

Dear Parents of Student Delegates,

Congratulations on your child being selected as a student delegate at a unique Model United Nations Program sponsored by Rotary District 5340! You should feel very proud that your son or daughter will be able to participate in this wonderful and enriching program.

As a student delegate, your child will become exposed to and engaged in major world issues, while meeting and working alongside their peers from different socio-economic groups, cultures and backgrounds. This experience is very similar to the situations encountered by actual delegates to the United Nations. Students will strengthen their leadership qualities while applying their studies in such areas as history, geography, and science to practical real world situations. Most importantly, they will learn how to peacefully resolve conflicts and reach consensus on various issues – critical tools to becoming peace builders or community leaders.

This year we will be debating the following issues: how to resolve the emerging civil war in Syria and what the UN and other countries can do to assist in that endeavor; how to address Iran's recent steps to enhance its nuclear enrichment programme to develop nuclear weapons capabilities and its threats to close the Persian Gulf and the Straits of Hormuz; and with the expiration of the Kyoto Protocol, what the UN can do to encourage or require member nations to undertake meaningful green gas emission reductions and other actions to protect against global climate change. These are current global issues that the real United Nations is presently grappling with among its member nations.

Students participating in our Model UN program will learn about the dynamics of international politics. They will also become familiar with the cultures and policies of the respective countries they represent. Your child will also learn the details of important global issues, the policies of many countries toward these issues, the activities of the United Nations and develop a better understanding of world affairs.

Your child will have to “become” a true ambassador of a foreign country and forget their US-centric values and beliefs and present and argue the various UN resolutions solely from the perspective of their country. This experience will require them to re-examine prejudices, beliefs and stereotypes about other cultures. They will have to accomplish this by having to uphold the foreign policies of their country, even when those policies are in conflict with their own feelings.

During the preparation process, students will develop personal and technical skills and will gain experience in researching the political and economic issues currently facing their respective countries. To persuade other countries to adopt their perspective on the various resolutions, your child will have to use their persuasive writing and speaking skills. Their Rotary and/or high school faculty advisors will help your child learn how to improve these skills. They will also learn how to more effectively listen to the needs of other countries and diplomatically negotiate compromises - abilities that will assist them in whatever career they ultimately pursue.

This year our conference will be held at the Joan Kroc Institute of Peace & Justice, University of San Diego, beginning on Saturday, April 14, 2012 at 8 a.m. The program will conclude on Sunday, April 15, 2012 around 2 p.m. The students will also receive full meals along with an overnight stay at the Crowne Plaza San Diego Hotel in Mission Valley. They will be safely transferred between the 2 locations. Your child will share a room at the hotel most likely with their teammate or with another student of the same gender. They will be thoroughly supervised throughout the weekend, and there will be a chaperone who will be awake and will monitor the hallways during the night of the hotel stay. Rotary District 5340 has adopted a Youth Protection Policy which will further ensure the safety and protection of your child during this program. All

Rotary advisors and other Rotarians supervising your child, including myself, have undergone training in this policy and will have undergone a background check.

The advisors should be sending you or your child a Permission Slip and Medical Release Form to complete and sign. Please promptly fill in the required information and return it to your child's advisor.

We also welcome you to attend our weekend events during the General Assemblies and evening banquet program. Due to the limited size capacity of our conference, guests will be welcomed on a first come, first served basis, and a small fee will be charged if you attend either the Saturday lunch or Saturday dinner. With respect to the costs for your child, the Rotary Club who has sponsored your child has funded all costs associated with your child's participation in the program, including the hotel stay. If you would like to attend any part of the event on April 14-15, 2012, please call your child's advisor.

This will be a very instructive and rewarding event for all of us. We look forward to being part of the amazing growth your child will experience during this fantastic program.

Sincerely,

Kevin A. Cahill
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