

# The People Speak

A Discussion of America's Role in the World

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NFL Staff Member

## Why Are Schools Participating in The People Speak Project?

Hundreds of National Forensic League schools have caught the buzz of *The People Speak: America Debates its Role in the World*. This project, which is a collaboration of thirty partner organizations including the United Nations Foundation, serves to increase dialogue on U.S. foreign policy. This year, over 4,000 conversations nationwide centered upon three topic areas; American Power and Global Security, Energy Choices and Environmental Challenges, and Prosperity in a Global Economy.

This initiative provides NFL members with many unique benefits. As you'll see in the pages that follow, these discussions help students make connections with retirement communities, civic and community organizations such as Rotary, Kiwanis, and the American Legion. The divergent viewpoints expressed in these foreign policy conversations are both eye-opening and educational. *The People Speak* gives students a vehicle to explore the ideas and opinions within their own community. The NFL gives point incentives to individual participants and teams, as a reward for their social consciousness.

Here are 50 examples of the interesting *The People Speak* events that took place in the months of September and October this year!

## Manchester Essex Regional HS, Manchester, MA Sept. 27<sup>th</sup>

Manchester Essex held a Public Forum intergenerational debate on a resolution dealing with U.S. support of U.N. Peacekeeping operations. The senior team supported the con, saying the U.S. should not do more. The students went pro, and won by a vote of 87 to 52.

## Gloucester Daily Times - Manchester Essex debate team gets a lesson from retirees (By Amy Van Cise)

Students can learn a lot from their elders, especially when it comes to politics and issues of national importance.

Members of the Manchester Essex Regional High School debate team are taking every opportunity to get those lessons.

The debate team went to Brooksby Village retirement home in Peabody Monday for an "inter-generational debate" to discuss whether the United States should increase its support of the United Nations. Chris Comenos, a junior, and Chloe Viner, a senior, spoke for the team in front of an audience of 139 people.

This is the third year the team has traveled to Brooksby Village, where a current events club for residents focuses on many of the same topics as the team.

Residents of the retirement home lived through many of the events the team discusses, Averill said, so they present views and perspectives the students benefit from hearing about.

This year's debate was part of a national effort sponsored by the United Nations Foundation in Washington, D.C., to promote public discussion of the role of the United Nations in today's world.

Comenos and Viner debated two members of the current events club. At the end of the debate, the audience voted in favor of increasing U.S. support of the United Nations.

"We had an outstanding discussion of the

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United Nations and U.S. policy," Averill said. "In general, the audience endorsed the idea that the U.S. ought to work with other countries."

Averill said the debates have been positive over the last three years.

"We will continue to go to Brooksby Village as often as we can," he said.

## Boston Herald-Sparring partners: Students debate seniors to warm up for BU event (By Tenley Woodman)

To prepare for tomorrow night's war of words with George Stephanopoulos and Sen. Joseph Biden (D-Del.), two Manchester-Essex Regional High School students went old school.

Last month Chloe Viner, 17, and Chris Comenos, 16, debated Jerome E. Levy, 86, and Everett Carlton, 80, both residents of the Brooksby Village retirement community in Peabody, on whether the United States' financial support to the United Nations should be increased.

The intergenerational match was arranged to decide whether Viner or Comenos would ask the first question at tomorrow's United Nations Foundation debate at Boston University.

Stephanopoulos, Biden, WBZ-radio host David Brudnoy, Sen. Lincoln Chafee (R-R.I.) and Nabil Fahmy, Egyptian ambassador to the United States, will debate the topic "American Power and Global Security."

The Brooksby debate proved to be the perfect litmus test for the two teens.

"It's definitely more real to debate someone who knows the material," Viner said following the Brooksby debate. "It's harder, but I appreciate it more."

Comenos said he called his grandparents prior to the match and asked how they would argue the topic so he could get an understanding of his opponents' mindset.

The teens' competitors, Levy and Carlton, are both World War II veterans.

