

# Westport salutes founding of United Nations

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Westport resident Aye Aye Thant, the daughter of the third Secretary-General of the United Nations, U Thant, speaks at Westport Town Hall on United Nations Day, Oct. 22, 2010. Photo: Tom Cleary / Westport News

At a time when the United Nations has been challenged to expand its role around the globe, the annual celebration of its creation 65 years ago has become even more relevant, according to supporters of the international peace-keeping organization.

Westport residents gathered at Town Hall on Friday morning, along with town officials and students from [Staples High School](#) and nearby [Trumbull High School](#), to recognize the mission that the UN carries out every day.

"We are living in a global village and we have come to realize it is an interdependent world," said Westport resident Aye Aye Thant, the daughter of [U Thant](#), the third secretary-general of the UN. "Youth involvement in understanding the work of the United Nations is very important. After all, it is their world and their future."

Thant said it is important for education systems to start the process of solving the world's problems. She said "youth exchange programs" should be encouraged because they can "greatly expand cultural understanding."

The ceremony began with a performance by Trumbull High's Chamber Singers Choir. Each year

Westport invites a different area school to join Staples students at the ceremony. Members of the [Trumbull Model UN Club](#) also took part in the event.

United Nations Day, the anniversary of the organization's founding on Oct. 24, 1945, will be observed Saturday around town, as proclaimed by First Selectman Gordon Joseloff. Flags of the United Nation member nations will be flying on the Ruth Steinkraus Cohen Memorial Bridge spanning the Saugatuck Rver on the Post Road. A UN flag was raised alongside the United States flag in front of Town Hall by students from the two high schools.

"I was fortunate enough to have dinner with the Secretary-General [Ban Ki-Moon](#) and his wife," said Joseloff, referring to Ki-Moon's visit to Westport in May. "And he expressed his gratitude for the support that the United Nations has received over the years from Westport."

Joseloff said the UN has proved its importance through work in places like earthquake-ravaged Haiti and by helping to keep peace around the world. He said "it is a delight to congratulate the UN" and to celebrate it today.

Ki-moon said in a statement about United Nations Day that was read at the ceremony, "UN Day is a day on which we resolve to do more."

"More to protect those caught up in armed conflict, to fight climate change and avert nuclear catastrophe; more to expand opportunities for women and girls, and to combat injustice and impunity," said Ki-Moon.

Students from the Staples Model UN told the crowd what the United Nations means to them.

"Through our work in Model UN we have come to truly understand compromising ," said [Rebecca Bobrow](#), the co-president of the club. She said she has learned the "strategies" and "sacrifices" that are "sometimes necessary to come up with solutions that work for everyone."

Fellow club Co-President [Sarah Hyman](#) said, "With the formation of the United Nations we have broken down barriers between countries and have facilitated global communication. These efforts have resulted in great strides to mainting universal peace and understanding."

The United Nations is focusing on halving world poverty by 2015 as one of its key goals, said [Bill Hass](#), the president of the [United Nations Association of Southwestern Connecticut](#), which sponsored the ceremony.

The UN provides vaccinations for 40 percent of the world's children, provides food to over 108 million people around the globe and also works to end conflict in war-torn nations. The UN has 116,000 peacekeepers in seven operations across four continents, according to Hass.

In the "global village," Thant said, everyone has to understand that each person's life touches another's life.

Thant said "we have even realized that a fluttering of a butterfly's wings in Brazil could the cause a tornado in Texas. Whatever happens in the far corners of the globe will affect our lives."

"So I would like to ask you," Thant said. "To be an instrument for change, speak out, learn and build your knowledge. Let the world hear your voice. Please always remember the beginning of the UN charter, 'We the people.' It is for everyone, young and old, to get involved in the activities of the United Nations."



Co-presidents of the Staples High School Model UN, Rebecca Bobrow (left) and Sarah Hyman speak at Westport Town Hall on United Nations Day, Oct. 22, 2010, as First Selectman Gordon Joseloff and Aye Aye Thant, the daughter of former UN Secretary-General U Thant, look on. Photo: Tom Cleary / Westport News



Bill Hass, the president of the United Nations Association of Southwestern Conn, speaks at Westport Town Hall on United Nations Day, Oct. 22, 2010. Photo: Tom Cleary / Westport News



Trumbull High School Model UN member Brett Rosen raises the UN flag at Westport Town Hall on United Nations Day, Oct. 22, 2010. Photo: Tom Cleary / Westport News



The United Nations and United States flags fly over Westport Town Hall on United Nations Day, Oct. 22, 2010. Photo: Tom Cleary / Westport News



Flags from the United Nations Member States fly along the Ruth Steinkraus Cohen Memorial Bridge on Post Road in Westport as part of the town's United Nation's Day celebration, which took place from Oct. 22-24, 2010. Photo: Tom Cleary / Westport News



Flags, including the United Nations flag and those from its member states, fly along the Ruth Steinkraus Cohen Memorial Bridge on Post Road in Westport as part of the town's United Nation's Day celebration, which took place from Oct. 22-24, 2010. Photo: Tom Cleary