting California and the world, including climate change, housing affordability, infrastructure improvements, social justice, human trafficking prevention, cybersecurity, and voting rights. It was encouraging to see how local legislative priorities can align with global goals through thoughtful policy and civic partnership.



We also had the privilege of meeting with Assemblymember Gail Pellerin regarding AB 1104 and broader collaborative advocacy efforts focused on women's health, climate action, mental health, and human trafficking prevention. This was an engaging and forward-thinking discussion centered on the importance of partnerships between community organizations, legislative leaders, and international advocates.

The meeting with Assemblymember Pellerin reflected a shared commitment to compassionate leadership, practical solutions, and bold collaboration across sectors to improve lives.

Most importantly, this Sacramento meeting marked the first California state-level UNA Lobby Day, laying the groundwork for future advocacy efforts and expanded participation in years to come.

## Respect My Crown Screening



On Sunday, April 26th, UNA-Pasadena sponsored a screening of *Respect My Crown* at the Western Justice Center in partnership with Community Women Vital Voices. The documentary sheds light on the experiences of Black women in California who have worked to overcome racial and gender barriers as they step into leadership and political roles.

Through interviews and historical moments, the film showed how these women made real change in politics, activism, labor, and the justice system. What stands out is that despite many challenges, these women kept pushing forward and making an impact. The film highlights why representation matters and how having diverse voices in leadership can shape a more inclusive future. Screenings like these offer opportunities to learn from those who have helped shape the communities around us.



Following the screening, attendees heard from the filmmakers and leaders featured in the documentary in a panel discussion. They shared the inspiration behind the film and also emphasized the importance of preserving these often-overlooked stories. A strong idea throughout the conversation was representation and how having Black women in leadership leads to more inclusive decision-making. Panelists also spoke about the idea of “lifting as we climb”, highlighting how generations of Black women have supported and opened doors for one another. The discussion ended with recognizing the impact Black women have had not only in California but across the country and even around the world.

A special thank you to our Advocacy Chair and Board Member, Char Bland, for helping connect UNA-USA Pasadena to this impactful experience.

~ *Charlotte Yorke, High School Intern*

## UNA Wilson Legacy Luncheon



On Saturday, May 2, 2026, all of the UNA-USA Southern California Chapters, UNA-USA Southern California Division leaders and several UNA-USA So. Cal. Campus Chapters, gathered at El Portal restaurant in Pasadena, to honor the memory of Rene and Tom Wilson, two pioneer UNA-USA leaders, who left a very generous, one-time, legacy gift for each of our Southern California Community Chapters and College Campus Chapters.

Both Tom and Rene contributed greatly to the UNA-USA Pasadena Chapter, the Southern California UNA-USA Division (all Southern California Chapters), and the UNA-USA national organization for many, many years. Rene presented at national meetings and was held in high regard by all who knew her. In Rene's obituary, the first of her many accomplishments listed was her UNA-USA Lifetime Achievement Award. This honor is awarded annually to one UNA-USA member in the entire United States. Rene and Tom flew to Washington, DC, to accept the award at a ceremony held at the United Nations Foundation headquarters. It was a beautiful event and well deserved.



Rene and Tom were extraordinary in their generosity of time and knowledge. They were fully committed to the UN. Everyone listened when Rene spoke, as she was a brilliant and effective advocate.

They were fully committed to the UN and worked diligently for countless years, always producing effective results, and their generous legacy gift to all of the UNA-USA Southern California chapters will support the continuation of their work.

*~Judith Harris, Board Member*

## Mayor's Interfaith Prayer Breakfast with Friends In Deed



The 53rd Annual Pasadena Mayor's Interfaith Breakfast, held at the Pasadena Convention Center, brought together Pasadena's community leaders, faith organizations, and residents to join Victor Gordo, Mayor of Pasadena, for a meaningful morning of reflection, connection, and unity. Representing our UNA-USA Pasadena Chapter were Daniel (Danny) Peterson, Antoinette Peterson, Paige LaCombe, Beverly Goldin, and Charlotte Bland.



Keynote speaker Miguel A. Santana and Mayor Gorda shared insightful reflections, addressing the challenges we face in Pasadena - "fire and ice." Both encouraged everyone to "rise up," the theme for this year, and stand together with courage, compassion, and a shared commitment to strengthening our communities and supporting one another. It was a beautiful morning

~ Char Bland, UNA Pasadena Advocacy Chair

# Spotlights

## New Board Members

UNA Pasadena is proud to introduce our two newest board members, Matthew Vasko and Paige LaCombe.



Matthew Vasko holds degrees in communications and psychology and works professionally as a podcaster, writer, speaker, and educator.

Matt has a passion for the social sciences and positive psychology, which are the focus of his podcast, “It Matters How We Treat One Another.” Additionally, he works to encourage a more compassionate future through his blog, “[CenturyOfCompassion.org](http://CenturyOfCompassion.org).”



Paige LaCombe is the Chair and founder of Servas Women, as well as the former Peace Secretary for Servas International.

Paige has a long history with UNA Pasadena, having previously been a member for many years. We are so excited for Paige to rejoin us as a Board Member, bringing her wealth of knowledge across a range of global issues.

## Thanking Liv & Bryan

We would like to extend a special thank you to Liv Bjorgum and Bryan Takeda, both of whom have been instrumental in this chapter's operations over the past year. Liv stepped in during a particularly busy time for our communications team and quickly made herself indispensable, managing email communications, designing newsletters, and helping organize UNA events. Bryan joined the UNA Board for 2025, and his organizational knowledge and experience were valuable assets as we navigated a period of transition.

As we reflect on the time and dedication both have devoted to our chapter, we wish them the best in all their current and future endeavors. Though they will be sorely missed, we are excited to see what life has in store for them next.

*Best of luck, Liv & Bryan!*

## CELEBRATION!!!

Join us in celebrating the graduation of **Ian Eriksson**, our wonderful Chapter Fellow from Occidental College. He will continue his work with UNA Pasadena. We wish him the best of luck!

## Not a member yet? Get your *UNA-USA 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.

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## 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!](#)

## Stay Up-to-Date with What We're Working On

We have lots of fun events and opportunities for you all year long, so don't miss out! *Give our socials a follow!*

**Instagram**   
[@unausapasadena](#)

**LinkedIn**   
[@UNA-USA Pasadena Chapter](#)

**Facebook**   
[@United Nations Association Pasadena Chapter](#)

**Website**   
[UNA-Pasadena.org](#)

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