Levy, a Harvard and MIT graduate, is a retired engineer and former physics teacher. Carlton is a retired banker.

"When I moved to Brooksby I wanted to stay involved," Carlton said about participating.

Levy and Carlton argued the con side of the issue.

Though Comenos and Viner came equipped with statistics, age was a factor—after all, Levy and Carleton have lived through U.N. successes and failures since its inception in 1945.

Comenos argued that there are 57,000

"We felt that we could learn a lot by doing debates with them," team advisor Tim Averill said.

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standing troops being used by the United Nations and that the United States has more than 100,000 troops in Iraq, to which Levy quickly responded that the U.N. charter does not allow the United Nations to have a standing army.

"We have vetoed every resolution where it hasn't been even-handed," Levy said. "I don't want to talk numbers, I want to talk facts."

In the end, Viner and Comenos persevered, but the Brooksby men made an impact.

"It's very unlike the debates we have," said Ryan Swanzey, 16, a MEHS junior at the debate. "But you get a lot more from it. They got feistier." Fellow classmate Erik Subatis, 16, agreed.

"I think it's pretty cool. You see a real difference of opinion between the elderly people and young people," said the junior.

Loretta Tenaglia, chairman of political outreach at Brooksby, said the debate offers a check and balance in political discussion.

"It gives exposure to the older populations who have lived through what they're debating. It allows us to see how the young people are doing," she said.

## **Eastside Catholic HS Bellevue, WA**

### **Oct. 11<sup>th</sup>**

Bellevue hosted a debate between representatives of the two candidates for the 8<sup>th</sup> Congressional District race between Dave Ross (D) and Dave Reichert (R). The representatives for each candidate presented an opening statement followed by a Town Hall type of question and answer from the audience made up of ECHS students, faculty, and the public. The event was moderated by Ms. Katie Doyle, ECHS Forensic Team Captain. The discussion was formatted to have a two minute answer followed by a one minute rebuttal. The discussion was lively and interesting.

### **Oct. 19<sup>th</sup>**

A debate between students representing the two candidates for the presidency of the U.S. presented an opening statement followed by a Town Hall type of question and answer from the audience made up of ECHS students, faculty, and the public. The event was again moderated by Ms. Katie Doyle, ECHS Forensics Team Captain, and was based on the same format.

### **Oct. 26<sup>th</sup>**

A debate between students representing the two candidates for governor with the students for each candidate presented an opening statement followed by a Town Hall type of question and answer from the audience made up of ECHS students, faculty, and parents.

## **Chardon HS Chardon, OH**

### **Sept. 13<sup>th</sup>**

The topics discussed were the United States involvement with the global economy and peacekeeping. Discussions involved the war on terrorism, United States' use of military force abroad, the perceptions of the United States by others and what we can do about it, and the ad-

*"The People Speak event was a rewarding experience for our club. Both the students and the audience gained new perspectives on issues."  
Leslie Poyar, Coach, Chadron HS*

vantages/disadvantages of trade in a global economy. The format of the program was such that a speaker addressed a topic and then a 10 minute period for questions and discussion followed. The audience included Chardon city manager Dave Lelko and city councilperson Dave Campbell. The event received a lot of positive feedback.

## **Muscatine HS Muscatine, IA**

### **Sept. 20<sup>th</sup>**

Three speakers provided information on "America's Role in the World". The Rotary Club was the audience. Matt Johannsen and Jake McLaughlin spoke on

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Muscatine Team pictured left to right: Jake McLaughlin, Matt Johannsen, Alexandra Weaver and Coach Sue Johannsen

opposing sides of the question, "How do positive and negative perceptions of the U.S. affect our role in the world?". Alexandra Weaver presented pros and cons on the question, "How should America exercise leadership in the world?" Following the presentation, the audience asked questions about the topic as well as about the nature of the current speech and debate team.



## **Clinton HS Clinton, MS Lion's Club Sept. 21<sup>st</sup>**

The event was in Public Forum format with the Lion's Club members participating in crossfire and a question-and-answer session at the conclusion of the debate. The students debated national security through the appointment of a cabinet-level intelligence chief.

