

2017



HIGH ROAD RECORD

Cornell IN BUFFALO



ILR School
Cornell University

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WHAT IS THE HIGH ROAD?



The term “High Road Economic Development” denotes a family of strategies for economic development that treat shared prosperity, environmental sustainability, and efficient democracy as necessary principles, not options or afterthoughts. Originating in the research and policy initiatives of the Center on Wisconsin Strategy (COWS) at the University of Wisconsin, it is a place-based strategy to realize these values while increasing equity.

Since 2009 High Road Fellowships have brought Cornell undergraduates to Buffalo for a summer immersion of community and economic development in the city’s dynamic social sector. Students are placed with partners of the Partnership for the Public Good, a think tank providing action-research, policy development and civic engagement tools to over 270 community-based organizations. This year’s placements are a diverse array of organizations including those focused on social enterprise, poverty alleviation, arts and education, food justice and worker cooperatives.

The High Road Fellowship is global learning on a domestic scale. Students are immersed in a dynamic model of collaborative outreach and extension that drives innovative, sustainable and equitable economic development in the new economy. High Road students are at the forefront of emerging policies and practices, from community benefit agreements to re-entry workforce development and employment programs, from livable wage campaigns to youth arts initiatives.

PERSPECTIVES: EXPERIENCES THAT MATTER

ALUMNI

150 Cornell students have participated in the High Road Fellowships since 2009 and gone on to a variety of careers including fields such as law, social innovation, affordable housing and urban planning, organized labor, financial and asset management, graduate studies and even the NFL. Some have chosen to relocate to Buffalo to begin their professional careers.

They remain connected to the Fellowship in a multitude of ways broadening the two-way High Road from Ithaca to Buffalo and beyond. Matthew Scherer ILR `11, 2009 High Roader, is a member of the High Road Advisory Committee and Susanne Donovan ILR `13, 2011 High Roader, served as a host supervisor this summer with the WNY Council on Occupational Safety and Health Worker Center.

Whether our alumni find themselves in traditional nonprofit organizations or elsewhere, High Roaders know how to make their knowledge count – seeing opportunities for change in their communities as ways to apply their learning in a uniquely Cornell way.

“The High Road Fellowship was the best experience I had in my four years at Cornell. The High Road exposed me to diverse points of view and changed how I think. I became aware of issues effecting the community, learned what others were doing to help and how I could also make a difference,”

JC Tretter ILR `13, 2010 High Roader, Cleveland Browns



PERSPECTIVES: EXPERIENCES THAT MATTER



2017 CLASS PROFILE

- This year's cohort includes students from the ILR School, Arts & Sciences, Human Ecology and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
- 7 are local students from the Buffalo area and another 8 are from greater New York while the rest come from Kansas, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, South Korea and Vietnam
- 14 rising sophomores, 7 rising juniors and 1 rising senior
- 3 Public Service Scholars, 1 McNair Scholar, 2 Meinig Family Scholars
- 9 different languages spoken
- Representative leadership from a diverse array of student groups including ILR Student Government Association, Black Students United, Cornell Outdoor Education, First Generation Student Union, Cornell Bhangra Board, Cornell Entrepreneurship Club, ILR Sports Business Society, and Cornell Chinese Students Association
- A myriad of talents including poets, athletes, artists, musicians, and journalists

JOSEPH ANDERSON

AMHERST, NY • ILR • CLASS OF 2020

OPEN BUFFALO

Open Buffalo is a civic initiative to make major, long-term improvements in justice and equity; it is an unprecedented collaboration among a diverse group of partners; and it is one of three projects in the nation chosen for the Open Places Initiative of the Open Society Foundations. Its mission is to create systemic changes leading to an “open” city for residents of Buffalo, through the measures of equality, justice, and freedom. Open Buffalo provides leadership development, media and policy strategy and coordination, direct support, and assistance to social and economic justice organizations and campaigns, facilitates action-oriented community research, and raises the profile of and mobilizes funding for this important work.



WORK HIGHLIGHTS:

- Staffed the Community First Alliance, an Open Buffalo-led coalition that is working to make sure that the community benefits from economic development programs and projects through quality jobs, education and training, local and minority business opportunities, and green design and operations, with an initial focus on the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus and the surrounding Fruit Belt neighborhood
- Organized community meetings and legislative visits around key issues of inclusionary zoning and gentrification for Fruit Belt residents and coalition members
- Assisted on activities related to comprehensive anti-gentrification strategy including organizing and planning the inaugural Anti-Gentrification Summit
- Presented to the Community First Alliance and High Road partners about the current development landscape and policy recommendations of what the coalition should embark on next given capacity and effectiveness of the stakeholders



IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

I couldn't have asked for a better summer. This has been the most eye-opening experience that has caused me to do a lot of self-reflection. But most importantly, it has inspired me to always be doing more. I don't have a defined career path yet. I find that every day I change what I want to do and I don't know how to figure it out. But, this summer has taught me that I can't be on the sidelines for anything and that I should trust my moral compass. So, for the long term, I don't know what I am going to do or how I am going to do it. But, short term, I know I will be taking everything back to Ithaca with me. I want to be more involved in the non-profit community in Ithaca. I want to start organizing student organizations via the PPG model so that students can better advocate for what they deserve. I know I won't forget this summer. It will be something that I always take with me and always will remember

From Joe's reflection journal

IMPACT...

Joe has a sharp analysis and a quick wit. He was instrumental in producing a campaign plan for our ongoing campaign to win a citywide mandatory inclusionary zoning policy for the city of Buffalo. He also assisted with the incorporation of and fundraising for Western New York's first community land trust. It was a pleasure to get to know him and work with him over the course of the 2017 High Road Fellowship. As a native son of Buffalo, his hometown has a lot to be proud of. I look forward to the work he'll do in the future, knowing that it will be grounded in justice and equity for all and a great love of humanity.

*Harper Bishop,
Open Buffalo*





ANNABEL BACON

BUFFALO, NY • HUMAN ECOLOGY • CLASS OF 2020

BREADHIVE WORKER COOPERATIVE BAKERY



BreadHive is a worker-owned cooperative bakery and cafe that seeks to create equity employment through the production and sale of high-quality, healthy food. The organization is committed to establishing a cooperative economy in Buffalo, NY, supporting its worker-owners by providing fulfilling work and equity ownership potential, supporting other cooperatives, and spreading awareness of worker-owned cooperatives as a viable and rewarding business model.



IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

I was born and raised in Buffalo. I love this place, it's my home, and I felt like I knew everything about Buffalo. How wrong I was. This summer, I have seen sides of Buffalo I didn't know existed, and my previous understanding has been shaken. Through different speakers and tours of this city, we have discovered the problems, such as segregation and poverty, while also noting the positives, such as our important historical sites, like the Colored Musicians Club and the site of Teddy Roosevelt's inauguration. This fellowship has changed the way I view Buffalo, and the way I now view businesses. I now know that there are alternatives to the hierarchical structure of the typical firm, where democratic practices are not usually in place. The cooperative business structure can be successful in creating employment, community activism, and a more equitable share of a company's wealth.

From Annabel's final evaluation



IMPACT...

Annabel was a great addition to the Breadhive family this summer. A bright and personable student, she produced a very thorough and well written research paper on the local cooperative movement. While promoting knowledge about cooperatives, this research will also be valuable in assisting cooperatives apply for different grants and other development strategies.

