



**Tina Weishaus**  
**Sustainable Highland Park**  
 Middlesex County, New Jersey

Tina Weishaus spent her life pushing the world toward justice—persistently and with great heart. On May 28, 2025, Tina died peacefully, surrounded by her family, after living for 25 years with a form of blood cancer. We celebrate the extraordinary legacy she leaves behind: one built on sustainability, equity, and tireless dedication to the common good.

“Tina was a model of the wisdom and consistency needed to move things forward. She knew how to deal with people and always kept calm and positive, but was relentless and continued to (politely) push for action from the various people in the Borough. It’s people like Tina who make good towns great,” said Randall Solomon, Executive Director of Sustainable Jersey and a neighbor in Highland Park.

Tina helped form the Highland Park Green Team and served as the chair of [Sustainable Highland Park](#) for eight years. She was president of the Highland Park Parent Teacher Organization for many years, and she also co-founded [DivestNJ](#), which advocates for state pension funds to divest from fossil fuels. She was a leader of the climate group [350NJ-Rockland](#) and an active member of the [I.L. Peretz Secular Jewish Community and School](#) for over 35 years.

Tina’s path as an environmental advocate began in earnest in 2006, when she trained with Vice President Al Gore to become a Global Warming Educator. She joined The Climate Project, delivering hundreds of climate change presentations across New Jersey—awakening audiences to the reality of the crisis and empowering them to act.

From that turning point forward, she never looked back. As chair of Sustainable Highland Park, she championed landmark initiatives, including the town’s 2019 plastic bag ban ordinance.

## Highland Park’s Bring Your Own Bag Ordinance

Tina managed a year-long education campaign to voluntarily reduce reliance on single-use plastic bags in Highland Park. In February 2019, the work culminated when the Highland Park Council passed [Ordinance No. 19-1980: Bring Your Own Bag Ordinance](#). With support from a \$10,000 [Sustainable Jersey grant](#) funded by the PSEG Foundation, Sustainable Highland Park educated residents and merchants about the importance of reducing the use of single-



use plastic bags. The multifaceted campaign included the purchase and distribution of 2,500 reusable bags, installation of 100 lawn signs throughout the downtown shopping area, 75 posters in store windows and a large permanent banner at Stop & Shop—all featuring a Bring Your Own Bag logo the group created. The Highland Park Borough ordinance played a direct role in shaping the statewide ban on single-use plastic bags.

For decades, Tina was a fixture at climate rallies, council meetings, and kitchen-table organizing sessions. Those who knew Tina said she spoke out not for recognition, but for the planet, for justice, and for future generations.

Dr. Melanie Hughes McDermott, a senior researcher at Sustainable Jersey, was a friend and neighbor. She said, “Tina was fierce and unwavering in her principles, yet never judgmental. She was deeply caring and embodied the rare virtue of equanimity. A progressive force and tireless advocate for cutting-edge environmental causes, she fought passionately for what she believed in and earned the respect of allies and opponents alike.”



## Sustainable Jersey Certified

Highland Park Borough first achieved [Sustainable Jersey certification](#) at the bronze level in 2010 and has been continuously certified at the silver level since 2013. You can review the most recent certification report to see the actions the municipality has completed: [2023 Highland Park Borough Certification Report](#). In addition to being the stalwart behind a perennial high-scoring town, Tina was instrumental in securing grant funding to move projects forward. Highland Park Borough received over \$46,000 in Sustainable Jersey grants to fund projects including the Green Action Plan, the Bring Your Own Bag outreach campaign, solar islanding/microgrid outreach, tree planting, and more.

Tina brought people together across sectors, backgrounds, and ideologies. A skilled communicator and strategic thinker, she maintained strong relationships with local officials, including the mayor and state legislators. She was known for doing her homework and never hesitating to push for bold action when others hesitated.

“She was the kind of person who thought globally but then did the work at home on the local level. Tina wanted to change the way people thought. She met them where they were and helped them understand why their choices mattered,” explained Teri Jover, Highland Park Borough Administrator and former chair of Sustainable Highland Park. “Tina believed in people, and she believed in a future worth fighting for. In her final weeks, she was still organizing, still leading, still doing the work. We owe it to her—to her vision, her determination, and her love for this planet—to carry on the fight. To be better. To work harder. To make a difference.”



## Highland Park Initiatives

Tina co-developed the Highland Park School Gardens Project, now thriving at three local schools. These gardens not only feed students and their communities, but also teach sustainability and environmental stewardship in tangible ways.

She ran Earth Day events and organized an environmental film series. Tina helped lead the Highland Park [Adopt a Storm Drain](#) project, which works to alleviate flooding from rainfall events—one of the dangerous results of the climate crisis in New Jersey. Storm drains move water away from impervious surfaces like streets and homes but also trap debris when it rains. The initiative supports a network of "adopt-a-drain" volunteers who are responsible for clearing the drains near their homes.

More recently, Tina had been working with members of the Board of Health and the Environmental Commission to support a leaf blower task force. Tina was a leader in the movement to ban gas-powered leaf blowers, finding that they pollute the air, impact health, and contribute to climate change. She participated in Sustainable Highland Park events to share the health risks, environmental impacts, and options for safer, cleaner alternatives. She encouraged support of the New Jersey bill to reduce or eliminate the use of gas powered blowers: Senate Bill [S437](#).

Tina worked on numerous local initiatives focused on waste reduction, clean energy, and community education. As the former Board President of [Who Is My Neighbor? Inc. \(WIMNI\)](#), Tina helped launch Elijah's Project Community Café, which followed sustainable practices and worked to alleviate food insecurity in Highland Park.



## Legislative Advocacy

Her impact extended beyond Highland Park. In 2018, Tina co-founded DivestNJ, a statewide campaign to remove fossil fuel investments from the New Jersey State Pension Fund. She helped draft key legislation (Senate Bill [S198](#)) and spent years meeting with lawmakers, testifying before the State Investment Council, and urging the governor to act. At the 2023 New York City March Against Fossil Fuels, Tina organized a powerful "Divestment Hub," uniting students, unions, and advocacy groups in a shared call for climate justice. Read Tina's 2024 Op-Ed in *NJ Spotlight News*: "[NJ pension fund should not be invested in Big Oil](#)."

Tina was also advocating for the [NJ Climate Superfund Act \(Assembly Bill A4696\)](#). The bill proposes that funds from the NJ Superfund Act be used to fund infrastructure projects to help the state become more resilient to flooding, extreme weather events, and other climate impacts. It would impose liability on fossil fuel companies for damages caused by climate change and establishes a program in the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection to collect and distribute compensatory payments.

## More About Tina

Tina was born in Manhattan on April 21, 1951, grew up in the Bronx and Queens, and attended college in New York, Wisconsin, and New Jersey. She worked as a nurse, then as a psychotherapist, for decades.

Tina balanced activism with family and community-building. She and her husband, Ira, raised their children, Daniel and Jenny, in a home rooted in compassion and responsibility—values now passed on to their grandchildren, Talvi and Elava. Tina leaves behind a transformed community and a template for what one person, motivated by clarity, care, and courage, can achieve.

Tina requested that any donations in her honor be made to [DIRE - the Deportation & Immigration Response Equipo](#), [Empower NJ](#), [Ironbound Community Corporation](#), and the [Palestinian Children's Relief Fund](#).

