

## **Marcia Barlow about advocacy at UN**

Marcia Barlow is the Director of International Programs for United Families International. She advocates on behalf of families and freedom of religion at the United Nations and other political venues. She has a master's degree from Harvard and is married with kids and grandkids.

During the workshop at Utah Valley University on March 2, 2018 as preparation for our delegation to attend the 62<sup>nd</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women, she told us to focus on three main things as we advocate at the UN which were our goals/ideology, making relationships, and language/documents. There is a "Foundational Document" for each session or commission at the UN that specifies the Goals and Ideology of each meeting. There are many different ideologies, goals and agendas among different groups at the CSW, but everyone there wants to help women. Marcia suggested a book called "The Righteous Mind-Why Good People Are Divided By Politics and Religion" by Jonathan Haidt because the book goes into depth on why people with common goals may have very different agendas in regards to those goals.

Relationships are very important in Advocacy at the UN because you cannot influence anyone without relationships. We need to acquire the UN Blue Book which lists all the missions, delegates, diplomats and their information. This will allow us to know who we want to try to meet and foster relationships with. She pointed out that meeting in passing can be a great opportunity to network with people. This made me happy because these types of happenstantial meetings are my specialty. I love meeting new people and finding common ground to connect on. She went on to explain that parallel events are at different venues that are separate from the United Nations, while the side events occur in the United Nations building itself. Side events have better opportunities for rubbing elbows with diplomats.

Mrs. Barlow also explained that you can set up on site exhibitions or booths/tables where you try to get your voice heard and attract people to talk to and network with. Also, she said that Peggy Kerry (U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry's sister) is the State Department liaison and is the one to talk to about attending the USA briefings. On top of that, she said that we should try to get on a national delegation. This got me excited to try to find a delegate from Senegal where we did our research to see if they would accredit us or at least attend one of our presentations. A

contact like that could open a lot of doors for future research and hopefully solutions to infrastructure and water quality solutions in that country. This could also apply to many other countries as well.

Marcia also told us to get to know the security guards as much as possible, as they can help get us into meetings and are in the know. Also, the security guards are from all over the world and have many helpful connections. Along with this tip, we were instructed to keep an eye on everyone's security badges as they will tell if someone is a delegate, a member of secretariat, or part of an NGO.

I could go on and on about the wealth of knowledge and tips that Marcia shared with us last Friday. It was clear without her having to say, that she has many years of experience in advocacy at the United Nations. I was impressed by her insights on worldview, ideologies and the differences between politically left and right views. I previously had never had any interest in advocacy and diplomacy in the United Nations, but Mrs. Barlow's presentation opened my eyes and made me not only excited to go present but also interested in the internships they do at the UN for Grad students. Overall, her visit was invaluable in preparing me for my visit to the UN because before her visit it was not fully clear to me what to expect.

*Isak Larsen, UVU student*