Emily Stewart,

Breadhive Worker Cooperative Bakery

WORK HIGHLIGHTS:

- Completed an applied research study about cooperative business structures, the differences between cooperatives and typical capitalist business structures, and their benefits and drawbacks
- Interviewed stakeholders integral to the WNY cooperative movement in the past and present to chronicle the history of the cooperative economy and movement in WNY
- Presented research findings at a cooperative mixer about what aspects allow a cooperative to succeed and remain sustainable with suggestions on how to foster cooperative growth in the Buffalo area
- As a member of the Breadhive Cooperative, worked in the bakery in a variety of capacities on the front end with customers and other organizational support work
- Worked in the bakery in a variety of capacities on the front end with customers and other organizational support work



MAAME BRITWUM

LAWRENCE, KS • ILR • CLASS OF 2020

WESTERN NEW YORK LAW CENTER



The WNY Law Center is a nonprofit legal services organization of legal professionals representing low-income people in a full range of civil matters. They engage in direct representation of homeowners facing foreclosure as well as in fair lending advocacy and education. They also maintain the Online Resource Center with the Empire Justice Center.

WORK HIGHLIGHTS:

- Conducted applied research to support the creation of a Vacant Properties Registry for the City of Buffalo
- Tracked fire activity in the city of Buffalo; traveled with staff to locations of recent fires to document the condition of the properties to show link between vacant properties and a higher rate of arson or other community threats
- Provided recommendations for community involvement to address the issue
- Traveled to Albany to meet with legislators about State policies to address vacant and abandoned properties
- Presented to local elected officials, stakeholders and community members on the increased likelihood of fires in vacant and abandoned properties and how a vacant property registry would be a valuable tool to address the issue



IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

Most importantly throughout the High Road I found my own strength. I still over apologize, and I'm not the most confident person out there, but I'm getting closer to being the best version of myself that I can be. I surprised myself with how well my research project went, I surprised myself in how quickly I learned how to cook—at all, I surprised myself in how handled difficult situations. I am not perfect by any stretch of the imagination, but I think I prefer myself after learning and growing than the me before.

From Maame's reflection journal

IMPACT...

The issue of vacant and abandoned zombie foreclosures is one that has plagued Western New York for years. While the problem is widely known, the scope and scale of the problem has been hard to determine. Maame's research will help strengthen our policy advocacy to win a Vacant Properties Registry. Her thoughtful and precise work was a great fit with the Law Center!

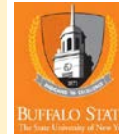
*Kate Lockhart,
WNY Law Center*



AJA CEESAY

BRUNSWICK, NJ • ILR • CLASS OF 2019

BUFFALO STATE COMMUNITY ACADEMIC CENTER



Established in 2011, the Buffalo State Community Academic Center (CAC) serves as a site where Buffalo State College faculties and administrators and the local community meet to engage for positive impacts on children, families, and the West Side of Buffalo. The center's mission is to anchor cradle-to-career educational support programming for youth on West Side of Buffalo. To align its mission and work, CAC developed three main goals: Direct educational programs to community youth and adults; Coordinate Buffalo State College engagement at community partner locations; and collaboratively develop broad-based networking initiatives.

WORK HIGHLIGHTS:

- Contributed to the Buffalo Beginnings program which supports newcomer refugee youth in building initial literacy skills during the first year of schooling
- Created a web-based training manual for volunteers and AmeriCorps members that work with the refugee youth which included gathering demographic data and researching the sources of conflict that refugees are fleeing in order to give better background
- Developed a training program for staff and volunteers which covers topics such as professionalism, cultural competency, restorative justice, and addressing race and class inequality through community work
- Conducted orientations for volunteers and new staff about CAC programs, organizational policies and tips for working with refugees and immigrants
- Staffed multilingual drop-in sessions which provide food, clothing donations, interpreters and other services to benefit CAC families



IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

I learned that Buffalo has a lot to offer. It has a unique social sector that I have not been exposed to anywhere else. The summer has strengthened my desire to work in the nonprofit field but if that isn't possible, I know I can still do good in other ways. I also learned that community engaged learning is not easy but you have to keep trying.

From Aja's final evaluation

IMPACT...

Aja's passion and expertise enabled her to not only to complete her project but also allow her to relate with the community and build the valuable relationship. She innovated CAC's training materials for Buffalo Beginnings into online version in a fun way. It is user friendly and accessible for everyone. AmeriCorps members and service-learners working with us enjoy the interface, and are able to acquire about the program and Western New York refugees demographic in a nutshell. That strengthens their working knowledge of the diverse population we worked with to deliver the impactful access to education. Aja was able to accommodate the need understanding our relationship to the local community and campus community.

*Win Min Thant,
Buffalo State Community Academic Center*



JENNY CHAN

OAKLAND GARDENS, NY • HUMAN ECOLOGY
CLASS OF 2019

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FOR GREATER BUFFALO

The Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo is a 501(c)3 public charity holding more than 750 different charitable funds, large and small, established by individuals, families, nonprofit organizations and businesses to benefit Western New York. For over 95 years, the Community Foundation has carried out its mission of "connecting people, ideas and resources to improve lives in Western New York" to achieve "a vibrant and inclusive Greater Buffalo region with opportunity for all." The Community Foundation directs resources to drive significant community change in the areas of education, equity, arts/culture and environment. Beyond grant making in these areas, the Community Foundation also acts as a community leader and convener to address specific pressing needs in our region.



IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

This summer indisputably reaffirmed my interest in the domain of health – innumerable lead ordinances and their nuances emboldened in my mind throughout the weeks. Assessing the progress made on implementing and overseeing the 2010 Task Force on the Prevention of Child Lead Poisoning's recommendations and identifying the most promising steps moving forward for local coalitions and statewide efforts to fulfill the ultimate objective of Gov. Paterson's Executive Order: the eradication of childhood lead poisoning in the State of New York, I have had the wonderful opportunity to eagerly use the skills that I have adoringly learned in the classroom as a Policy Analysis and Management Major and truly apply them in reality. I am thrilled for the future of Buffalo. I am grateful for all the people that I have met here, including those who I have lived with and those who I have engaged with on this unimaginable eight week voyage. I am inspired by their passion and their no nonsense approach to asinine apathy and I am excited for their futures that simply reek of the incredible.

From Jenny's reflection journal

IMPACT...

Jenny was an amazing addition to the Community Foundation and allowed us to assist on projects and deepen partnerships that we would not have had the capacity to do otherwise. During her appointment, she updated two NYS reports from Gov. Patterson's Lead Poisoning Prevention Task Force and added a series of policy and agency recommendations for the State to consider. These recommendations are being reviewed by Lead Poisoning Coalitions across New York State.

