

Career Day 2024 Participants

Mayor Susan McCartney

Mayor McCartney is the first female Mayor of West Orange elected to serve 2023-2026. She served on the town council from 2002 to 2022, and currently serves as the Council liaison to the Chamber of Commerce and the West Orange Planning Board. With a Bachelor's degree from Seton Hall University and a Master's from Kean University, Susan's graduate thesis was published by Harper Collins. Susan has designed state-wide curriculum models and served as an adjunct professor in Education and Administration at Seton Hall University and Montclair State University. She is the founder and owner of First Mountain Preschool in West Orange. A former Gregory School parent, Susan served as PTA Vice President while her three children attended Gregory School.

Michael AQ - Associate Creative Director, VaynerMedia

Michael AQ has worked in advertising for nearly twenty years. He is currently an Associate Creative Director at VaynerMedia where he gets to make videos for companies like Jimmy John's, Sam's Club, and St. Jude Children's Research hospital. Michael loves movies, being creative, and being a dad to Lielle and Sarai.

Andrew Blais - Lighting Technician, "Live with Kelly & Mark" - WABC/The Walt Disney Company

Andrew Blais is a career lighting director, light board programmer, and stagehand, whose career includes production for theater, dance, opera, concerts and live television.

Alison Chessa - Attorney

Alison worked as an attorney for the government (ADA in Brooklyn). Now she works at an IT staffing and solutions firm.

Carl Cofield - Chair of Graduate Acting, NYU

Carl Cofield is the Chair of Graduate Acting at NYU, and has served as the Associate Artistic Director of the Classical Theatre of Harlem since 2018. CTH directing credits include *Twelfth Night*, *Seize the King*, *The Bacchae*, *Antigone*, *Macbeth*, *The Tempest*, and *Dutchman*. He also directed the world premiere of Kemp Powers' *One Night in Miami* for Rogue Machine Theater in Los Angeles, and later iterations at Miami New Drama and Denver Center. Other directing venues include Oregon Shakespeare Festival, McCarter Theatre, and Yale Repertory. He has served on faculty at Yale School of Drama, Columbia School of the Arts, Manhattan School of Music, and the New School.

Jeff Cureton - Quality Assurance Supervisor, Topps/Fanatics Collectibles

A proud father of 2, Maddie & Alex, I spend my free time enjoying playing games and attending theater with my family. From a business standpoint, I have dedicated almost 20 years towards quality assurance in legal translations and now as lead supervisor for Topps Trading Cards, combining my passions for quality and collectibles.

Jason Fager - Software Engineer, Squarespace

I studied computer science in college and have worked as a software engineer for almost 20 years. I love working with computers and solving problems with technology. My favorite part of my job is being a detective following clues to debug broken software.

Joanne Fischetti - Communications Leader, Americas Tax at Ernst & Young

Joanne Fischetti is the leader of a communications team that makes sure everyone understands the latest news and rules at Ernst & Young in the Americas Tax Practice, which is like making sure everyone knows the rules of a board game. She uses storytelling to make boring information fun and interesting for almost 20,000 people! Joanne is also the proud mom of AJ and Aly.

Meara Franowicz - Library Media Specialist

Ms. Franowicz was born in Minnesota, the land of Prince and Bob Dylan. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin - Madison with a Bachelor of Science in Philosophy. After working on concert tours for a number of years, she moved to project management before finding her place in education.

Meghan Heide - Senior Director of Corporate Communications, Paramount

Meghan Heide is the Senior Director of Corporate Communications at Paramount, one of the world's leading producers of media and entertainment content and home to popular consumer brands including CBS, Showtime Networks, Paramount Pictures, Nickelodeon, MTV, Comedy Central, BET, Paramount+ and Pluto TV. Meghan is an experienced marketing and communications professional with a strong background in corporate marketing activities, PR, advertising, events, and branding. She has held key roles at Innovid, Meredith Corporation, Raptive, and Definition 6 and holds a BA in Communications and Media Studies from Fairfield University.

Kevin Judson - Fire Captain, FDNY

Kevin Judson was born and raised in Queens, New York. Kevin attended John Browne High School and graduated in 1981. Following his graduation, Kevin attended the New York Institute of Technology followed by the Fire Department Academy. His first year on the job was in 1991. Kevin has been a Firefighter for 33 years; he was promoted to Lieutenant in 2003 and Captain in 2013. He currently serves as Captain at E305-L151 in Forest Hills, Queens. Kevin also served as a Captains Representative for the Fire Officers Union from 2019-2022. He lives in Northport, New York with his wife and has three children – one daughter and two sons.

