

# UNA-Westchester Global Connection



United Nations Association of the USA (UNA-USA) Westchester Chapter  
<http://www.unawestchester.org> October 2014

**Please Join Us for UN Day 2014!  
Celebrate UN's 69th year!**



## **“Empowering Youth in Westchester and the World”**

### **UN Day Celebration**

Sunday, October 26, 2014

YWCA, 515 North Street, White Plains, NY

**‘The World We Want’: Dialogue with youth,**  
3:30–5:00 p.m.

Plenary and reception for UNA members and  
guests, 5:15–6:30 p.m.

### **“Empowering the World’s Women”**

UNA Teams up with the Mamaroneck Library for a panel discussion on Saturday, October 25, 4:00–6:00 p.m., 136 Prospect Ave., Mamaroneck, NY.

Featuring Dr. Mahjabeen Hassan, Ms. Michaela Walsh, and Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf.

Moderated by Professor Joan Katen, Pace University

October Book Selection: *I Am Malala*

### **Directions to the Events:**

**YWCA:** From 287E: Take exit 8E, turn right on White Plains Rd., continue on to North Street.

YWCA is opposite White Plains High School.

From 287 W: Take exit 9S, Merge onto Westchester Ave., turn left on Bryant Ave/Bryant Ave Bridge Left on North St.

**Mamaroneck Library:** From Huchinson Parkway North: Take exit 22 for Mamaroneck Rd toward Mamaroneck. Continue on White Plains Rd and Mamareoncek Ave to Prospect Ave.

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***Editors: Scott C. Monje, Marcia Brewster***

## *Letter from the President*



Dear Friends,

I am thrilled that we have received an award (\$1,000) from UNA-National to support our UN Day event, “Empowering Youth in Westchester and the World,” which will be held at the YWCA in White Plains on October 26. The award is given for a dialogue with youth in order to integrate youth topics into the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We are expecting 80–100 high school and college students and young professionals from Westchester to provide their ideas in roundtable discussions led by selected discussion leaders. The discussion leaders will report to our members and the general public immediately after their sessions. A reception will follow. UNA-Westchester is delighted to be part of the process of adding a civil-society voice to the UN’s SDG deliberations. Please support our UNA by attending and bringing a friend.

Our annual meeting in May had a very good turnout. The theme was Corporate Social Responsibility and Partnerships with the United Nations. Our speakers were Amir Dossal, Chair of the Global Partnerships Forum, and Dan Bena, Head of Sustainable Development Global Operations at Pepsico. Both have played an important role in forging partnerships between the UN and the private sector: Amir as head of the UN Fund for International Partnerships and Dan is in the Leadership Group of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD). We had a partnership fair and a lively discussion. We were pleased to honor the award-winning Model UN teams from Pace University and Mercy College (the only recipients of National Model UN awards in Westchester

County for two years in a row). The chapter reelected board members for the coming year; we will retain five officers and four directors for the coming year, as well as four directors who will serve one more year in their current terms. The full list of directors can be found on page 7 of the newsletter. It has been a real pleasure to serve with this dedicated and harmonious group of people. We will be looking for new directors in the spring of next year, so I would encourage other members to stand for elections or join one of our committees.

Intern Nicole Chi and I attended the annual UNA-USA meeting in Washington in June. While I met with counterparts from other chapters around the country, Nicole met with leaders of Young Professional groups. Our report can be found on the website, [www.unawestchester.org](http://www.unawestchester.org). We attended one session on “Intergenerational Model UN,” as we would like to hold such an event in Westchester and take advantage of funds available for Model UN programs this year. Finally, we visited the offices of most of our Congressional representatives and senators, but mainly spoke to their staff. We did meet one representative, Chris Gibson, who is a Republican who supports the work of the UN, especially peacekeeping. A former army officer, he served with UN peacekeepers in Kosovo and Haiti.

There is a second UN Day event sponsored by the chapter and Pace University on October 25, “Malala Day,” to be held from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Mamaroneck library. It will feature a panel on Empowering Women, including: Imam Feisal of the Cordoba Initiative; Dr. Mahjabeen Hassan, a Muslim woman and plastic surgeon; and Michaela Walsh who began “Women’s World Banking” in 1975. Our board member Professor Joan Katen will moderate the panel. We look forward to welcoming you to these important events.

—*Marcia Brewster*

***Advocacy Corner:  
Why Support the United Nations?***

As I sit down to write this short column, I see the New York Times on my desk. From the front page, the anguished face of a Liberian man seems to look at me, his face twisted in sorrow. He is part of a Liberian Red Cross burial team, and he has just buried his father who died of the Ebola virus. After watching his father suffer and then die, the man did his job. Can you imagine how heavy his heart felt?