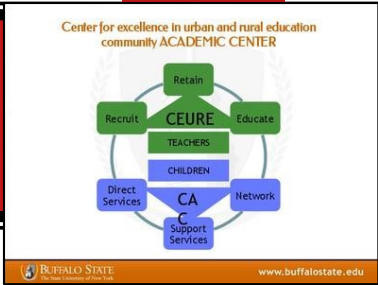
Allie Urbanski,

Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo

WORK HIGHLIGHTS:

- Reviewed and identified progress, gaps, and potential suggestions for implementing the 2010 New York State Childhood Task Force on the Prevention of Childhood Lead Poisoning recommendations through new State legislation
- Researched various childhood lead poisoning prevention initiatives in both New York State and Erie County to inform a current task force tackling this issue
- Traveled to Rochester, NY, where she presented her research to the Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning and local stakeholders
- Staffed the Racial Equity Roundtable, an initiative of the Community Foundation that includes more than 30 community leaders from public, private, nonprofits and faith institutions convened to advance racial equity and promote the change required to accelerate a shared regional prosperity





NATHANAEL CHENG

RYDAL, PA • ILR • CLASS OF 2020

BUFFALO STATE COLLEGE CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN URBAN AND RURAL EDUCATION



CEURE—the Center for Excellence in Urban and Rural Education—is committed to the enhancement of high-need urban and rural schools through the recruitment, retention, and continuing education of highly qualified teachers, as well as the support of reform efforts and research about effective schools. To support educational reform and school improvement, CEURE partners with schools, community groups, foundations, and other institutions of higher education across Western New York.



IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

This summer was amazing. The High Roads lived up to its hype. I will never forget the experiences had, memories made, friendships built. This summer I learned a lot, grew a lot...Buffalo is a cool city. I would be interested in going into this type of work in the future. This summer gave me a lot of perspective on a plethora issues that helped me grow. Working for the community, in the community, helping build others up, and taking the high road was really fulfilling work for me.

From Nathanael's journal and final evaluation



IMPACT...

Nate was a tremendous asset to the Center this summer. His work has been a great help to our efforts to engage residents in critical conversations and will be highly valuable in helping us strengthen cradle to career initiatives for this community.

*John Siskar,
Buffalo State College*



WORK HIGHLIGHTS:

- Assisted in the logistics of a leadership development course for 25 emerging community leaders including creating publicity brochures, pairing mentors with mentees, and supervising the various workshops
- Surveyed 40+ program participants and utilized data to compile a report of recommendations that were adopted by the organization
- Interviewed 30+ community members and conducted an ethnographic study on the New American community in Buffalo
- Represented Buffalo State CEURE at community meetings and coalition focused on community development of Buffalo's West Side

KAYA COLEMAN

PERLAND, TX • ARTS & SCIENCES • CLASS OF 2020

LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF WNY

The Learning Disabilities Association of WNY is a parent and client led, professionally managed organization that assists individuals in gaining as much independence as their abilities allow. LDA provides an array of supports to individuals with learning disabilities, neurological impairments and other such disabilities. LDA programming includes service coordination (case management), leisure skill building, job coaching, residential services, and an art studio and gallery.



WORK HIGHLIGHTS:

- Served as a member of the Educational Advocacy Department, assisting parents and families in the urban school district with issues related to special education rights and responsibilities.
- Developed materials for transition aged (14-21 years old) students focusing on student involvement and self-advocacy in creating Individualized Education Plans and meeting with case managers
- Evaluated effectiveness of materials by engaging students and gaining their input about what should be altered for greater effectiveness in the future
- Created outreach strategies to canvass neighborhoods in order to reach families in need of services
- Hosted trainings and other events for families about self-advocacy strategies and LDA services
- Expanded LDA's social media platform to increase access and provide multiple entry points to programming



IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

I have become stronger, more courageous, and more open-minded on the High Road, and I know that these skills will be useful not only in my future internships but for the rest of my life. It is so important to check and understand our own privilege while also using our positions in life to help bring those around us up. Being in Buffalo, and being able to see the needs and issues of African-Americans and other minorities in the community, has opened my eyes even further. Equity is a goal that everyone should be working towards, and I have gotten the opportunity to do so in the time that I have been here.

From Kaya's final evaluation

IMPACT...

Kaya exceeded our expectations. The work we did together was exactly what we planned to do and more. She is incredibly hard-working, courageous, curious and very ambitious. Her work is awesome and very much needed. I will be sharing photos and updates with her as to how her work has been used over time and how it has improved the quality of life for our students.

*Phylicia Brown,
Learning Disabilities Association of WNY*





GIRISH JAYANT

BROOKLYN, NY • CALS • CLASS OF 2019

GRASSROOTS GARDENS



Grassroots Gardens of Buffalo is an independent 501 (c) 3 organization devoted to helping people create and sustain community gardens on vacant, city-owned lots in Buffalo. Grassroots Gardens enables community-led efforts to revitalize the city and enhance quality of life through creation and maintenance of community gardens that beautify blocks, grow healthy food, and strengthen neighborhood spirit.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

Participating in this program has greatly encouraged me to get more politically involved. I don't think I will ever run for office (though my thoughts may change) but I'm much more willing to contact my local representatives about issues important to me. Finally, I have learned that community engaged service learning is an incredibly powerful tool for actually developing solutions to problems your city faces. Getting to work with Grassroots Gardens and walk around the city let me see the vacant housing problem Buffalo faces first hand and all the different ways community and school gardens can help solve it while improving other aspects of community life. I would never have truly learned as much in a classroom. So even though grassroots level activism is an unpredictable and sometimes unreliable process, when it does get results, they can be quite beautiful.

From Girish's final evaluation

IMPACT...

When the Harvest of the Month cooking guide is adopted by the school system it will have an impact on all students who receive their meals. It will also help connect New Americans culturally to the school systems by providing meals prepared in a familiar way.

*Greg Wilder,
Grassroots Gardens*



WORK HIGHLIGHTS:

- Researched and created a cookbook for the crop of the week program of the Buffalo Public Schools that is both nutritious by encouraging healthy eating habits and culturally inclusive recognizing Buffalo's newest community members
- Developed a questionnaire for teachers to provide feedback and recommendations on the crop of the week program
- Represented Grassroots Gardens in a working group for Buffalo's Farm to School program linking schools with local farms
- Researched best practices from other community garden organizations and Farm to School initiatives across the country
- Created a toolkit of curriculum based on the Farm to School policy for leaders of school gardens to use

EMILY KING

CHAGRIN FALLS, OH • ILR • CLASS OF 2020

FOOD BANK OF WESTERN NEW YORK

The Food Bank of Western New York was founded in 1979, after a group of religious and community leaders came together to develop an effective and comprehensive way to fight hunger in the region. Today, the organization assists as many as 135,000 individuals in any given month through its 341 member agencies, including food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, youth programs, group homes and senior centers.



WORK HIGHLIGHTS:

- Analyzed current agency capacity of 21 member agencies through on-site visits and identified issues inhibiting food distribution
 - Created a report based on a survey analyzing of current agency capacity. The report projected potential increase of distribution and identified issues that inhibited the organization's efforts to increase distribution to those in need in their communities
 - Presented findings to the Food Bank of WNY's Agency Services Committee, Physical Systems Committee and Board Members
 - Consulted on the successful implementation of her recommendations to the member agencies
 - Secured central office approval to pursue grant funding for storage equipment and to decentralize certain field operating decisions
- Supervisor quote



IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

Throughout my time at the Food Bank, I overcame my fear of phone calls (telephonophobia is real) via making over 50 calls, created a site visit evaluation sheet, visited 21 pantries in the counties of Erie and Niagara, pioneered a spreadsheet to compile such data and crafted a presentation to explain my findings. But beyond the tangible, I witnessed the importance of truly believing in the cause you work or volunteer for. Because without that, many lack the incentive to go above and beyond and in the non-profit sector it is those that go above and beyond that make the most difference. We all have the capacity to do so. I leave Buffalo a mini expert in the Food Bank business, a sous chef, a better runner, a more socially aware person, a slightly improved Avalon player, a Buffalo sports fan (Browns = Bills at this point) and most of all, a motivated person to always seek to take the High Road in business and in life.

