

From the Editors



Faith Brigham
NYPD
Counterterrorism



Matthew Vann
Mayor's Office of
Immigrant Affairs

How do you spot a 2011-2012 New York City Urban Fellow? A City Hall ID badge? A focused 20 something clutching onto Robert Caro's *The Power Broker*? If you're thinking of common characteristics like educational background, place of work, or career goals, think broader. Pinning our cohort down to any of these means would be misleading. We hail from 14 states and 23 universities. We've studied subjects from cognitive science to technology. We represent Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx. (Sorry Staten Island, maybe next year!) We work in 14 offices and agencies as diverse as the NYPD to Small Business Services. So, do we have anything in common? We do: an abiding passion for public service. But judge for yourself.

On behalf of the 2011-2012 Urban Fellows cohort, we invite you to get to know us through this year's newsletter. We will be highlighting our agencies and the projects we are involved with, our weekly seminars, personal backgrounds and future aspirations. Finally, thank you to all the people that made this fellowship possible... two months in and we're having a blast!

The NYC Urban Fellows Program is sponsored by The City of New York



and administered by the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS). The program is designed to introduce America's finest college students and graduates to local government and public service.

Edna Wells Handy, DCAS Commissioner
Maria DiPaola, Chief Human Capital Officer
Barbara Simmons,
Director of Fellowship Programs
Jaida S. Reilly-Comice, Assistant Director of Fellowship Programs

Meet the 2011-2012 Fellows



First row (left to right): Ana Cunningham, Penny King, Malina Tea Tran, Rashida Davis, Paul Monge-Rodriguez, Rachel Van Tosh; Second row: Kimberly Seiler, Ravi Singh, Olga Deshchenko, Siena Chiang, Sairah Anwar, Ryan Erickson; Third row: Peter Morrissey, Henry Bluestone Smith, Faith Brigham, Daniel Wallace, Carin Whint, Blake Edwards; Fourth row: Natan Vega Potler, Anthony Perez, David Eisenman, JP Allen, Needham Hurst; Back row: Matthew Vann, Hui Wang

A Day in the Life: Department of Correction

By Rashida Davis



New York City's Department of Correction (DOC) is one of the nation's largest correctional systems. The average inmate population on any given day is approximately 13,000, which is more than the prison population of many state correctional facilities. The department is led by Commissioner Dora B. Schriro who, throughout her career, demonstrated her commitment to sentencing reform, the crime victims' community, and the corrections workforce and re-entry efforts. With an operating budget of over \$1 billion, the department employs over 8,000 uniformed officers as well as over 1,000 civilian staff to keep the system running efficiently.

I work with the Department of Correction. My first day at the New York City Department of Correction began with a City Council hearing regarding bill number 656, "a local law that has been proposed to amend the administrative code of the city of New York in relation to persons not to be detained." After the hearing, I set out to Queens to my new office at DOC Headquarters. Once I settled in I typed up my notes for submission to Commissioner Schriro. I knew instantly that there would never be a dull moment at DOC.

In the weeks to come I visited Rikers Island—New York City's main jail complex—multiple times to learn more about how correctional facilities operate. I began by visiting an inmate who had written to the commissioner and then began observing inmate council meetings as well as meetings on policies regarding inmate property and visitation. I also participated in a luncheon during New York City's customer service week—hosted by DOC Commissioner Schriro—which honored department employees who exhibit excellent customer service. It was impressive to see how hands-on the commissioner is. She not only presented the employees with certificates, but she stayed to enjoy the lunch and conversation.

After getting my "feet wet" and having an official orientation, I began working on three projects. One of those projects includes enhancing the care, custody and control of transgender inmates. The other two involve the enhancement of property operations and inmate visitation. Researching and creating best practice ideas to enhance the care, custody and control of the transgender population has been fascinating. It is a challenge that I welcome and hope that I can innovatively contribute to. Working with my supervisor Maggie Peck, the director of constituent services, provides me the opportunity to witness firsthand how DOC's strategic plan: "Public Safety Now,

Penny's Two Cents

Penny King
Office of the
Deputy Mayor
for Economic
Development



October 12, 2011 marked the start of the weekly Urban

Fellows seminar series, which began with a trip to the Brooklyn Navy Yard. The Brooklyn Navy Yard is an innovative example of "adaptive reuse," a term that describes the preservation of old structures for new purposes. The navy yard was established in 1801 by the U.S. Navy, but today it is a 300-acre industrial park home to over 240 businesses. The Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation (B.N.Y.D.C.), which manages the site for the City of New York, is leading the effort to modernize the site and make it a model of sustainable industry.

Conventional wisdom holds that urban manufacturing is dead or dying in the United States. However, small-scale manufacturing is a rare bright spot in today's gloomy economy. The Wall Street Journal reported that "Artisanal and specialty manufacturers in New York City are quickly becoming the silver lining for a sector that has been shedding jobs for decades." As Andrew Kimball, President of the B.N.Y.D.C., explained in a Metropolis magazine article, "We've demonstrated here that urban manufacturing is back...It doesn't look anything like the days of the smokestacks. It tends to be small-scale, with very nimble businesses that tap into the creative class..."

The Urban Fellows visited several of the Brooklyn Navy Yard's tenants with B.N.Y.D.C. Senior Vice President Richard Drucker. First on the tour was Cumberland Packing, located on the site where individual sugar packets were invented in 1945 and where Sweet 'N Low, Sugar in the Raw, and other sweeteners are still packaged today. Steiner Studios is a state-of-the-art production studio where feature films and television shows, including Boardwalk Empire and Pan Am, are filmed. Capsys, a tenant that builds environmentally-sensitive modular units, has partnered with affordable-housing developer Nehemiah to transform neighborhoods in East New York.

