

## UNA-Westchester Annual Meeting, May 19, 2019: Bios for Speakers and Nominees for Board of Directors



**Youth Singer: Sophia Angelica** was born in New York and has embraced her Argentinian ancestry by learning Spanish in her mother's bilingual acting classes, where she found her passion for the arts and music. Sophia began performing and songwriting at the age of 9, and appeared in her first TV show "Good Day New York" at the age of 13. She combined her vocal and acting talents as the voice of the "singing rabbit" for Dora the Explorer on Nickelodeon. She was cast by the Cleveland Playhouse in the "Care Program Monologues", helping youth struggling in volatile school environments. Building on that, Sophia has performed at many cause-related events at the UN and other major venues. She is an advocate and activist for human rights, and in March 2018, Sophia went on a University Human Rights Tour in Asia. Her 2018 original musical, "The Greatest Runaways on Earth" was presented at Symphony Space in New York. Sophia is also currently serving as board director and writing music for the international nonprofit, Global Peace Chain. She has recently received the HOLA (Hispanic Organization of Latin Actors) Elizabeth Pena Breakthrough Artist Award. In April 2019 she was honored with the prestigious Presidential Volunteer Service Award (PVSA) for her work with human rights. She has received letters of achievement and recognition from Governor Cuomo, Governor Murphy of NJ and the NJ State Legislature. Sophia continues to release singles and is working on an original pop album.



**Moderator, Climate Action Dialogue and Nominee, Board of Directors**  
**Dan Bena** is an award-winning executive who served as PepsiCo's Corporate Water Steward and led the Sustainable Development agenda for PepsiCo Global Operations. Among others, he serves/has served on the Public Health Committee of the Safe Water Network; the Leadership Group of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD); Steering Board of IFC's 2030 Water Resources Group and Steering Committee of the United Nations CEO Water Mandate. Bena currently serves on the Board of the Creative Visions Foundation, a non-profit using media and the arts to develop agents of positive social change. He has spoken at over 100 venues which span the business, government, academic, and non-profit worlds. He keynoted the UN Youth Assembly to youth delegates from over 100 countries. UNA-Westchester recognized him as a "Global Goals, Local Leader" in 2017 for his role in water partnerships which provide safe water to over 22 million people. Dan was invited by the President of the UN General Assembly to participate in a high-level panel on partnerships to advance the post-2015 Development agenda, and was named an Honorary Professor by Glasgow Caledonian University.

**Speaker: Peter McCartt** has had an extensive and successful business career with a focus over the last 12 years on the environment, energy conservation, and sustainability. He is well-known for making lasting partnerships with a vast range of business principals, community leaders and elected officials throughout metro NY and the country. He has been instrumental in the creation of several successful organizations across Westchester County. He helped found Sustainable Westchester and sits on its Executive Committee. He created and has chaired Eastchester's Environmental Committee since 2006, he helped formulate and chaired the Advisory Board of Southern Westchester Energy Action Consortium, and is President of the Twin Lakes Civic Association. In 2012 Peter was named United Way's Volunteer of the Year for his work on the environment in Westchester/Putnam/Rockland and has received many other awards for his distinguished public service to our region. Peter and his wife Jennifer live in Eastchester with their children Camilla (14) and Miles (10). Peter graduated from Columbia University where he was a Student Senator and lettered in Track and Cross-country.





**Speaker: Nina Orville** is the Principal/Founder of Abundant Efficiency and the Director of Community Solar, Sustainable Westchester. She serves as Co-Chair of the energy committee of Westchester County’s Climate Crisis Task Force. Through Abundant Efficiency, Nina creates and implements innovative solutions to environmental and business challenges for local governments, corporations and non-profit organizations. Her focus is to design and manage programs to accelerate the adoption of clean energy technologies. Current and recent initiatives include community solar, HeatSmart, Solarize and energy efficient streetlights. Nina was previously the founding Executive Director of the Southern Westchester Energy Action Consortium, a predecessor to Sustainable Westchester. Prior to that, she served on the senior management team of a multi-bank venture capital fund that provided growth capital to New York State companies. She holds a BA from Oberlin College and an MBA from Columbia Business School.



**Speaker: Dan Shepard** is UN Information Officer and Climate Specialist at the UN Department of Global Communications. He covers communications for UN conferences related to sustainable development and climate, including Rio+20, Financing for Development, the Paris Climate Conference and the Climate Summit coming up in September 2019.

**Nominee, Board of Directors: Tricia Baldes** is a middle level educator with two decades of experience working in public schools in New York. Her commitment to social action and peace education was nurtured while working in Somers Central School District, where a human rights education initiative was being pioneered. With colleagues, Tricia developed a comprehensive social action classroom curriculum for their 8th graders which served as the inspiration and the basis for Rock Your World. She continues to serve as Rock Your World’s chief program advisor. Tricia’s work with Rock Your World has grown over the years, allowing her to collaborate with various organizations such as the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights, Rebelhouse Films, and Speranza Foundation. Tricia earned her bachelor’s degree in English from Purchase College and a master’s degree in English from Lehman College. She has led multiple professional development courses and has presented at national conferences. She continues to teach eighth grade English in Somers, NY—each year inspiring a new group of students to become global citizens.



**Nominee, Board of Directors: Demetrios J. Mihailidis** (or Mr. M, as he is known), is an educator who spent much of his career in the Mount Vernon School District. He feels his major accomplishments as an educator, were: 1) Establishing the United Nations Club 30 years ago, that has inspired and sparked the interest of many students in global affairs and enabled them to become future ambassadors in this global society; and 2) being recognized by various organizations for his efforts in the area of Human Rights and Teaching. He serves on the Executive PTA Committee at UN International School. Mr. M

has received the Spirit of Achievement and the Lifetime Service Awards from Junior Achievement and the Champion of Human Rights Award from the Westchester County Human Rights Commission. He was recognized as High School Teacher of the Year from Mount Vernon. His parents were Greek immigrants from Asia Minor. He graduated from New York University with a B.A. and M.A. in History. His career in education started in 1988 at District 7 in the South Bronx, and in 1998 he accepted a position at A.B. Davis Middle School in Mount Vernon. In 2006 he transferred to the Mount Vernon High School. He supports much of the work of UNA-Westchester with his UN Club, and we are happy to have him as a new member of the board. His future endeavors are to continue his work in the field of human rights, travel, learn and most importantly spend time with his family.