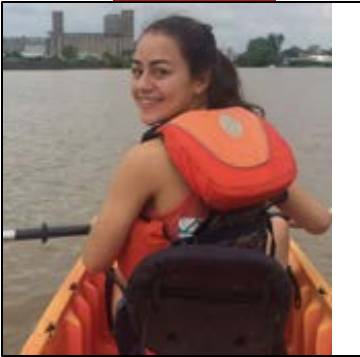
From Emily's blog and reflection journal

IMPACT...

Our organization benefitted greatly from this opportunity. The impact of this project is going to be implemented throughout our network. Emily always came prepared, stayed on point, was thoroughly engaged with Food Bank staff, member agencies and board members, is extremely motivated, and mature. Emily will be a success at whatever path she chooses.

*Carol Palumbo,
Food Bank of WNY*





IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

I joined the High Road Program for many of the same professional reasons as anyone else here: to gain job experience, to explore the NGO sector of the workforce, to further discover my career interests, etc. But I also came to Buffalo looking for answers, to explore a side to society that I had never been previously exposed to for my own personal development. I wanted to be positively uncomfortable and to reflect on why I was uncomfortable in the first place. Thank you to everyone for making this summer so memorable. I've learned a lot while being here. I have a better sense of what social justice truly means and how to be a successful advocate for my community. No matter what sector I go into, I'm going to apply what I learned here.

From Aimee's blog and reflection journal

IMPACT...

Amy's creativity and research ability was a true asset to the organization. She was instrumental in helping us complete long planned projects.

*Brian Brown-Cashdollar,
Western New York Council on Occupational
Safety & Health Worker Center*

AIMEE LE FRANCE

SKANEATELES, NY • ILR • CLASS OF 2020

WESTERN NEW YORK COUNCIL ON OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY & HEALTH WORKER CENTER



WNYCOSH is a coalition of labor and medical/legal/technical experts committed to eliminating safety and health hazards in the workplace. The WNYCOSH Worker Center benefits workers, especially low-wage workers-immigrant, refugee, temporary workers, and native-born, to learn about their rights and organize fellow workers to improve workplace conditions. The ultimate goal of the WNYCOSH Worker Center is to create a programmatic space to foster an informed, engaged membership advocating for positive change in their workplaces and workplaces, throughout WNY. Worker Center components include Outreach, Services, Education and Advocacy.

WORK HIGHLIGHTS:

- Supported a campaign to reach, assist and empower workers in the nail salon industry
- Conducted outreach to targeted communities to educate workers on workplace safety and health issues and to promote Worker Center resources
- Created a Family Resource Guide for families who recently lost a loved one to a work related accident. The guide outlines New York State compensation death benefits, a sample FOIA, and introduces readers to the support WNYCOSH can provide.
- Planned and conducted Worker Center summer leadership training
- Organized incoming calls to the Worker Center's 10 language hotline

LEV LASCU

EAST AMHERST, NY • ILR • CLASS OF 2020

ARTS SERVICES INITIATIVE OF WESTERN NY

Arts Services Initiative of Western New York (ASI) promotes the cultural sector's vital role in economic development and the community through capacity building, collaboration, and advocacy for arts organizations in Erie, Niagara, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, and Allegany Counties.



WORK HIGHLIGHTS:

- Managed ASI's program, Arts Access, which gives Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients free tickets to arts and cultural venues throughout the region
- Updated database with current contact information of Arts Access program members. Enhanced engagement efforts by connecting with dormant partners and strengthening communication with active participants
- Expanded program by reaching out to potential partner organizations and recruited them to participate
- Conducted site visits for targeted outreach to service agencies to reach new constituents and increase enrollment of SNAP recipients



IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

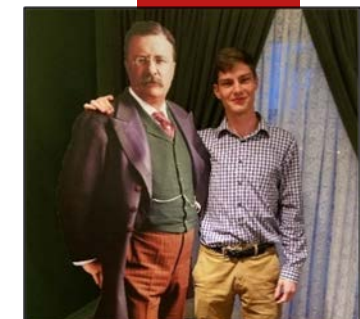
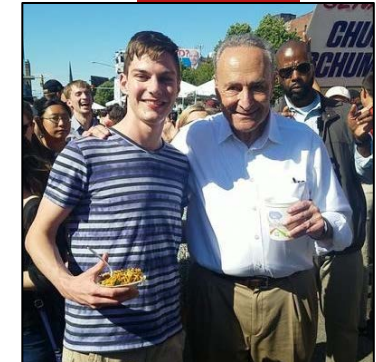
I can't think of a better way to have spent my summer. I got to learn about my hometown through service work and field trips. I had great mentors at ASI and learned a lot from the other fellows as well. I would like to be involved in something like ASI in the future, either as an associate, board member or volunteer. I think the aspect of ASI that I found most interesting was the leadership. I really enjoyed seeing how the board made decisions for the nonprofit and discussed strategy for expanding its reach and influence while increasing its funding. This helped me realize that nonprofits do share many of the goals of businesses and have to consider many of the things that businesses focus on.

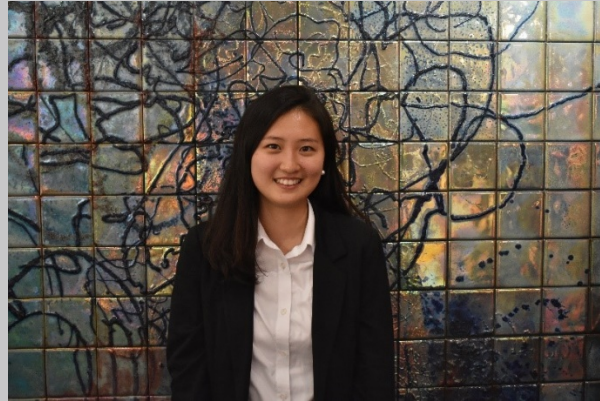
From Lev's reflection journal

IMPACT...

Lev was an asset to our team this summer. He was flexible with tasks, he produced high quality work and provided insight and ideas that were utilized. He has a great attitude and was a team player.

*Parrish Gibbons-Herzog,
Arts Services Initiative of Western New York*





MARGARET LEE

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA • ILR • CLASS OF 2020

WESTMINSTER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE



WEDI empowers economically disadvantaged people in Buffalo, NY, with a primary focus on the West Side community. WEDI reduces barriers to success and opportunity through economic development, community building, and education. The West Side Bazaar, a WEDI initiative started in 2011, is an international market place and business incubator, where business vendors from around the world sell international cuisines and gifts.



IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

I learned that Buffalo is a unique city in every sense – it is a vibrant community with polar opposites that are seeking to come together as one under a common agenda of social innovation. I learned that I would really like to become involved in the social sector via public service, and that it is possible to do so even as a financial institution. I truly enjoyed being with other Cornell students at Buffalo. I don't think that I would have been able to fully enjoy the fellowship experience if I didn't have my peers.

From Margaret's final evaluation

IMPACT...

Margaret spoke to over 40 small business owners about WEDI's services and worked independently on business plans with two WEDI clients. She created an MWBE certification guide that will be available to all future WEDI clients, as well as updated our Community Resources and Referrals Guide for our all clients, but specifically those who are over 50 years old.

