Youth Voices on Substance Abuse
-A Guide for Empowerment and Action-
Organized in partnership with Global Education Motivators

20 April 2017
11 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.
Conference Room 4,
United Nations Headquarters, New York

Opening Remarks
Jeff Brez
Chief, NGO Relations, Advocacy and Special Events,
United Nations Department of Public Information

Moderator
Gertrude Noden
Teacher, Global Education Motivators; Founder, Words into Deeds

Speakers
Yu Ping Chan
Special Policy Advisor, UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

Svante L. Myrick
Mayor, The City of Ithaca

Faith de Castro
Senior, Dickerson High School

Eva Mayu Mecham
Junior, New Roots Charter School

Michelle McElroy
Deputy Executive Director, Southern Tier AIDS Program (STAP)

DPI NGO Relations  @UNDPINGO #DPINGO
Mr. Jeff Brez [@JeffBrez] is Chief of NGO Relations, Advocacy and Special Events in the Department of Public Information. In this capacity he oversees relations with Non-Governmental Organizations, the Messengers of Peace Programme, the Creative Community Outreach Initiative (partnerships with television and film) and Special Events. His work in international humanitarian aid and development assistance has spanned more than a decade and covered a range of issues including anti-corruption, children’s and women’s rights including child soldiers, education, public health, refugee and internally displaced persons assistance, sustainable agriculture and food security, environmental sustainability and climate change. He holds a Master of International Public Policy from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, where he studied international economics and development.

Gertrude Noden brings two decades as classroom teacher and outreach program developer, wherein she nurtured young adults to become world citizens through her innovative Human Rights Curriculum based upon preparation and implementation of informed action projects. Ms. Noden’s vision has brought thousands of students’ ideas to fruition through local and global humanitarian projects, thereby fostering skills in participatory citizenship based on the UDHR and Sustainable Development Goals. In conjunction with Global Educational Motivators and through her own Words Into Deeds organization, she now focuses on working with teachers, school administrators, and their students, helping them develop curricula that include Human Rights principles and outreach programs, K-12 and beyond.
Svante L. Myrick [@SvanteMyrick] was sworn into office in January 2012 and became, at 24, the City of Ithaca’s youngest Mayor and first Mayor of color. Mayor Myrick was first elected to the Common Council at the age of 20 while still a junior at Cornell. His first budget included a radical overhaul of City government that merged departments, streamlined processes and was able to successfully close a $3 million deficit – all while delivering the lowest tax increase in the City of Ithaca since the year 2000. His active advocacy in Albany and in Washington D.C. has resulted in over $20 million of grants and awards from the State and Federal government. Mayor Myrick has changed the way people in Ithaca view public space by turning his dedicated mayoral parking space into a public park, after years without them he’s brought fireworks back to the City on the 4th of July and he’s moved Ithaca into the 21st century by embracing social media and overhauling the City’s web presence. His 2015 accomplishments include sorely needed revisions to the City of Ithaca’s sidewalk policy, an overhaul of storm water utility legislation, successful implementation of the total rehabilitation of the Commons, Ithaca’s downtown pedestrian mall, and making changes within the Ithaca Police Department in an effort to improve police and community relations. He ran and won to serve a second four year term as Mayor of the City of Ithaca, leading with a commanding 89% of the vote in 2015. In February 2016 Mayor Myrick released the Ithaca Plan: A Public Health and Safety Approach to Drugs and Drug Policy that garnered international attention for its forward thinking. Mayor Myrick has also gained accolades for strengthening Ithaca’s Sanctuary City status for refugees.

Yu Ping Chan [@UNODC] is a Special Policy Advisor in the New York Office of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), working on issues related to UNODC’s mandate, such as corruption, human trafficking, wildlife crime, narcotics and other matters. Prior to working for the UNODC, Yu Ping was a diplomat in the Singaporean Foreign Service. She served in Singapore’s Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York as Singapore’s expert representative on the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) and Sixth Committee (Legal) of the United Nations General Assembly. She was also the Embassy’s Press Officer. Before her posting to New York, Yu Ping worked in the Ministry of Foreign Affair’s department overseeing the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), covering regional strategic, political and security developments. Yu Ping has a Bachelor of Arts (magna cum laude) from Harvard University, and a Masters of Public Administration from Columbia University’s School of International and Public Affairs.
**Faith de Castro** is a senior at Charles O. Dickerson High School in Trumansburg, New York. She recently participated in the Student Leadership Conference on Development. Ms. Castro plans on studying environmental and women's studies in college, with a focus on Human Rights. She is interested in human rights education in particular because she believes it is essential that children know when their or other people's rights are being violated.

**Michelle McElroy** is the Deputy Executive Director for the Southern Tier AIDS Program (STAP). She has worked at STAP for over ten years, performing roles related to harm reduction education and advocacy, HIV/HCV testing, syringe exchange, administration, community training, and grant writing. She has previously worked in the human service sector settings serving individuals with mental health or co-occurring disorder diagnoses. She recently graduated from the UCLA Health Care Executive Leadership Program (2015). Ms. McElroy has served on several New York State Department of Health work groups and has worked in human services for more than 20 years. She is a compassionate advocate, a community educator, and a dedicated mother. She is a believer in the power of each person to achieve positive change through the application of harm reduction principles and the achievement of small successes.

**Eva Mayu Mecham** was born in Quito, Ecuador and moved to Ithaca, NY when she was fourteen. She is currently an 11th grader at New Roots Charter School. The school focuses on social justice and sustainability, which is why participating in this forum, is so important and enriching for Ms. Mecham’s growth. Ms. Mecham has witnessed substance abuse first hand and seen the impact it has on the user. Through Ms. Mecham’s project, she hopes to raise awareness that approaching this health crisis is not only the responsibility of those who hold power and influence, but rather extends to every individual in the community.
# Youth Voices

## Open My Eyes, Open My Heart

Eva Macham  
Abigail Ives

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## Youth Voices and Public Policy

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<tr>
<td>Faith de Castro</td>
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<td>Evelyn Van Ness</td>
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Social Media Cheat Sheet

- 1 in 20 adults, or a nearly 250 million people between the ages of 15 and 64 years, used at least one drug in 2014. @UNODC #DPINGO

- Many people who use drugs tend to use more than one substance concurrently or sequentially. @UNODC #WorldDrugReport #DPINGO

- Prevalence of drug use among young people is reportedly higher than among adults. #WorldDrugReport @DPINGO

- The actual number of young people experimenting with drugs is smaller than young people tend to think. @UNODC #DPINGO

- Television and other media may portray people who abuse drugs as irrational, their unpredictable behaviour frightening. @UNODC #DPINGO

- Drug abuse is often not a free choice or a moral question. @UNODC #DPINGO

- Saying “No” is not so easy. - UNODC @UNODC #DPINGO

- Individual, family and community risk factors for young people are
  - specific temperament or particular personality traits
  - a family history of addiction
  - a family member who abuses drugs
  - negative relationships with parents that lack bonding and warmth, neglect and abuse
  - lack of a family or home
  - friends who experiment with or use drugs
  - living in a community where drug abuse is common
  - lack of out-of-school activities, schooling or employment
  - insufficient rest and nutrition.
  - UNODC @UNODC #DPINGO