*"We had a great evening." Betty Whitlock, Coach of Clinton HS*

**La Junta HS, La Junta, CO  
Sept. 23<sup>rd</sup>**

The La Junta High School Forensic team hosted the area Toastmasters to promote a citizen dialogue about issues of global importance. The LJHS team selected the American Power and Global Security topic on which to center the discussion. Team members Kari Otteman, Nick Newby, Amber McVicker, Tim Kelley and Audrey Bradshaw shared their ideas along with Asst. Coach Mr. Warren Parker. The event allowed students and adults to present an opening statement and then flowed into a guided group discussion of the central topic. The event concluded with the audience being allowed to ask questions or add to the discussion. Audience members and panel members felt the event was worthwhile and the beginning step in forming a global vision for peace.

**Norman North HS,  
Norman, OK  
Crosstimbers Rotary  
Sept. 7<sup>th</sup>**

This *The People Speak* event format was similar to Public Forum debate. Two speakers presented the topic, followed by questions and comments from the adult audience members. The topic debated was "Resolved, the U.S. has an obligation to help stabilize developing economies worldwide."

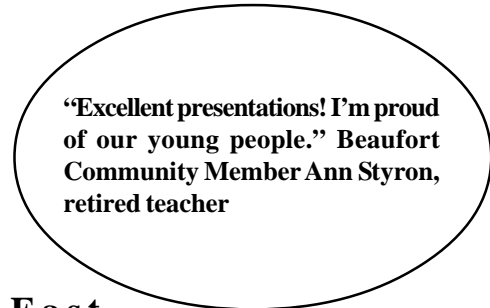
**Sooner Rotary  
Sept. 21<sup>st</sup>**

The same format was adhered to, but the resolution debated differed. At this *The People Speak* event, students debated "Resolved, The U.S. has an obligation to protect human rights around the world."

**Norman Public Library  
Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup>**

A format similar to Public Forum debate was again employed to spark discus-

sion on the topic "Resolved, the U.S. has an obligation to protect foreign ecosystems." Audience participation followed this exhibition debate between students.



**E a s t  
Carteret HS,  
Beaufort, NC  
Democratic Party Headquarters  
Sept. 7<sup>th</sup>**

Local Democratic candidates were introduced. Then, the ECHS debaters, following an introduction, debated the 2004 peacekeeping Policy Debate topic. The format was modified. Four debaters delivered 4-minute constructives and cross examined one another, limited to two questions each. Then 1-2 minute refutations followed. After the debate, audience members engaged in lively discussion over the issues that the students had raised.

**Republican Party  
Headquarters  
Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>**

This event began with opening remarks from head coach Julia Brown-Millush about the school, the NFL, and the students' interest in politics. A pre-debate poll was held to measure the opinion of the audience prior to the exchange of ideas. Each of the debaters began with a 5-8 minute constructive related to the '04 Policy Debate peacekeeping topic followed by a 3 minute cross examination and a 3 minute rebuttal. After the debate, the floor was opened for lively audience debate. The event concluded with a post-debate poll to

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measure opinion changes. Three people had been swayed from their original position.

**Ole Towne Rotary  
Sept. 13<sup>th</sup>**

The Rotary Club opened their weekly luncheon meeting by introducing coach Julia Brown-Millush. Again, a pre-debate poll was held to establish the opinion of the audience prior to the exhibition. Four debaters presented 5 minute constructives followed by 2-minute rebuttals. Then the floor was opened for audience debate and questions. A post debate poll was held after the event. The debate centered upon the UN Peacekeeping mission resolution, however, the Rotarian members had questions prepared before the event to enrich the discussion.