*Bryana DiFonzo,
Westminster Economic Development Initiative*



WORK HIGHLIGHTS:

- Participated in a variety of direct, grassroots economic development work through WEDI's Economic Development program, including business incubation with its West Side Bazaar vendors and microloan clients
- Formulated business plans and guided small business entrepreneurs in restaurant, retail, transportation fields
- Conducted door-to-door community outreach to expand microloan clientele among refugee business owners by researching potential clients and marketing beneficial loan products
- Outlined issues in human resource policies through planning and organizing staff retreat and reporting outcomes
- Created guides for MWBE certification, loan management, community resources and referrals for WEDI clients

MARTHA MENDY

ROCHESTER, NY • ILR • CLASS OF 2019

JERICO ROAD COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

Jericho Road Community Health Center provides a culturally sensitive medical home, especially for refugee and low-income community members, facilitating wellness and self-sufficiency by addressing health, education, economic and spiritual barriers.



WORK HIGHLIGHTS:

- Was a member of the English Second Language (ESL) initiative where she taught daily ESL and citizenship classes to a diverse array of students from Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa
- Developed a learning module that included a series of lesson plans, visuals, and instructions for taking a field trip using public transportation to a community location
- Also taught modules on communication in situations regarding housing, health and education to empower students to advocate for themselves and successfully adjust to life in the United States
- Planned and carried out field trips with the students to a variety of Buffalo landmarks and educational institutions



IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

I have learned that Buffalo is still a growing city with a lot of untapped resources. Working in Buffalo this summer also convinced me that I'm in the right school, pursuing the right career. I also learned that community engaged service learning is one of the most direct means to apply theory. My interaction with other fellows also contributed to the great summer I had in Buffalo because it was my first time living and dining in a house with people from different cultures and backgrounds. Our interaction built new characters in me that I never planned or thought of. I'm also glad that the experience taught me more about myself.

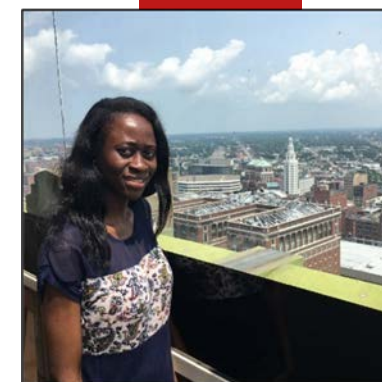
From Martha's final evaluation

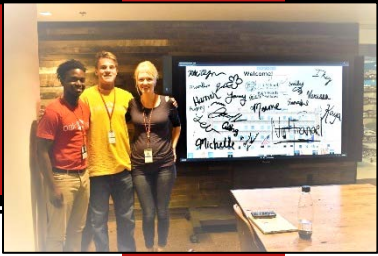
IMPACT...

Martha was an incredible addition to our team this summer. She was a patient and through teacher who always went above and beyond to help her students succeed. Martha is true team player and we will miss her spirit and smile in the office.

Anna Matejova,

Jericho Road Community Health Center





IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

I learned that for all its progress Buffalo has a lot more work to do. On the surface the city is starting to look better, but not everyone reaps those benefits. For my career path I still want to go to law school so I will take away a lot from this experience. I learned that community engagement can be done by for profit enterprises and that they make an enormous impact especially with regards to sustainability. Economic development and community development can be done concurrently.

From David's final evaluation

IMPACT...

We are so grateful for David's input and hard work. He was a great team member who was eager to contribute in any way he could. His work will be highly valuable in securing Bak USA's certification as a Benefit Corporation.

*Carly Battin,
Bak USA*

DAVID MILLAR

BUFFALO, NY • HUMAN ECOLOGY • CLASS OF 2020



BAK USA

Bak USA is a social enterprise that seeks to further universal education, employment, and connectivity by producing affordable tablets and smartphones. Bak USA is nurturing vibrant communities in Buffalo, NY by employing willing, friendly people who are looking for a supportive environment to start a new career. BAK USA assembles high-tech tablet PCs by hand in Buffalo for educational use all over the world. Its products are made by people, for people. The company seeks to bridge educational gaps around the world by providing reliable, user-friendly instruments to learn at an affordable price. Bak USA sells tools, not gadgets.

WORK HIGHLIGHTS:

- To further the company's social mission, developed documentation and systems to measure impact in areas such as supplier responsibility, sustainability, workers' rights to align with Benefit Corporation (B Corp) standards
- Reviewed the list of credentials that the company needs to meet to receive B Corp certification and conducted the recommended assessment from the governing with policy recommendations for a successful application
- Met with company leadership about implementing the policy recommendations and the process to secure B Corp certification
- Developed a Supplier Code of Conduct for the company including fair labor practices, environmental policies, and good business ethics
- Created and distributed three surveys about employee satisfaction around volunteering, public transportation and child care

CUONG PHAM

HANOI, VIETNAM • ILR • CLASS OF 2020

BUFFALO CENTER FOR ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY (BCAT)

The mission of the Buffalo Center for Arts & Technology (BCAT), as part of Buffalo's economic revitalization, is twofold: 1. To keep youth in school through high school completion so they are able to take advantage of the post-secondary opportunities the "Say Yes" scholarship program makes available to them by offering high-quality and high-tech arts instruction and studio space. 2. To assist unemployed or underemployed adults in securing jobs with wages sufficient to support a family through NYS Education Department-approved training programs that will lead to jobs in the healthcare industry.



WORK HIGHLIGHTS:

- Led classes for BCAT's Youth Arts and Adult Workforce Programs in collaboration with teaching artists
- Participated in the Youth-led Participatory Action Research program to actively engage Buffalo youth of color in research on social determinants of health equity to make recommendations to Buffalo's citywide strategy and programmatic efforts to improve education and wellness outcomes
- Conducted research on employment and workforce development of minorities in Buffalo using demographic data of BCAT alumni and compiled a report on the feasibility of BCAT's programs
- Compiled database of foundations and grants to pursue funding for the Youth Media Institute program



IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

This summer, I got to see many sides of Buffalo as a city that is growing. On one hand, I got to see the many issues that it still faces, but on the other hand I also got to see and work closely with local movements and efforts fighting for change. Friday discussions were amazing because they allowed me to meet community leaders actively fighting for change. This has helped me gain a lot of insight and experience in working in the social sector as a possible career path. I think community engaged service learning provided me with a very unique experience of working directly within the community and with the people who are directly affected by the issues you're dealing with.

From Cuong's final evaluation

IMPACT...

Cuong did a great job at managing his time, keeping professional boundaries with the youth (some of which were in his peer group!), being inquisitive about our model, and learning as much as he could from the experience. Being a small organization, we tend to lean on each other for a lot, he fit right into the culture of helping and asking for help when needed. Cuong was amazingly empathetic and involved when it came to our youth.

Whitney Smith,

Buffalo Center for Arts and Technology





VANESSA ROGA

BELMORE, NY • ILR • CLASS OF 2020



IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

It's almost as if I wasn't ready to leave Buffalo (my suitcase wasn't, they had to ship it out on the next flight), after a wonderful summer of growth and learning. I feel as though it's strange that I spent so much time in a city and learned so much about its issues and burgeoning successes only to leave. I'm sure I'll be following every new brief PPG puts out, every new strike the ALF goes on, and the after interview day I'll definitely be following some of those elections. It's strange, but I feel as though putting myself in a new and unfamiliar environment this summer helped me to discover new things about who I am and what I value. Buffalo has a special place in my heart even if I won't see it again for a while. While I thought it almost silly at first, I really do understand the Buffalove. This summer has been instrumental in learning about my interests and how I can turn them into a career. I learned how interested I am in a socially-minded career, working for the greater good. I also learned about the importance of engaging with the community around development issues so that its progress doesn't leave some people behind.