This terrible Ebola virus knows no borders, does not listen to reason, and cannot be convinced to stay away. But we as a human race—if we work together—can stop its march forward. Yes, it has already killed thousands and predictions are that it will kill a million or more human beings if it is not stopped. But as I said—if we work together—we can stop its advance. The World Health Organization (WHO), an important United Nations agency, is poised to stop the virus, and it knows what to do. BUT it cannot do its job properly because it is underfunded.

These are the ways UNA-USA suggests we can take action ([www.unausa.org](http://www.unausa.org)):

1. **Donate to the UN Foundation's Ebola Response Fund to support the life-saving efforts of UN agencies, including WHO.** Funds will be used to obtain supplies, such as personal protective equipment and chlorine, and to provide technical assistance to the governments of Ebola-affected countries.
2. **Are you a UNFCU member? UNFCU established an Ebola Relief Fund and will match member contributions made through October 31, 2014, up to \$ 25,000.**
3. **Send a note to your members of**

**Congress urging them to pay our UN dues and fully fund the WHO, so that it can work to combat Ebola and other disease outbreaks.**

We need to call our congressional representatives and tell them to fully fund the WHO, especially for its work to halt the spread of the Ebola virus. We need bipartisan support for the work of the WHO. Who will tell the Ebola virus not to get on an airplane and come to our country? Only the WHO has the credibility to do so. The world has shrunk; airplanes and social media bring us close together. There are positives and negatives to this. We can work together on so many different issues to survive as a planet, or we can suffer and perish together. I choose working together for the good of all mankind—working on disease control, action on climate change, and diplomacy to settle disputes. And central to all the positive outcomes is the United Nations, which facilitates our working together. Let us support the world's hope for peace and health and pay our dues to the United Nations and fully fund the WHO.

*—Joan Katen, Advocacy Cochair*

***UNA-USA and UNFCU Partnership:  
Mutual support and member benefits***

On Members' Day in February, UNA-USA and the United Nations Federal Credit Union (UNFCU) formed an alliance extending UNFCU membership to UNA-USA members. In the six months since, more than 500 new members have joined the award-winning financial cooperative to take advantage of all of the financial products and services exclusively available to the United Nations, its specialized agency staff, retirees, and their families worldwide.

With nearly 140 years of United Nations support between them, the UNA-USA and

UNFCU relationship arose from shared values and with the aim of furthering advocacy on behalf of the UN and service, respectively.

“This partnership offers our members direct access to the same financial brand which solely serves the United Nations community in more than 200 countries and territories around the globe,” said Chris Whatley, executive director of UNA-USA. “With UNFCU, we have gained entry to the international financial solutions members want, while underlining the UN experience that is at their core.”

From participating at an International Career Day at Mercy College in Dobbs Ferry, N.Y., with representatives from the Westchester Chapter, to discussing its grassroots social responsibility programs with UN agencies at the Westchester Chapter Annual Meeting last May, UNFCU’s relationship with UNA-USA members north of New York City has grown.

Said Marcia Brewster, Westchester chapter president and a UNFCU member of 33 years: “UNFCU has taken care of almost all my family’s financial needs for many years; it offers great benefits and provides convenient ways for members to access their accounts. The Credit Union conducts financial education events as part of its effort to help people, and has a number of ways to engage UNA members in the future.”

In addition to information about special promotions, products, and services, Westchester chapter members can avail of an array of financial webinars to view in real time and on-demand at their convenience via UNFCU’s UNA-USA website portal: [www.unfcu.org/unausa/unfcu.org](http://www.unfcu.org/unausa/unfcu.org).

A UNA-USA affinity VISA® EMV Chip and PIN credit card is slated to debut soon. A portion

of the revenue incurred on all purchases made with the UNA-USA card will go directly to support the UNA-USA organization. UNFCU pioneered the chip and PIN card in the U.S., which is the standard in payment security in more than 120 countries.

Moreover, home buying, home refinancing, education, and other competitive lending options available for U.S. citizens and G-4 visa holders, global payment card-based term life insurance as well as identity theft and fraud prevention resources also underscore UNFCU’s ability to meet member needs and respond to feedback.

“This alliance represents an extension of our mission at UNFCU, which is to ‘serve the people who serve the world,’” said Pamela Agnone, senior vice president of Retail Services at UNFCU. “We look forward to building strong relationships through our personalized service and unique offerings.”

