

2011 Young Women in Public Affairs Award Recipients

Zonta International is pleased to announce the five international recipients of the 2011 Young Women in Public Affairs Award.

District 5 – Emily Kvalheim (USA)
District 17 – Arizza Ann Sahi Nocum (Philippines)
District 18 – Mehitabel Markwei (Ghana)
District 25 – Anjali Chandrashekar (India)
District 30 – Nasma Dasser (Switzerland)

Emily Kvalheim (USA)

Described by her teachers as a student with a commitment to excellence, willingness to lead, a compassionate and generous spirit, and a strong voice for ideas and change, Emily Kvalheim dedicated much of her high school experience to serving others, completing more than 700 hours of community service before the end of her senior year. Through her involvement and leadership with Invisible Children, Key Club and National Honor Society, Emily raised money for numerous non-profit organizations, collected more than 8,000 books for students in Northern Uganda and partnered with women in Uganda to sell jewelry they made to help provide extra income for the women and their families.



Emily believes one of the most pressing problems in today's world is women's lack of access to formal education. "Education is a powerful thing; it gives us the necessary tools to succeed and empowers us to use those tools," said Emily. To help address this issue, Emily sponsors a young girl in Kenya, providing her with the necessary medical care and a school uniform so she can get the education she needs to succeed. She also teaches English as a Second Language to Mexican adults. By participating in and leading service activities in her school and community, Emily hopes to encourage more people to make a difference. "Emily believes in the power of education to change the world, and so she used her own education to learn about others and to inform her peers about issues of global concern," said Emily's teacher.

Emily plans to study political science and international relations this fall when she enters college and hopes to one day work for the United Nations or the US State Department where she can use her interest in government to change lives. She will continue teaching English as a Second Language and will advocate for organizations that work to protect human rights.

Arizza Ann Sahi Nocum (Philippines)

Arizza Ann Nocum is an active member of the student body. She is a member of the student government, social science club, co-chairperson of Aksis Speaks About Politics, Editor-in-Chief of Imprints magazine, editor-in-chief of the yearbook and captain of the girls' football team.



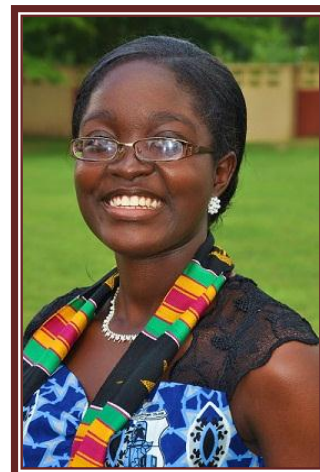
In 2009, she was selected to represent the Philippines at the international Community Development and Leadership Summit in New Delhi, India, where the theme was "Creating National Wealth for International Well-Being." As the valedictory speaker for the summit, Arizza asked her co-delegates to see the people of each nation as the primary wealth of that nation and to, above all, improve their welfare.

Outside of school, Arizza is administrator of the A-Book-Saya Group, an organization founded by her Christian father and Muslim mother to improve and promote education for children living in communities entrenched in poverty and crime. The organization solicits books and educational materials from sponsors and sends them to children in the Southern islands. In 2008, they established the Christian-Muslim Peace Library in Zamboanga City to provide free computer and library services, tutorials and enrollment subsidies to children from surrounding public schools. "Imagine if instead of guns, each child there would grow up with books and new opportunities," said Arizza.

Arizza wants to be a leader in the establishment and advancement of science and technology in the Philippines which will lead to the creation of jobs, improved standards of living and progress for her country. She would also like to empower Muslims and minorities, especially women and children, to improve their living conditions and status in society.

Mehitabel Markwei (Ghana)

Mehitabel Markwei is a leader in her school community, serving as a class representative on the Student Representative Council, dining hall monitor and Head Girl. As Head Girl, Mehitabel initiated new student mentorship programs, organized school functions and supervised student residential life with the aim of promoting diversity tolerance, student participation and school spirit.