From Vanessa's reflection journal and final evaluation

IMPACT...

Vanessa was a great fellow for us. She fit right into our work and as part of our team. Vanessa's work will help us better understand our members and influence our advocacy priorities.

Richard Lipsitz,

Western New York Area Labor Federation, AFL-CIO

WNY AREA LABOR FEDERATION AFL-CIO



The WNY Area Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, includes five Central Labor Councils (CLCs): the Buffalo Labor Council representing Erie County; the Niagara/Orleans Labor Council representing all of Niagara County and the western part of Orleans County; and the Dunkirk, Jamestown, and Cattaraugus/Allegany Labor Councils representing the counties in the Southern Tier. The WNYALF represents over 130,000 members from all walks of life and occupations. It seeks to strengthen connections with its affiliates and better understand the individuals comprising the organized workforce of the region. Its mission is to improve the lives and increase the power of working families, bring fairness and dignity to the workplace and secure social equality.

WORK HIGHLIGHTS:

- Conducted an original survey of the labor federation's 138 affiliated unions to compile a demographic profile of union members in WNY, including age and racial and gender make-up
- Created and distributed survey tool to capture demographic data of affiliates
- Produced a written report analyzing the survey results to all them to accessible to the union movement and to the general public
- Helped plan and execute the annual "Interview Day" where local candidates for elected office meet with labor representatives and pitch their platforms for potential endorsement
- Participated in the regular field work of the ALF attending a number of labor meetings and other coalitions



KATHERINE RYAN

BUFFALO, NY • ILR • CLASS OF 2019

SAY YES BUFFALO

Say Yes Buffalo is a landmark partnership that aims to provide a powerful engine for long-term economic development through radically improving the life course of public school students in the City of Buffalo. To do this, the Say Yes Buffalo partnership combines a comprehensive K-12 support system with the incentive of locally funded postsecondary tuition scholarships to remove the barriers (financial, academic, social and health) to college access and success for youth in the City of Buffalo.



WORK HIGHLIGHTS:

- Developed a tracking database for Say Yes alumni and made contact with a significant number of students to engage them and strengthen the organization's network
- Developed a mentorship program matching Say Yes alumni with the current cohort that will matriculate this fall. The program will be sustained by Say Yes staff
- Helped coordinate and led a panel discussion on college readiness for the Say Yes Scholar Kick Off
- Created and implemented social media fundraising and awareness campaigns targeted at a youth and small donors
- Successfully wrote a grant proposal for furthering the mission of Say Yes Buffalo
- Created and implemented social media fundraising and awareness campaigns



IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

This summer I have seen the highs and the lows of my city; booming revitalization directly contrasts the neighborhoods left behind, struggling to combat poverty and segregation. Although I've grown up here observing this segregation, both socioeconomic and racial, my whole life, this summer feels different. Maybe it was my time away from Buffalo, living at Cornell, but I have returned with fresh eyes, and now often find myself overwhelmed by the problems of the city, feeling like there's not enough time for me to possibly make a difference. Then I remember why we are here, as a group, working to experiment with ideas directly in the community. Taking the skills that we have learned at Cornell, and using them to make something better.

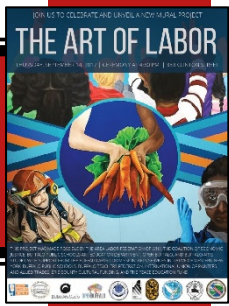
From Kate's reflection journal

IMPACT...

Not only did the on-campus class and program preparation provide Kate with a strong foundation, she is a Say yes scholar, which provided her with additional insight to our work. Kate's work helped to support our Say Yes scholars, of which there are over 4,000, plus their families, through her work on our website, fundraising campaign, and Alumni network concept.

*Emily Wyckoff,
Say Yes Buffalo*





IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

This summer I learned so much more about Buffalo’s recent revitalization efforts. Especially since I live outside the city, there were some projects I was not familiar with that High Road introduced me too. Seeing the role of the arts in combatting issues such as gentrification was really interesting. I also learned more about community engaged learning, something that I had never been familiar with. I really loved how this kind of learning involves a hands on approach that is often not as common in traditional educational institutions.”

From Audrey’s final evaluation

IMPACT...

Audrey was professional, organized and thorough. Her database project reflected these qualities. Buffalo Arts Studio will utilize her research as we continue to advocate for increased public art and inclusion of diverse communities in creating the installations.

*Shirley Verrico,
Buffalo Arts Studio*

AUDREY SIA-ASAMOAH

EAST AMHERST, NY • ILR • CLASS OF 2020

BUFFALO ARTS STUDIO



Buffalo Arts Studio

Buffalo Arts Studio is a not-for-profit arts organization whose mission is to provide affordable studio space and regular public exposure for regional, national, and international artists through exhibitions, and to enrich the community with art classes, mural programs, and public art. Exhibitions, public art projects, and classes help the studio serve as a cultural center.

WORK HIGHLIGHTS:

- Created a database of public art installations in Western New York with an emphasis on murals
- Worked on a collaborative public mural project, *The Art of Labor*, and coordinated stakeholders including Area Labor Federation of WNY, the Coalition for Economic Justice, Buffalo Public Schools Art Education Department and Open Buffalo
- Supported *Public Art: Training Youth to Create Art for Communities*, a class aiming to engage BAS students’ interest in public art and assisting in the painting the *Art of Labor* Mural
- Shadowed leadership with the John R. Oishei foundation to learn about philanthropy and community development
- Supported daily operations of the gallery including managing exhibits, tours, administrative support and communications

HANNAH SOSENKO

NORTH TONAWNDA, NY • ILR • CLASS OF 2019

CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION OF ERIE COUNTY

Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) is a key outreach system of Cornell University with a strong public mission and an extensive local presence that is responsive to the needs in New York communities. CCE is a participant in the nationwide network of Cooperative Extension programs, which began in 1914 as a means of applying land-grant university research in understandable and useful ways to farmers and rural families. The CCE educational system enables people to improve their lives and communities through partnerships that put experience and research knowledge to work.



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Erie County

WORK HIGHLIGHTS:

- Worked with the urban 4-H initiative on a summer youth development program, offering internships and opportunities for high school students to participate in community based projects
- Researched benefits and barriers to participation of summer youth employment programs and after school programs and wrote a policy brief, describing findings and providing recommendations
- Created a report of organizations across the county that have youth employment programs and descriptions of their goals, funding sources, and work tasks and/or curricula used



IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

I've learned taking the "high road" can be tough, but it's extremely rewarding (I know, super cheesy but super true). And this applies to both non-profit work and interactions with people too. I've really learned the importance of kindness and being cognizant of the things I say and how they may impact someone of a different background who has had different experiences than I have. It also is not easy to devote your career to a project that you may never see through to the end, or that may not achieve the full progress desired. While Buffalo is not going to change dramatically overnight, so much progress has been made by the various organizations we all worked with and got to hear from on Fridays. This progress, even if it may seem insignificant to some, is necessary for creating a better Buffalo.

From Hannah's blog post

IMPACT...