Pictured at the top from left are: Carteret County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. David Lenker; Rotary President Darlene Leonard; ECHS Principal Ralph Holloway; ECHS debate Captain, senior Barrett Snipes; ECHS student congress captain, junior Russell Lewis; ECHS NFL Coach Julia Milmeister; and ECHS interpretation captain, junior Amanda Eubanks

**Toastmasters International  
Sept. 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Each student presented a side of the UN Peacekeeping issue similarly to our prior events. The floor was then opened to the public attending the meeting. Many Democratic and Republican Party members, as well as members of Rotary attended this event to get another chance to hear our students' presentations!

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## **The News-Times - Democrats Hold a Debate Forum for ECHS Youth (excerpt)**

The Carteret County Democratic Party hosted an energizing debate forum presented by East Carteret High School's nationally ranked National Forensic League to encourage the ECHS students and to address their fellow Democratic members. Bill Henderson served as master of ceremonies.

East Carteret juniors Amanda Eubanks and Elissa Hachmeister presented their case affirming the Forensic League's 2004-2005 policy debate topic: That the United States federal government should establish a foreign policy substantially increasing its support of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Senior Barrett Snipes and junior Russell Lewis argued for the negative.

In the course of the demonstration debate, the Democratic members in attendance were asked to cross-examine both sides of the issue and engaged in a lively, thought-provoking discussion on a timely issue affecting the nation.

NFL sophomore Brian Russell served as the team's photojournalist.

The current East Carteret debate team is the continuing legacy of ECHS's powerhouse 2003 National Champion Public Policy Debate Forum and the 2004 third place national winners in the same event.

East Carteret debaters will also be taking both sides of the issue to the Toastmasters International meeting at Bryant Student Center at the campus of Carteret Community College at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 23, to elicit more public discussion on this topic of UN peacekeeping missions.

## **ECHS Debaters Perform for GOP (excerpt)**

The Saturday monthly Republican Breakfast was held in the Republican Welcome Center, 504 Arendell St.

An enthusiastic crowd was treated to a special program along with breakfast.

Instead of a speaker, Steve Williamson, Executive Committee member and Republican Men's Club Secretary, introduced Julia Millush, debate sponsor and East Carteret High School teacher.

Mrs. Mullish then introduced four members of the East Carteret's nationally ranked 2003-2004 National Forensic League Team: juniors, Amanda Eubanks and Elissa Hachmeister on the affirmative team, followed by junior Russell Lewis and senior Barrett Snipes on the opposing team. Brian Russell was introduced as the acting photographer for the debate.

The 2004-2005 debate subject is "The United States federal government should estab-

lish a foreign policy substantially increasing its support of United Nations peacekeeping operations."

In the course of the demonstration debate, the energized audience was invited to cross-examine both sides of the issue. There was a lively, thought-provoking discussion on the timely issue.

## **East's NFL Keeps Busy Schedule**

The Ole Towne Rotary hosted an energizing debate forum presented by East Carteret High School's nationally ranked National Forensic League team under sponsor Julia Millush.

Rotary President Darlene Leonard and member Keith Willis prepared the Rotarians with the debate issues and audience participation questions to address the issues.

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## **Park Hill HS Kansas City, MO Sept. 13<sup>th</sup>**

Four students; Mike Ito, Rachel Vaughn, Vito Mazzara, and Samantha Olds, held a Public Forum debate on the question, "Is the U.S. winning the war on terrorism?" A question-and-answer session followed the debate with the Citizens for a Better Democracy group. This organization is made up of community involved adults seeking a better democracy and way of life in the United States. The audience was supportive and interested in the presentation.

## **East Chapel Hill HS Chapel Hill, NC Sept. 30<sup>th</sup>**

Panels of 3 students each presented a Public Forum style debate on whether

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America should be more concerned with protecting U.S. jobs than promoting free trade and global economic growth. After 30 minutes of panel debate, a 30 minute audience questioning period followed.

## **Central Valley HS Spokane, WA Sept. 14<sup>th</sup>**

**"This was a really fun experience." Roberta Rice, Coach of Central Valley HS**

We used the current policy topic, Resolved: That the United States federal government should establish a foreign policy substantially increasing its support of United Nations peacekeeping operations in a Public Forum Debate format.