-- *Elisabeth Philippe*

### *Young Professionals program*

The Young Professionals Program (YPP) has two new cochairs, Andy Laub and Martha Perez, and they are ready to have a wonderful year of growth and outreach. The program was launched in December of last year, with Asif Khan of the UN Foundation attending and showing how young professionals in New York can become more involved in the work of the UN through programs such as Girl Up. Since then the YPP has grown to include young professionals from all over Westchester.

Currently, the YPP is planning to organize an event on Climate Change that will provide alternative energy solutions such as biogas, solar cooking, and solar energy. The YPP has also partnered up with the Mercy College ENVISAJ club to organize a fundraiser for

the club's next trip to Haiti, where they will be building Bio digesters that will provide renewable energy to impoverished communities. The YPP is eager to empower the youth of Westchester at this year's UN Day while working alongside UNA-USA.

The YPP is excited to host career and networking events in the future, as well as more educational events to inspire the community to become more involved in promoting change both locally and globally. Please visit our link on [unawestchester.org](http://unawestchester.org) or e-mail questions to [yp.unawestchester@gmail.com](mailto:yp.unawestchester@gmail.com) for more information on how to become involved!

-- Martha Perez and Andy Laub

### ***WHO and the Ebola Crisis***

It was 38 years ago, in 1976, that scientists first identified the virus. It was in a small village in northern Zaire (as the Democratic Republic of the Congo was called in those days) along the banks of the Ebola River. Initially called Ebola hemorrhagic fever and now known simply as Ebola virus disease (EVD), it has erupted two dozen times since then. Most of the outbreaks have been small, but they killed a high percentage of those inflicted. The current West African outbreak, which has struck urban areas with mobile populations, has already killed more people than all previous outbreaks combined. Moreover, the number of cases is growing exponentially, with reported cases doubling every three weeks. Computer simulations done by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggest that by the end of January 2015, the number of victims could be anywhere from 0 to 1.4 million, depending on many shifting variables, including the effectiveness of the international response. The medical systems of the countries involved are breaking down, and the epidemic is currently outpacing

international efforts to contain it. In addition, the World Bank reports that the epidemic could have a catastrophic economic impact on the countries involved, owing less to the disease than to "aversion behavior" as others seek to isolate whole countries. The suspension of commercial flights to the afflicted area has even made it difficult for volunteers and supplies to reach victims.

The current Ebola outbreak, which primarily affects Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea, began in December 2013 and was recognized as a health emergency in March 2014. On Sept. 18, 2014, the UN Security Council unanimously declared it a threat to international peace and security and urged member states to rally their resources to combat it. Dr. David Nabarro, the recently appointed UN system coordinator for Ebola, estimated that the current level of effort needed to be increased twentyfold. (Keep in mind, too, that this is happening at a time when wars in Iraq, Syria, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic are generating their own health crises.)

Within the United Nations system, the agency most concerned with the crisis is the World Health Organization (WHO). Its performance, however, has come under criticism. The problem is largely due to WHO's changing position within the international health system and to some extent to its complex bureaucratic structure.

WHO was founded in 1948. Its founding treaty gave it a complex, federated bureaucratic structure because it was required to absorb existing regional entities, such as the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO). Still, for decades, it was one of the most successful UN agencies. WHO acted as a coordinating body and a technical consultancy, advising member states on the best practices for combatting disease. WHO oversaw the eradication of

smallpox, and it organized global immunization campaigns against measles, polio, and yellow fever. Then, in the 1990s, it was struck by a set of adverse trends. Some member states and special interests objected to its “overly political” studies, say, linking disease to poverty or examining the health impact of pharmaceutical patents. At the same time, private philanthropic institutions and governments began promoting disease-specific programs focused on AIDS, malaria, or tuberculosis. WHO became one voice among many on international health issues. (The UN’s own creation of a new specialized program, UNAIDS, contributed to this as well.) Moreover, some of these rivals, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, were much better funded. Health-related aid quadrupled in the two decades after 1990, but WHO’s governing body, the World Health Assembly (WHA), froze members’ dues that year and has not changed them in the quarter century since, which means that WHO’s official source of funding declined dramatically in real terms. To pay its staff and keep its offices open, the agency sought voluntary contributions from private and public sources. Voluntary contributions now constitute 80 percent of its budget. These funds are often tied to the donors’ priorities, which makes it difficult to address global health trends in a cohesive, comprehensive manner. Far from providing direction, leadership, and coordination, the various entities in WHO’s federated structure were competing with each other for grants and catering to donors’ goals.