Hannah was really on top of things. She helped plan the whole summer youth program! She also prepared other materials that were a significant contribution to our work supporting positive youth development programming in Buffalo and across Erie County

Sara Jablonski,

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County





RACHEL WHALEN

WILLIAMSVILLE, NY • ARTS & SCIENCES
CLASS OF 2019

YOUNG AUDIENCES OF WESTERN NEW YORK

Young Audiences (YAWNY) is a dynamic and growing provider of arts learning opportunities, providing services within eight counties of Western New York. Its mission is to make the visual, performing, and literary arts a part of young people's lives in order to enhance their development as creative and productive human beings. Over the years, YAWNY has demonstrated expertise in helping young people develop the essential skills—from collaborative engagement and leadership to critical thinking and communication—necessary for the 21st century workplace.



IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

The High Roads experience will never just be 'something I did one summer.' It has sparked interests and skills I never knew I had, and it has kick-started a new drive in me. I have my sights set on working in communities as rich as this one, and though they may not always be in Buffalo nor in the public sector nor even in arts or education (though I am very closely attached to every one of those communities), I dearly hope they are all as enriching. I cannot express the depth of my appreciation for the experiences I had and the people I interacted with, and I will certainly carry this with me for the rest of my life. To my dear Buffalo, always my home and now my community, my gratitude is endless.

From Rachel's final evaluation

IMPACT...

Rachel did phenomenal work with the M@Re and for ArtWorks programs. She was a wonderful mentor for our students, using her creativity and patience to really bring out the best in the youth. Rachel is an exceptional young person and it was a privilege to have her as part of the Young Audiences team this summer.

*Naomi Pabon-Figueroa,
Young Audiences of WNY*

WORK HIGHLIGHTS:

- Taught in the ArtWorks program, a paid youth apprenticeship program in the arts for high school students ages 14-18 who reside in the City of Buffalo. The youth work in teams to flex their creative muscles and learn essential career skills while producing works of art
- Researched and conducted interviews to create an informal strategic plan for sustaining and growing the ArtWorks program
- Created a visual art project in the form of a map to highlight the local region and places that students live, play and work
- Developed curriculum for the M@RE program which focuses on reducing recidivism by youth at the Erie County Youth Detention Center or somehow involved with the criminal justice system



JOHN YOON

ITHACA, NY • ARTS & SCIENCES • CLASS OF 2020

COMMUNITY ACTION ORGANIZATION OF WNY

The mission of the Community Action Organization of Erie County is to promote opportunities for low-income individuals, families, and communities to achieve and sustain self-sufficiency through advocacy, partnerships, access to services, and low-to-moderate income housing developments. The CAO serves more than 30,000 individuals annually in service ranging from Head Start programs, housing and neighborhood development programs, to its Youth Services Network that includes a number of programs and targeted mentoring initiatives.



WORK HIGHLIGHTS:

- Served as a member of the Employment and Training Division
- Conducted academic and field research on causes of unemployment among impoverished individuals of Buffalo culminating in a 45-page study
- Analyzed data for 1000+ clients of CAO's Employment and Training Division, which revealed persistent racial and age-based employment discrimination and increasing spatial and skills mismatch
- Developed organizational model and strategic plan to increase quality of comprehensive career development service delivery for one of the largest social service agencies in Western New York
- Followed federal guidelines to create and implement documentation workflow for division



IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

The High Road Fellowship made this summer the most powerful I've had yet. I found such a smart and passionate group of friends who I am so lucky to have shared time, thoughts, struggles, and dreams with together. I met with people carrying immense burdens of despair, neglect, trauma, and experiences I could never fully come to understand, who made me become ever more aware of my privileges and the need to use it for those for whom those privileges are systemically unattainable. I had the opportunity to do something I really believed in — helping people make a transition from joblessness, homelessness, and shame to self-sufficient wage earning and living meaningful lives.

From John's blog post

IMPACT...

John is an incredible young man. He showed tremendous maturity and provided valuable input that will contribute to our organizational success. His command of logic, analysis, and other vital skills were an asset in every assignment he tackled.

*Nicole Stewart,
Community Action Organization of WNY*



GROUP	PERSON	FAMILY	GENDER	AGES	ETHNICITY
1	130	130	130	130	95
2	130	130	130	130	95
3	130	130	130	130	95
4	130	130	130	130	95
5	130	130	130	130	95
6	130	130	130	130	95
7	130	130	130	130	95
8	130	130	130	130	95
9	130	130	130	130	95
10	130	130	130	130	95
11	130	130	130	130	95
12	130	130	130	130	95
13	130	130	130	130	95
14	130	130	130	130	95
15	130	130	130	130	95
16	130	130	130	130	95
17	130	130	130	130	95
18	130	130	130	130	95
19	130	130	130	130	95
20	130	130	130	130	95
21	130	130	130	130	95





MICHELLE ZHAO

DIX HILLS, NY • ILR • CLASS OF 2019

PARTNERSHIP FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD



PARTNERSHIP
FOR THE
PUBLIC GOOD

Partnership for the Public Good is a community-based think tank that builds a more just, sustainable, and culturally vibrant Buffalo Niagara through action-oriented research, policy development, and citizen engagement. We see a revitalized Buffalo in which the non-profit community and citizens have a stronger voice in public policy and are better able to promote the public good. We see a community building on assets such as diversity, historic neighborhoods, and natural resources, making progress on problems such as poverty, inequality, and pollution, and finding solutions that bring greater accountability and democracy to local government.



IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

Buffalo is a promising city to live and work in, and there is certainly a strong culture of community activism I have not so readily encountered in other communities I've engaged with. The summer has made me more cognizant of grassroots campaigns and the different levels of engagement community involvement can take on. Service-learning with a rigorous educational curriculum as opposed to volunteerism is, by far, more effective and impactful in its ability to call the individual participant to reflect upon their experiences. I understand municipal politics and nonprofit organizations far more now, and would very much like to pursue a public sector career path in the future.

From Michelle's final evaluation

IMPACT...

Michelle met and surpassed all our expectation as a High Road fellow this summer. Not only is she highly adept at research and writing, but her curiosity, personality and sense of humor brought a much-appreciated lightness to the office. Her report on the waterfront development will be an important model as we work to promote equitable development strategies across the city. My only regret is that Michelle didn't stay longer!

*Sarah Wooton,
Partnership for the Public Good*



WORK HIGHLIGHTS:

- Wrote a narrative on the history of the campaign to develop Buffalo's waterfront. Interviewed a number of organizers, researchers, public officials, community activists and developers about the implementation of the High Road Principles Agreement for CanalSide which is now published on Buffalo Commons, a digital library of Buffalo-focused research
- Participated in the Buffalo Transit Riders United grassroots advocacy day in Albany to lobby State legislators for increased public transit funding, enhanced routes and rider representation on the transit authority board
- Updated Buffalo Brief publications that provide a snapshot of information about Buffalo demographics with regard to education, poverty, immigration, Housing, and Racial Disparities

FACULTY AND STAFF PROFILES



LOU JEAN FLERON

HIGH ROAD FELLOWSHIP DIRECTOR

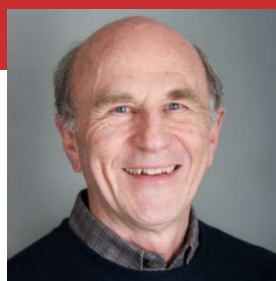
Now ILR emeritus, Lou Jean directs the High Road program. A Cornell ILR Extension faculty member since 1977, her research and teaching areas are public economic policy, industry and community development, and labor management relations. She served as director of ILR Western Region and is the author of studies on regional economic development, including *Champions @ Work: Employment, Workplace Practices and Labor-Management Relations in Western New York*, and *Buffalo Child Care Means Business*. Prior to working at ILR, she taught political science at SUNY Buffalo and the University of Kentucky. Lou Jean was chair of Buffalo Living Wage Commission from 2003 to 2010 and co-founded the Partnership for the Public Good which she now serves as chair of the board.