## **Trinity Presbyterian School Montgomery, AL Sept. 28<sup>th</sup>**

This *The People Speak* event was an even bigger success than Trinity had

hoped for! Of the eighteen community leaders invited to participate, nine attended. The event lasted a little over an hour and concluded with refreshments and informal conversation between the panelists and the audience members. A round table/panel discussion was chosen for the format. The topic for discussion was "How should America exercise leadership in the world?". After each of the panelists shared their initial opinions, the floor was opened to the audience to question and comment upon the panelists' viewpoints.

## Grandview High School Aurora, CO Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup>

Nine excellent, and mostly novice, speakers raise interest and concern about peacekeeping, security, and national human rights in panel presentations. Some of the hot topics of discussion included issues on national defense and copyright laws.

## Belton HS Belton, MO Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>

Four Belton students spoke before the Bel-Ray Lions Club. The students debated the topic: "Resolved, The United States should be the caretaker of the world." Following the debate, the presentation was opened to the audience for a question-and-answer period. State Representative Brian Baker congratulated the students.



Belton team pictured: Brian Lawson, Sara Greenwood, Emily Pfefer and Valerie Spencer.

## Carnegie Village Sept. 13<sup>th</sup>

Four Belton students debated the same topic before the Belton Chamber of Commerce, Former Mayor Phil Duncan, and Belton School Board officials. The debate culminated with a question-and-answer session. Former Kansas City Mayor and Congressional Candidate, Emanuel Clever congratulated the students.

## Carnegie Village Sept 15<sup>th</sup>

Four Belton students again debated the same resolution before the Belton American Legion. A question-and-answer session followed.

## Star Herald BHS Students to Make Public Debate Appearances

Four Belton High School students, in conjunction with the United Nations Foundation, will make three public debate appearances in September to promote the role of America in the world.

Senior Bryan Lawson, junior Sarah Greenwood, and sophomores Emily Pfefer and Valerie Spencer will debate at 8 a.m. Sept. 11 before the Belton-Raymore Lions Club followed by a luncheon presentation before the Belton Chamber of Commerce at noon Sept. 13. The public debates will conclude at 7:30 p.m. Sept. 15, before the Belton American Legion. All meetings will be held at Carnegie Village. The public is encouraged to attend.

All four students are members of the Belton High School debate/forensics team and the National Forensic League, which is sponsoring the nationwide event during September. The foursome will debate the topic, resolved: The United States should be the caretaker of the world.

## Coronado HS El Paso, TX Sept. 17<sup>th</sup>

El Paso Coronado debaters engaged in Parliamentary Debate with members of the University of Texas, El Paso Forensics Union. Rachel Harwell and Stephanie James from Coronado HS upheld the government position while UTEP debaters James Baker and Casey Williams repre-

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sented the opposition. The resolution examined was, "Resolved: this house believes humanitarian aid should be a vital part of US Foreign Policy." Forty-five community members from El Paso Community College and the University of Texas, El Paso observed and participated in this activity. Sara Corlett-Roberts served as moderator and Zane Harwell served as facilitator. This activity was well received.



Pictured left to right:  
Casey Williams, Univ. of Texas, James Baker, Univ. of Texas, Coach Sara Corlett-Roberts, Rachel E. Harwell and Stephanie James

## Benton HS St. Joseph, MO Sept. 20<sup>th</sup>

On September 20<sup>th</sup>, the Benton Forensic Team hosted *The People Speak*. The St. Joseph chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution co-hosted the event. The event was formatted as a panel discussion over topics dealing with the U.S. foreign relations. State Representative Lawson was in attendance as were a number of members of the NSDAR, members of Rotary, and members of the school board. The program lasted an hour and a half as question-and-answer time ran longer than allotted.

## St. Joseph News - Press - Students Take on Politics

The Benton High School speech team and the St. Joseph Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution will host a forum on American foreign policy on Monday at 6:30 p.m. featuring the Benton speech team to be held at the Benton Auditorium. Stu-