Matt Kebbekus - Restaurateur

Matt started working in restaurants while in high school, continued through college, and then made it his career. Today, he and his friends have four restaurants in New York City.

Matt Konwiser - Regional CTO/Technical Team Leader, Artificial Intelligence & Automation at IBM

Matt is an author, speaker and technology worker focused on cybersecurity, artificial intelligence and automation. He has written papers, spoken at events, taught classes, been on podcasts, and is a LinkedIn regular contributor on many topics. He is also a gamer and a HUGE Lego fan and builder!

David Langlois - Musician

David was born in Paris, France. He received musical training in France and Senegal. He arrived in the U.S. in 2003 then toured the world playing jazz and reggae.

Michael Liskow - Attorney

Michael Liskow is a lawyer who practices civil litigation, which means he goes to court to represent individuals and businesses. He focuses on bringing cases on behalf of people and small companies that have been harmed by illegal business practices. He sometimes has to wear a tie but not as often as you might think.

Francesco Longenecker - Sales Director, Petzel Gallery

I am the Sales Director at Petzel Gallery, a contemporary art gallery located in Chelsea NYC. We focus on exhibiting and selling emerging, mid-career, and established artists' work. I place work within private and public collections and institutions. We present our artists' work in our art galleries in Chelsea and the Upper East Side, as well as art fairs in the U.S., Europe, and Asia.

Columb Mahoney - Architect (Senior Associate/Studio Manager, Cooper Carry Architects)

I grew up on Long Island in NY. My favorite toy growing up was Legos and inspired a love of designing. After high school I went to Syracuse University to study architecture. Since then, I have worked in a number of different offices. The work I do is primarily high-rise apartment buildings and hotels.

Makeda Marshall-NeSmith - Urban Planner

Makeda Marshall-NeSmith is an urban planner who loves making neighborhoods better by giving people access to good healthcare, education, nice homes, jobs, and friendships. For example, she's been part of projects that focus on how education and housing systems can better work together to create better outcomes for students and families. Makeda has also been involved in efforts to make sure the legal system treats everyone fairly, especially when it comes to finding housing. But the most fulfilling role in her life is being a mom to Nina and Stokely.

Andrew Marston - Director of Operations

Andrew Marston, Managing Director of Guana Island, has over 20 years of experience in the luxury hospitality industry, managing properties from private estates to boutique hotels. Born in the UK, he served Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II working Royal events throughout the palaces of England and Scotland. Andrew emigrated to the United States in 2005 to manage the Penthouse Suites at The Setai Resort in South Beach Miami, Florida. For the past decade, Andrew has managed properties owned by the Jarecki family, including Guana Island and Norman Island in the British Virgin Islands.

Matt McKenna - Attorney, Simpson Thacher and Bartlett Law Firm

Mr. McKenna attended the University of Texas for college and law school, and has since practiced corporate, immigration, and criminal law. Through his Manhattan law firm, Simpson Thacher and Bartlett, he is active with their volunteer (pro bono) department, working on criminal pardons.

Rebecca Moss - Product and Engineering Director, Advance Local (including NJ.com)

Rebecca Moss has spent her career at the intersection of media and technology, being a part of the transformation of magazines, newspapers, movies, and music into the digital forms we enjoy today. She has worked at companies such as Spotify, The Economist, Consumer Reports, American Express, and Conde Nast. She loves that her work combines writing and communication with technology and coding. The jobs she has held did not even exist when she started college!

Milan Mraz - Finance Vice President, Morgan Stanley

Milan has worked in banking since 2006. He has worked in both New York and London.

Dan Mueller - Aerospace Engineer, Aerojet Rocketdyne

I grew up in South Jersey, played soccer and became an Eagle Scout. Went to school at Rutgers University, New Brunswick School of Engineering. Worked as a program manager at an aerospace manufacturing company building components for rockets and satellites.

Tierney Norris - Neonatal Intensive Care Registered Nurse, Cooperman St. Barnabas

Tierney Norris has been a Neonatal ICU Nurse for 22 years and has taken care of tens of thousands of babies in that time. She always loved science and was amazed at the incredible wonders of how the human body works so a career in nursing seemed a great fit. She believes her work is a true act of service and a privilege to support families at a very difficult time in their family's life.

