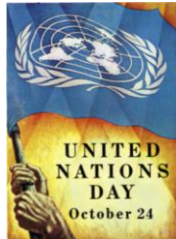




**UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION**  
*of the United States of America*  
 A PROGRAM OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOUNDATION

**Westchester Helps Bridge the Development Gap: Committed Leaders Improve Water, Education, and Health”**



**Sunday, October 23, 2011** - Celebrating the United Nations’ 66<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the UNA-USA Westchester Chapter organized an event titled “Westchester Helps Bridge the Development Gap: Committed Leaders Improve Water, Education, and Health.” This celebratory and important event was co-sponsored by Bronxville Rotary Club, Westchester County Human Rights Commission, Community Unitarian Church, and World Federation of Methodist and Uniting

Church Women. The event and panelists were introduced by Chapter President Marcia Brewster and featured: Dr. David Winder (CEO, Water Aid America), Dr. Cream Wright (Head, REDI4Change LLC & Former Global Chief, UNICEF Education Program), and Ms. Clare M. Effiong (Founder & Director, Esther’s Aid for Needy and Abandoned Children). Mr. George C. McKinnis (World Community Service Chair, Rotary International), moderated the session.

United Nations Day 2011 had its theme: “The United Nations: In Everyone’s Interest.” Speaking directly to this theme, the panel discussion focused on what Westchester residents are doing to support the UN’s efforts in water and sanitation, girls’ and boys’ education and in addressing HIV-AIDS in Africa.



[From L: David Winder, George McKinnis, Clare Effiong, Cream Wright. *Photo: Rosalina Christiani*]

The speakers addressed their work and their contributions to these efforts and provided recommendations on how we can all work together to improve the lives of people around the global.

**Dr. David Winder - Water and Sanitation**



Dr. Winder spoke to the crucial importance of clean water and sanitation in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), specifically MDG 7: Ensure Environment Sustainability. WaterAid America’s vision is of a world where everyone has access to safe water and sanitation. WaterAid transforms

**UN Day**

- *In 1947, United Nations General Assembly declared 24 October, the anniversary of the Charter of the United Nations*
- *Devoted to making known to peoples of the world the aims and achievements of the United Nations Organization*
- *UN day is part of the United Nations Week , which runs from 20 to 26 October*

**Rotary International**  
[www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org)

- *Worldwide organization of more than 1.2 million business, professional, and community leaders*
- *Rotarians provide humanitarian service, encourage high ethical standards in all vocations, and help build goodwill and peace in the world*

**Water Aid America**  
[www.wateraidamerica.org](http://www.wateraidamerica.org)

- *International non-profit organization dedicated exclusively to the provision of safe domestic water, sanitation and hygiene education to the world’s poorest communities*
- *870 million without fresh water, 4,000 kids die of waterborne diseases per day*
- *In 2010/2011, supported nearly 500 partner organizations in bringing safe water to 1.5 million people and sanitation to 1.6 million people in 26 countries*

lives by improving access to safe water, hygiene and sanitation in the world's poorest communities. Lack of clean water and sanitation has far reaching developmental and economically implications. Women and girls suffer most from poor access to water, as walking long distances to carry water prevents them from using their time for more productive activities, such as attending school and earning a living through decent work. WaterAid works to advocate government involvement to increase spending on water and sanitation. For every dollar invested in water and sanitation, 8 dollars are returned in terms of improved productivity and reduced health care costs.



### **Dr. Cream Wright - Girls' and Boys' Education**

Dr. Wright, discussing the importance of providing equal and quality education to young girls and boys for achieving universal primary education (MDG 2), raised and provided answers to numerous important questions.

What is the rationale for basic education for all? Charity? Governments under pressure? Economic development? Cultivate markets overseas? Promote national unity? A better educated electorate? Indeed, no country has taken off without offering basic education. Sometimes we argue over the obvious, but the real rationale for basic education is that it is a fundamental human right. People are entitled to education for its own sake.

