

2014—2015 UNICEF High School National Council



Chaereen Pak – Valencia High School, California

Born and raised in Southern California, Chaereen lives with her parents and younger brother and is now a rising senior at Valencia High School. Chaereen first joined UNICEF in her freshman year, intrigued by its mission: to protect and work for a better world for children all across the globe. Through annual fundraisers and events, she began to feel more and more in place, developing the urge to acquire more knowledge about what exactly is happening on the other side of the world and what else she can do to support UNICEF's work. Chaereen will be stepping up to the position of presidency in Valencia High School's UNICEF Club next semester and hopes to grow its presence on her campus. Chaereen is also a member of her school's California Scholarship Federation, National Honor Society, and Circle of Friends chapter. Having a passion for learning different languages, Chaereen is fluent in Korean and hopes to study the highest level of Spanish offered at her school. More importantly, she combines this aspiration with her desire to help children by volunteering at a local Korean School every Saturday as a teaching assistant. This summer, she will be traveling to her homeland to teach English to high school students in Tongyeong, a rural town at the very foot of South Korea. Although still exploring different pathways, Chaereen hopes to have a future career in which she can help others directly and have the opportunity to travel from country to country to learn more about new peoples and cultures.



Hayden Little – Argyle High School, Texas

Hayden Little was born in Denton, TX and currently attends Argyle High School in Argyle, TX. Hayden is the director of his UNICEF club and the president of his class. Hayden is additionally involved in UIL Academics, National Honors Society, and Drumline. In addition to his extracurricular activities, Hayden currently holds jobs at both Sears and the AMC movie theater. Hayden has been active in his UNICEF club since his freshman year and has contributed to its long history of success. When Hayden first heard of the UNICEF organization at his freshman orientation, he knew that it was something he wanted to devote his time and effort towards. Hayden plans to continue his devotion to UNICEF in whichever college he chooses to attend for Petroleum Engineering.



Kanika Gupta – Eastview High School, Minnesota

Kanika is a senior at Eastview High School in Apple Valley, MN. She started a UNICEF High School Club at her school and serves as its President. With the help of very supportive staff at UNICEF, she formulated the model of the ‘UNICEF High School Clubs Alliance’ in the Midwest and for this work received the President’s Volunteer Service Award, 2014. She serves as a member of the National Council of UNICEF High School Clubs. Kanika is actively involved in extracurricular activities at her school and in the local community. She is the editor-in-chief of the school’s award winning literary arts magazine and is a member of varsity debate, speech, and tennis teams. She is a member of National Honor and Spanish Honor Societies. Kanika serves as the Youth Representative of the City’s Park and Recreation Advisory Committee and on weekends, she enjoys volunteering at a local senior home where she engages the residents in mentally enriching activities. For her academic goals, Kanika aspires to pursue a career in medicine.



Lucy Kneissler – Fryeburg Academy, Maine

Lucy is a rising senior at Fryeburg Academy in Fryeburg, ME. Lucy is an active member in the community who is currently the President of the Interact Club and the Caring Acts of Kindness Club in addition to being the co-Chair of the Civil Rights Team and co-Founder and President of Fryeburg Academy’s UNICEF Club. Lucy has made High Honor Roll every semester that she has been at Fryeburg Academy and enjoys challenging herself academically and through her extracurricular activities. Lucy has talked to various different leadership groups across the state of Maine and has enjoyed participating in Maine Youth Leadership Alliance, a statewide group of young leaders inspired to pursue change. Lucy is always looking for ways to help her community. She was awarded a grant from Sodexo Foundation and Youth Service America to address issues of childhood hunger in her community. Lucy has also participated in DoSomething’s Youth Advisory Council where she drafted two national campaigns targeting youth and volunteerism. She volunteers with her local Rotary International Chapter, the Mount Washington Valley Children's Museum, and at local food pantries. Lucy is very interested in international humanitarian aid and hopes to pursue a career in international volunteer work. Lucy enjoys playing tennis, traveling, hiking and looks forward to new adventures and information as being part of the National Council.



Melissa Ly – Independence High School, California

Melissa was born in San Jose, CA and is a rising senior at Independence High School. Melissa is currently the Youth Commissioner of San Jose's District 4 as well as an intern for her councilmember. Through Youth Commission Melissa strives to establish an open atmosphere for the youth within her community by giving the youth a voice in making decisions for her City. Melissa looks to provide an outlet for young people to earnestly express their opinions, thoughts, and recommendations. As an intern, she specializes in environmental policies and aids her councilmember in community events. Melissa has faced her own share of Goliaths in high school, entering as a freshman feeling purposeless and uninspired, she decided to join her school's UNICEF club. Through the mission of UNICEF and the inspiration she received from the organization, she found a club where she could immerse herself in, she found long lasting friends who provided her love and support, and most of all- she found her purpose. She found a building block of well-constructed and supportive humanitarian concrete that helped her realize this purpose, which is to create a positive global impact in the lives of those who are less blessed. After becoming the president of her UNICEF club she raised the member count from 5 to 240, increased the positivity level by offering more volunteering and bonding events, and helped start UNICEF: Bay Area, a unifying collaborative between UNICEF clubs in the Bay Area, with her Vice President. Melissa hopes to continue her work with UNICEF by intertwining the ideas and morals she has acquired from being a Youth Commissioner with the leadership skills and empathy she has learned from being a president in order to become a dedicated and understanding National Council Member.



M. Ummer Qureshi – Northwest High School

I am excited to be a rising senior at Northwest High School. I am the founder & president of the first UNICEF club at my high school. I strongly support UNICEF's work because I deeply believe in their mission. I believe it is an evident fact that every human on this earth deserves the basic necessities and a chance at improving his/her life. Therefore, in my eyes, supporting the work of humanitarian organizations such as UNICEF is a moral duty of all humans. In my spare time, I enjoy kayaking, swimming, participating in academic competitions, and literature. I hope to attend the University of Chicago to study biology and biochemistry en route to an M.D. I am excited to work on behalf of UNICEF. Watch out world! We're going to do great things!