Thomas Rodriguez - Director of Operations (Hospitality)

Thomas Rodriguez has always had a passion for restaurants and trying new foods. In school, he participated in a program that kickstarted his interest in the food service industry. Over the years Mr. Rodriguez moved to different restaurants, continuously learning and expanding his knowledge of the business. After gaining experience in management, Mr. Rodriguez had the opportunity to oversee multiple restaurants and a team of over 100 employees. During his free time, he enjoys cooking for his family.

Tez Roro - Real Estate Broker

Tez Roro is a real estate broker who enjoys helping families buy and sell real estate. She is a mom of 2 boys - ages 7.5 and 12.

Dan Scheraga - Print Publishing Editor, The Wall Street Journal

Dan has worked in journalism for the past 25 years. Right now he edits content for the print edition of The Wall Street Journal, one of the best-known newspapers in the U.S., and has previously worked on the online edition. He specializes in business and finance news, and on some days leads the production of that section for the Journal's print edition.

Alexandra Schrecengost

Alexandra Schrecengost founded Virtual With Us in 2020 following Culture With Us in 2021 - and serves as the CEO. The organizations' missions are to support global corporations with distributed workforces through cultural

programming, DEI initiatives and food and beverage entertainment to better improve human connections. With more than 18+ years of experience in hospitality, lifestyle, and luxury public relations, Alex's focus has been on community-building that ties into events marketing. She lives in New Jersey with her husband and their identical twin 8-year-old boys.

Jon Schwartz - Deputy Editor, New York Yankees

I write stories about and host podcasts with players on the New York Yankees. I work in Yankee Stadium and get to spend every day thinking about baseball. Whether you're a great player or just someone who is interested in sports, there are so many different ways to turn sports into a career when you get older.

Samantha Sheridan - Senior VP Production & Operations, Embassy Row/Sony Pictures

Worked at Embassy Row for the last 18 years. Focused on production management and studio operations. Serves as Executive in Charge of production on all projects and oversees the company's 3 studios and live broadcast control rooms.

Matt Sterling - Corporate Strategy, Ross Stores

Graduated from Pennsylvania State University with a degree in Supply Chain Management. Currently working in Corporate Strategy for Ross Stores - focusing on Supply Chain, Merchandising / Planning, and Information Technology. Prior to Ross, spent time in both Planning and Strategy at J.Crew, Cole Haan/Nike, and Aeropostale.

Elena Tedeschi - Chef/Owner, Well Rooted Kitchen

Chef Elena has been cooking since she was little. At 12, she even catered her mom's baby shower when her youngest brother was born! Her family's love for food and travel taught her to find the best local dishes, sparking her passion for cooking. Even though she studied psychology and worked in mental health, Chef Elena realized her true calling was in the kitchen. After college she went to culinary school and combined her love of mental health and food with teaching. Now, Chef Elena uses her experience to show how cooking can be a fun way to use what you learn in school (like math, reading, art, science and history) in the kitchen. She teaches skills such as reading recipes, measuring ingredients, understanding the chemistry of cooking, creating artful plates, and the cultural background of different dishes. She believes cooking helps build confidence, teaches important life lessons, and is a great way to make delicious and nutritious food for yourself and your friends!

Rachel Tombari - Mental Health Therapist

I am a mental health counselor which means that people come to see me when they are having hard things in their life that they need help with.

Ivy Wilson - Professor of English, Northwestern University

Ivy Wilson teaches courses on the comparative literature of the black diaspora and U.S. literary studies with a particular emphasis on African American culture. His book, *Specters of Democracy: Blackness and the Aesthetics of Nationalism*, interrogates how the figurations and tropes of blackness were used to produce the social equations that regulated the cultural meanings of U.S. citizenship and traces how African American intellectuals manipulated the field of aesthetics as a means to enter into political discourse about the forms of subjectivity and national belonging. His other work in U.S. literary studies includes edited volumes on James Monroe Whitfield, Albery Allson Whitman, Walt Whitman, and on the emergent scholarship in American literary and cultural studies of the "long" nineteenth century. His current research interests focus on the solubility of nationalism in relation to theories of the diaspora, global economies of culture, and circuits of the super-national and sub-national.