Why does gender matter? People lack education for a variety of reasons: poverty, living in rural areas, religion, ethnicity, just to name a few. Girls are disproportionately impacted by all the above issues. A gender lens is an opportunity to tackle many development issues. Educating a woman means educating a country. It should also be noted that, in countries where boys are at a disadvantage, they should also be given equal opportunity.

How to measure success? Success depends on more than just access. Attendance, achievement, and learning are also important barometers. How can Westchester help? Some of the ways are: channeling resources to successful projects so that they can scale up, contacting elected officials, getting involved in projects such as the Global Goodness Project that provides education materials for schools in developing countries.

### **Ms. Clare M. Effiong - Poverty and Children's Health**



Ms. Effiong, speaking passionately, presented a heart-warming journey of Esther's Aid, a faith-based, nonprofit organization dedicated to addressing the needs of children orphaned by war and diseases. An organization that began in New York in 1999, spread its scope of work globally after Ms. Effiong's site visit to Rwanda in 2000 where she witnessed and was stunned by the devastation and incredible suffering endured by small children on the streets, struggling for survival. The children were without parents, shelter, with little clothing, poorly nourished, and in ill health. This was a direct result of the 1994 genocide, which made them orphans and plunged them into untold hardship, neglect, abandonment, hunger and abuse. Having witnessed first-hand the plight of Rwandan children, Esther's Aid provides assistance to protect Rwandan and other children globally, from health hazards such as HIV/AIDS, drug addiction, malnutrition, sexual exploitation, cheap child labor and prostitution.

### **REDI4Change** **([www.redi4change.com](http://www.redi4change.com))**

- *“Working with clients to facilitate the changes needed in development”*
- *Uses multidisciplinary analyses and the insights of expert practitioners to facilitate pragmatic and creative solutions to development challenges*
- *Areas of focus: education, public health, advocacy and communications*

### **Esther's Aid** **([www.estersaid.org](http://www.estersaid.org))**

- *Established in 1999 in New York*
- *Expanded scope of work to Rwanda in 2000*
- *501 (c)(3) nonprofit, faith-based organization with an international mission dedicated to reach out to the suffering orphans and needy children in the world*
- *Works to educate the general public, advocates against child labor, girl's prostitution and abuse*
- *Since 2000, has:*
  - *Reached out to over 3,000 orphans and needy street children/youth/widows*
  - *Rehabilitated and reintegrated hundreds of children, and opened free primary school*

Inspired by the passion, remarks and contributions of our speakers and the UNA-USA Westchester Chapter Team, our distinguished guest, Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins encouraged all Westchester residents to give back to the global community by getting involved in the work of the UN. Other distinguished guests included Judith Schwartzstein, President of Bronxville Rotary and MaryJane Shimsky, County Legislator.

Following the discussion, awards were presented by Program Chair Brenda Smith to the panelists for each of their organizations, and to: the Westchester Coalition on Global Poverty and HIV/ AIDS; the Greater Hudson Valley Chapter of The Links; the Rotary Club of Bronxville; and the eco-band Solar Punch.

Guests mingled and networked post program as Solar Punch, a band that uses music for environmental activism, performed.



[from L: David Winder, Clare Effiong, Sen. Andrea Stewart-Cousins, George McKinnis, Brenda Smith, Marcia Brewster and Cream Wright.]



[from L: James Dean Conklin, Alan Bigalow, Joe Mitch, Andrew Mattina;  
photo: Elisa Zazzera]

On behalf of the entire UNA-USA Westchester Chapter Team, we thank all our speakers, guests, performers, and volunteers for their contributions in making UN Day 2011 a success. We hope to see you at our future events!

**Solar Punch**  
([www.solarpunch.org](http://www.solarpunch.org))

- *A rock band on a mission*
- *Uses music to sing about science and the environment*
- *Holds workshops to help explain simple solar concepts and provide examples of where solutions are in use around the world*

**Website:**

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