

Summer internship blog series: Students become advocates at the United Nations

BY CONTRIBUTING WRITER ON AUGUST 23, 2013



(Left to right) Elise Van Gelder '15, Sam Linnerooth '14, and Charity Whyte '16 at the United Nations in New York City.

Colgate students, interning this summer at companies such as NBCUniversal, Hukster, Nike, and Facebook, are sharing their experiences. This post is written by Charity Whyte '16, with contributions from fellow interns Sam Linnerooth '14 and Elise Van Gelder '15 — they spent their summer at the United Nations.

Elise and I spent the summer in New York City, interning at the United Nations (UN). We worked for the Non-Governmental Organization Committee on Ageing to the UN under the coordination of [Gray Panthers](#). This intergenerational education and advocacy organization, chaired by Jack Kupferman '77, is dedicated to achieving social and economic justice and peace for all people.

As interns with the NGO Committee on Ageing, Elise and I researched and identified government and civil society entities on aging. We produced useful reference documents for UN delegates, and we created a website directory that will act as a

handy human rights instrument for the UN and affiliated representatives looking to contact aging-advocacy organizations worldwide.

In preparation for the UN's Open Ended Working Group on Ageing conference, we met with and catalogued our meetings with UN diplomats of member countries. The purpose of the meetings was to discuss the challenges that countries with elderly populations face and propose possible strategies that UN Missions' Ambassador staff could implement to protect older persons globally.

Mr. Kupferman also supervised Sam, who worked with the Gray Panthers Task Force for Emergency Planning and Response for Special Needs Populations. Sam conducted research and wrote position papers, op-eds, and executive summaries on the issue of emergency management for older persons. Targeting audiences that included the educated general public and policy makers, Sam aimed to increase public awareness and raise the political priority-level of issues related to older persons in disaster situations.

Highlights of my own internship included attending UN conferences; observing the dialogue between UN member states and civil society in their efforts to further protect older persons globally; meeting ambassadors, First Secretaries, and world-renowned diplomats; as well as joining forces with activists to protect the rights of the global aging population.

Our internship experiences combating ageism on the regional and global level concluded last week with the fourth session of the Open Ended Working Group on Ageing.

This summer has been an incredible learning experience, and we have appreciated the opportunity to do meaningful work that will have a positive impact on the lives of the global community.

Charity Whyte '16 (Stone Mountain, GA)
Elise Van Gelder '15 (Monroe, NY)
Sam Linnerooth '14 (Carnation, WA)