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Anthony Perez
Mayor's Fund to Advance
New York City

What will your business card say in five years?

"Bronx Public Servant." I don't know what I'll be doing exactly but I know there comes a time when an individual must stop being the recipient of great opportunities like receiving a college education, having inspiring mentors, and participating in programs like the NYC Urban Fellows. At that point, it's time to pass along these gifts. I plan to continue this cycle right where it all began: The Bronx, my home.

What led you to do the NYC Urban Fellows program?

My college thesis advisor recommended that I research the fellowship. The program seemed like an ideal way to gain valuable exposure to the policy-making process which many college graduates, including myself, have studied but never fully experienced. As someone who hopes to ultimately find a career in the public realm, working in New York City government allows me to have a better understanding of how legislation is generated and applied at the local level.



Henry Smith
Department of
Education

What is your favorite autobiography?

My favorite autobiography is Frank Abagnale Jr.'s *Catch Me If You Can* (1980), which chronicles his exploits as one of the world's most infamous con men. I first read this book in high school and learned a valuable lesson in self-confidence. Often life throws you in situations where you think are in over your head, but by portraying more self-confidence than you actually may feel, you can accomplish more than you imagined.



Kim Seiler
Department of
Environmental Protection

What is the best thing about getting to know New York City?

Getting involved in my neighborhood! I've been making friends with local proprietors, particularly at the homebrew supply store near my apartment. The owners and I trade recipes! As a formerly car-dependent Midwesterner, I am enjoying a new lifestyle where everything I need is only a short walk away.



Needham Hurst
Department of Housing
Preservation and Development

If you weren't doing the NYC Urban Fellows program, what would you be doing?

I would be completing a Masters at Oxford University in, believe it or not, Social Theology. I've always been interested in how faith traditions and modernity interact, and I was entirely prepared to move to the UK to study it when I got the call from the Fellowship.



Peter Morrissey
New York Police
Department

Davis continued:

Public Safety Later, Cultivating and Celebrating Excellence in the Workplace, and Providing Victim-focused Services and Support" is

implemented and accessed. I am happy to be a part of this team and cannot wait for what the future will bring.



A group of Fellows don hair nets to visit the Cumberland Packing Corp., which packages Sweet'N Low.

FOLLOW THE FELLOW BRICK ROAD...

- Gracie Mansion Tour
- Five Borough Scavenger Hunt
- DEP Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Brownsville NYCHA housing
- Brooklyn Navy Yard
- Alumni Event at the Arsenal
- NYC Cares Service Day
- DOT Jersey Barrier Painting in Brooklyn

A Day in the Life: Center for Economic Opportunity



By Ana Cunningham

In 2006, Mayor Bloomberg announced the creation of the Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) to tackle poverty through programs that improve the lives of New York City's residents. CEO operates as a unit within the Mayor's Office and is designed to improve economic and social conditions for New Yorkers through workforce, youth, education, and asset development programs. CEO collaborates with other city agencies to implement programs that effectively and efficiently address the immediate needs of citizens.

Prior to the Urban Fellowship, my experience within government had been fairly limited. My previous internship experiences include working at the Public Defenders Office in Rockville, Maryland, as well as teaching English and Math in a juvenile detention facility. CEO programs such as the Young Adult Literacy Program (YALP) and the Young Adult Internship Program (YAIP) fueled my interest since I never considered the ways macro-level policy decisions could affect criminal justice programs. On a personal level, I want to use my fellowship to explore how macro-level policy decisions are made and the process through which organizations assess their own programs. The group interview at CEO gave a compelling overview of the unique and multi-disciplinary approach CEO incorporates to

reduce poverty in New York City, as well as highlighting the strength and talent of all CEO staff members. My interview solidified why I wanted to spend nine months at CEO--the office values and invests in its own staff members and I would have the enormous opportunity to develop new quantitative and qualitative skills, while also improving my interpersonal skills which will be helpful in my future plans in either the legal or policy realms.

In the first few weeks of my time at CEO, I feel that I have learned so much of how CEO functions within New York City government, as well as how programs actually start within an agency. The most surprising and rewarding aspect of my employment has been that no two days are exactly the same. For instance, my day typically begins with either my meeting with another CEO staff member on his or her projects, or a meeting between CEO and another agency on a current program. Following the meeting, I oscillate between working on the long-term CEO program analysis project and helping a senior advisor prepare notes for an upcoming meeting with a potential new funder. I feel incredibly privileged to work with an enormously talented staff that passionately cares about their work and welcome my questions and interest to learn. As an Urban Fellow, I aspire to learn how to better effectively serve the public and how to create effective policies even within systematic constraints. On a daily basis, staff members at the Center for Economic Opportunity demonstrate that perseverance and passion, not economic climate, determine the high-quality of programs that make a difference in the lives of New Yorkers.

King continued:

Finally, the Fellows visited the workshop of Ferra Designs, which produces architectural metal fabrications for residential and commercial clients.

This trip illustrated New York City's innovative approach to economic development and historic preservation and gave the Fellows

access to a site that many New Yorkers do not know. Fortunately, that soon may change: the Brooklyn Navy Yard Center at Building 92, a visitor's center and exhibition space that will examine the history and future of the Brooklyn Navy Yard, is scheduled to open in the renovated 1857 Marine Commandant's home this fall. It's worth a visit!

Headshot photos by Michael Evangelou, DCAS Intern
Brooklyn Navy Yard photo by Richard Drucker