Then came the crash of 2008, and the voluntary contributions began to shrivel up. Then came the euro crisis of 2010. The Geneva-based agency receives its funding in U.S. dollars but makes its payroll and many other payments in Swiss francs. With the onset of the euro crisis, people fleeing the euro for Swiss francs drove the value of the

franc up by 32 percent, reducing the value of dollar-denominated revenues. In 2011 WHO was forced to lay off 20 percent of its staff. The epidemic-response department saw its budget cut three times in the next three years. In 2012 alone, the WHA slashed funding for crises and epidemics by 50 percent. WHO hoped to balance these cuts by issuing guidelines on how countries could respond to their own epidemics, but many countries, especially in Africa, were not in a position to implement them at that time.

As Laurie Garrett, a global-health specialist at the Council on Foreign Relations, describes the current situation: “In reality, the WHO begs airlines for tickets in coach, pleads with drug companies and protective gear manufacturers for free handouts, and has only the expertise on hand that governments are prepared to payroll and donate, such as scientists from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).” WHO was not in a strong position to address the latest Ebola outbreak.

The market has not resolved the Ebola issue, either. Up to now, outbreaks have been too brief and small-scale to generate the sort of profit potential that would interest the private sector. Thus, while some preliminary testing has been done, there is no approved remedy or vaccine for Ebola 38 years after the disease’s discovery. (The entire inventory of the unapproved experimental drug ZMapp consisted of about half a dozen doses.) The disaster-oriented philanthropic response to the current epidemic has also been weak. Philanthropy—not unlike government—generally has its strongest response in the immediate recovery phase of a sudden, dramatic, catastrophic event, such as a hurricane or earthquake. Epidemics, on the contrary, begin quietly, build slowly in their initial stages, and have no easily identifiable transition to recovery. Although epidemics are easiest to address in



the earliest phases, when there are still few cases, they do not generate public attention.

After a slow start, however, in late August WHO released its “Ebola Response Roadmap,” a plan for stopping the Ebola epidemic within nine months. It established the Ebola Crisis Center, in New York, in September. The Security Council created the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER), its first health-related overseas mission. Given the reluctance of commercial carriers to fly to Ebola-stricken countries, arrangements were made to fly people and supplies in through Ghana. Now, the remaining question is whether member states can mobilize enough funds and personnel in time. A clinic with 80 Ebola patients requires 200–250 health-care providers, equipped with full-body protective gear, plus logistics personnel.

Addressing the Ebola situation in early September, Dr. Scott F. Dowell, a past director of the Division of Global Disease Detection and Emergency Response at CDC, told the New York Times: “There’s confusion and chaos. It argues for a system that’s organized as much as possible ahead of time so people know their roles.” There is an agency in position to perform that role, WHO. It only requires the international community to fund it and staff it adequately.

For further reading: “WHO: Past, Present, and Future,” a special issue of *Public Health* 128:2 (February 2014).

—*Scott C. Monje*

### ***The People’s Climate March***

General Secretary Ban Ki-moon, former vice president and environmental activist Al Gore, UNA-Westchester’s Marcia Brewster, big-screen superstar Leonardo DiCaprio, and 400,000 other people from around the

world joined in on the People’s Climate March in New York City on Sunday, Sept. 21, 2014. Coming a few days before a UN summit meeting on climate change, the event was intended to impress upon leaders the urgency of the issue. The marchers presented a petition with 2.1 million signatures demanding action on climate change. UNA-Westchester was a cosponsor of the event, and the President marched with the Concerned Families of Westchester.

### ***Board Members, Officers, and Committee Chairs***

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Martha Perez, marthap1993@gmail.com  
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*Ex officio:* George Garland, Jeanne Betsock  
Stillman.

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION** (this can also be submitted on line at [www.unausa.org](http://www.unausa.org)):

Please renew my membership

Please enroll me as a member of UNA-USA at the following level:

- |  |         |   |      |
|--|---------|---|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime (one-time payment) | \$1,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Member                         | \$40 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron                      | \$ 500  | <input type="checkbox"/> Introductory (first year only) | \$25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor                     | \$ 100  | <input type="checkbox"/> Student                        | \$10 |

In addition to my membership dues, I would like to contribute to:

- Westchester Chapter \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Lee Bloom Memorial Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- National Office \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Total enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

My company matches employee contributions. (My company's matching form is attached.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ (Please print)

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to UNA-USA.

Or  Charge payment to your Credit Card:  VISA  MC  Am. Express

Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp.Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Return this, with your payment to UNA-USA, to:

UNA-USA WESTCHESTER CHAPTER

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