

UlsterCorps Service Summit 2016

SPEAKER BIOS

Lee Anne Albritton is Executive Director of the Poughkeepsie Farm Project, a member-supported farm in the City of Poughkeepsie that grows fresh vegetables and fruit for their CSA, trains future farmers, provides hands-on educational programs, and improves access to healthy locally-grown food. Poughkeepsie Farm Project began in 1999 as a small community farm with a commitment to education and food justice. The first season, 15 CSA shareholders enjoyed produce from 3 acres of reawakened farmland leased from Vassar College. Sixteen years later the farm has expanded to 12 acres and over 475 members. It is a leader in cutting edge practices in today's sustainable agriculture. In 2014 they grew 151,317 pounds of produce, and donated 27,227 pounds of it to those in need in our community.

Deborah DeWan, Executive Director, Rondout Valley Growers Association is in her fifth year leading the RVGA, having worked throughout the Hudson Valley and Catskills assisting not-for-profits and communities with program development, strategic planning and community preservation projects. All the while she has built a regional reputation as an effective bridge builder between diverse constituencies. Her commitment to connecting schools and communities with fresh local food and food security has come full circle – early on as a Family volunteer and then serving as director of Family's Nutrition Outreach Program to this day overseeing the RVGA Farm to Food Pantry Program launched by RVGA co-founders Fabia Wargin and Bruce Davenport. Deborah has served on several nonprofit boards including Family of Woodstock, Catskill Center for Conservation and Development, Hudsonia, the Catskill Watershed Corporation, and is currently a member of the Riverkeeper Advisory Board. She holds a B.A. (Poli Sci) from SUNY Stony Brook and an M.S. in Environmental Studies from Bard College.

Christine Hein has been passionately advocating for People's Place as their Executive Director since May 2012. She brings an extensive management background and vast experiences partnering with community not-for-profits for over 25 years. Developing innovative and creative programming to combat food insecurities and other financial challenges confronting families and individuals in our communities has been her major focus the last four years. Under her direction, People's Place has become the largest Food Pantry in Ulster County.

Stiles R. Najac, the Food Security Coordinator for Cornell Cooperative Extension Orange County since 2006, graduated with a degree in sociology from SUNY New Paltz. Her major focus is CCE's Gleaning Program which recovers excess produce from local farmers for donation to soup kitchens and food pantries. During her tenure as coordinator for the past ten years, this program has tripled in size and distributes roughly 230,000 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables each year. She recently added efforts to create lasting Farm to School and Farm to Pantry relationships in Orange County. A Leadership Orange graduate, class of 2015, Stiles is an active member of the Safe Harbors of the Hudson board and plays soccer with the Orange County Soccer League. She presently lives in Middletown, NY.

Mark Newman has been volunteering since before he knew what it was called; earliest memories include working with his parents at various fundraisers and helping sweep/mop/clean at the firehouse. He has continued volunteering as part of his life's journey. Mark is currently employed at United Healthcare as an Operations/Audit Manager. His employer supports his efforts to volunteer in the community.

Diane Serratore, Executive Director, People to People, Rockland County has worked in the non-profit arena for more than 30 years at such nationally-known organizations as the March of Dimes, the Girl Scouts and the United Way. In 2008, Diane became the second Executive Director in the history of People to People, Rockland's primary hunger relief organization. Diane is a Nyack native and a member of the Rockland Business Association, Leadership Rockland Alumni Association, Nanuet Rotary and St. Ann's Choir. She is a graduate of Leadership Rockland and the Pattern for Progress Fellows Program Diane has received the Girl Scout Pearl Award, the Rockland Business Women's Network "Woman of the Year" Award, the VERITAS Medal Award from Dominican College, the Nyack Center Woman of Leadership and Vision Award, the Venture Foundation Award and the Pattern for Progress Regional Fellows Award.

KayCee Wimbish is a farmer and a teacher and is now bringing both of those passions together at the Kingston YMCA Farm Project. She loves building community and bringing people together through gardens and food. She is part of the growing movement to decrease food insecurity and to increase access to fresh, local food for all communities in Kingston.