In addition to her leadership roles at school, Mehitabel tutored teenage girls, many of whom were drug addicts and victims of sexual abuse, and also volunteered frequently at local orphanages where she saw firsthand the heartbreaking reality of poverty, illiteracy and abuse in Ghana. From these experiences, Mehitabel was inspired to create *Footprints*, a project aimed at financing the construction of educational facilities and resources for underprivileged children. To support the project, Mehitabel organized a fundraiser at the Ghana National Theatre in March 2010, which raised \$35,000. "*Footprints* helped me

overcome a childhood phobia of the stage by using it as a platform to advocate for every child's right to education. The global stage becomes my next amphitheater, and I will leave footprints in the lives of many," said Mehitabel.

Mehitabel has been accepted into the Yale University pre-medicine program and will begin her studies this fall. She plans to immerse herself in a variety of disciplines, including international relations, global health policy, public health administration, development economics and natural sciences. She hopes to one day work with the World Health Organization and other global health institutions to implement improved public health policies in Ghana and other African countries, build new hospitals and make health facilities more accessible. She would also like to found a community-based service organization to inspire African youth to play an active role in developing impoverished communities.

Anjali Chandrashekar (India)

Anjali Chandrashekar firmly believes that young people, especially young women, have immense potential to be a part of the change-making process and can actually make a difference. As an artist who believes that art is one medium that has the power to transcend barriers of culture, age and literacy, Anjali uses her art to reach out to the masses and raise funds for, and awareness of, many national and international organizations working on some of the most important issues facing the world today. Auctions of her artwork have raised money for diabetes, Parkinson's disease, kidney research, disaster management and much more. Anjali also employs her talents to teach art therapy classes for women, orphans and children with disabilities.



Deeply passionate about working for women's and girls' rights, especially equitable education systems in India, Anjali has worked on free primary education for all by conducting outreach programs where she speaks to marginalized girls about the importance of education. In 2010, she was selected as one of 60 Global Changemakers by the British Council to attend the Global Youth Summit in London, where she had the opportunity to share ideas and debate on topics such as poverty and hunger relief, girls and women's rights, violence against women, education, HIV/AIDS and climate change. Of the 60 participants, Anjali was one of five chosen to attend the World Economic Forum 2011 in Davos, Switzerland where she was the youngest participant ever.

According to her teacher, Anjali is an "inspiration to everyone at school and has made a mark in the city and the country as a young woman with immense potential to change the existing norms of society for the better." Anjali hopes to use art and design to help improve the lives of women around the world.

Nasma Dasser (Switzerland)

Nasma Dasser was very active in student government, elected by the student body to serve as student council president for two consecutive years. As president, Nasma created the first youth orchestra, launched an optional Spanish class for students interested in learning a new language and organized a one-week campaign to raise awareness of poverty, hunger relief and girls' rights to education. "All these great achievements made me realize how youth participation in our society is an essential tool towards making our voices heard at all decision-making levels," said Nasma.



After conducting an independent research project on energy efficiency in her school which showed that her school was one of the biggest energy users in the city, Nasma, together with her teacher and a few students, created The Center for Renewable Energies of Nyon (CdERN). In April 2009, they built solar panels and a wind tower on the roof of the school.

Beyond her school community, Nasma was nominated numerous times to attend the Swiss Federal Youth Sessions at the Parliament House in Bern, where Swiss young people gather to discuss and make recommendations to national politicians on issues that concern them. She was also the Swiss Youth Representative to the United Nations where her goal was to enhance understanding among youth worldwide and to encourage youth participation in society at all levels. As the Swiss Youth Representative to the UN, Nasma attended the 55th Session of the CSW (Commission on the Status of Women) in New York in 2011, where she had the opportunity to advise other delegations on how to include a youth perspective in their national policies.

Nasma will begin her studies in geomatic and planning engineering at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in September 2011.