MEGAN CONNELLY

DIRECTOR OF HIGH ROAD POLICY AND ENGAGED LEARNING

An attorney with years of policy advocacy experience, Megan joined Cornell in 2011 where she cultivates civically engaged and socially responsible students while supporting community-engaged learning and research. Prior to her role as Director of High Road Policy and Engaged Learning she held concurrent positions as the Associate Director of the High Road Fellowships and Director of Policy Advancement at Partnership for the Public Good. Admitted to practice in New York, Megan is a graduate of the University at Buffalo Law School. She previously worked at Neighborhood Legal Services in Buffalo, at the Youth Justice Project in South Bend, Indiana, and for the University at Buffalo's Office of Civic Engagement and the Regional Institute. She believes that her own service experiences as an undergraduate at the University of Notre Dame helped to shape her values, interests and ultimately, her career path and she likes to provide similar transformative opportunities for students to engage with and learn from the community.



RON APPLGATE

LECTURER, ILR SCHOOL CORNELL UNIVERSITY

An economic and labor historian, Ron is a lecturer at Cornell ILR in the Department of Labor Relations, Law and History. In addition to the foundational course in U.S labor history, Ron teaches courses on the history of U.S. economic development and contemporary innovations in community-based development. His research interest in the theory and practice of economic development, with a particular emphasis on collective action to establish inclusive governance and generate equitable outcomes, is rooted in prior work experience: coordinating community development programs for the Coalition for a Better Acre (Lowell, Massachusetts) and the Over-the-Rhine Housing Network (Cincinnati, Ohio). In his current capacity as the faculty advisor to ILR's High Road Fellowship program, Ron has collaborated with ILR faculty in Buffalo to create courses designed to envelop students' participation in engaged learning: both preparing students for their community immersion and deepening their critical reflections after their experience.



DIANE BURTON

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, ILR SCHOOL CORNELL UNIVERSITY

Diane Burton is a faculty member in the ILR School at Cornell University and currently serves as the Provost's Fellow for Public Engagement. Her primary appointment is in human resources studies with courtesy appointments in organizational behavior and sociology. Prior to joining the Cornell faculty in 2009, she was a faculty member at the MIT Sloan School of Management. She started her academic career at the Harvard Business School teaching leadership and organizational behavior. She earned her PhD in Sociology at Stanford University and served as a lecturer and researcher in organizational behavior and human resources management at the Stanford Graduate School of Business. Diane is an organizational sociologist interested in innovation and entrepreneurship, and has extensive experience in teaching by the case method. Her primary research is a major study of high-tech start-ups in Silicon Valley including the study of entrepreneurial teams and executive careers. More recently she has been studying R&D teams and leadership in the non-profit sector and employment practices in law firms.

MARYA BESHAROV

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, ILR SCHOOL CORNELL UNIVERSITY

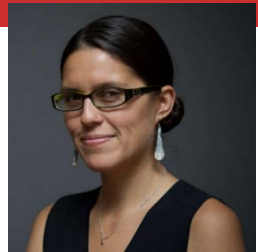
Marya Besharov is an Associate Professor of Organizational Behavior at the ILR School at Cornell University. An organizational theorist with a background in organizational sociology, Marya studies how organizations and their leaders navigate competing goals. Much of her research focuses on social-business hybrid organizations such as social enterprises and mission-driven businesses that combine social and commercial goals. Her work has been published in journals such as *Academy of Management Journal*, *Academy of Management Review*, *Business Ethics Quarterly*, *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, *Research in Organizational Behavior*, *Research in the Sociology of Organizations*, and *Industrial and Corporate Change*. Marya currently serves on the editorial boards of the *Academy of Management Journal*, *Academy of Management Review*, and *Administrative Science Quarterly*. She received a BA in Social Studies, an MA in Sociology, and a PhD in Organizational Behavior from Harvard University. She also holds an MBA from Stanford. Prior to her academic career, Marya worked as a researcher and consultant in the health care field.



SHANNON GLEESON

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, ILR SCHOOL CORNELL UNIVERSITY

Shannon Gleeson earned her Ph.D. in Sociology and Demography from the University of California, Berkeley in 2008. She joined the faculty of the Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations in Fall 2014, after six years in the Latin American & Latino Studies Department at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Her research focuses on the experiences of low-wage workers, the role of immigrant documentation status, and legal mobilization. She has also conducted research on immigrant civic engagement and the bureaucratic processes of labor standards enforcement. She is currently working on a book that examines the promises and failures of U.S. labor and employment law, the challenges low-wage workers face when they come forward to file a claim, and their experiences in fighting for justice. Her previous books include *Precarious Claims: The Promise and Failure of Workplace Protections in the United States* (University of California Press, 2016), *The Nation and Its Peoples: Citizens, Denizens, Migrants* (Routledge, 2014, edited with John Park), and *Conflicting Commitments: The Politics of Enforcing Immigrant Worker Rights in San Jose and Houston* (Cornell University Press, 2012).



SAM MAGAVERN

ADJUNCT FACULTY, ILR SCHOOL CORNELL UNIVERSITY

Sam is adjunct faculty of Cornell ILR, and also teaches at the University at Buffalo Law School. He joined the clinical law faculty in 2007 after a year as compliance coordinator for the City of Buffalo Living Wage Commission. His classes focus on the policy aspects of affordable housing and community economic development and offer students experience in action-oriented research and policy advocacy. A graduate of Harvard University and UCLA Law School, he practiced law with the Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis before returning to Buffalo in 2004. Sam currently serves as pro bono attorney for the City of Buffalo Living Wage Commission and as executive director of partnership for the Public Good which he co-founded. He has chaired the boards of several non-profits, including an inner city family service provider, a ballet school, and a land conservancy. He hosts a weekly radio show, the Public Good, on WUFO AM 1080. Sam has published many works, ranging from scholarly articles to poetry, including a nonfiction book, *Primo Levi's Universe* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), and a movie, *The Last Word* (Firelight Films, 2004). He has been the lead author on many policy reports for Partnership for the Public Good, including *Missing the Target: How Economic Development Programs Fail Buffalo's Most Challenged Neighborhoods*; *The Niagara River Greenway: Fulfilling the Promise*; *Greening Buffalo: What Local Governments Can Do*; and *Generating Waste: Problems with NYPA and the IDAs and How to Solve Them*.



CURRICULAR & CAREER CONNECTIONS

PRE-COURSE

During the spring semester fellows participated in a pre-course to provide them with an academic framework to support their summer immersion experience.

ILR 3052 *Community Controlled Economic Development: The Case of Buffalo NY*, introduced students to a brief economic history of Buffalo and explored the challenges, opportunities and assets of a classic rust-belt city experiencing a dynamic revitalization. Students learned about the types of nonprofit, social enterprise, labor, and community organizations they would be working with during their time in Buffalo, and introduced to the problem-solving, planning and community-building efforts of the social sector and government actors committed to moving Buffalo toward a new economy based on equity, sustainability and democracy.

Taught by Professor Ron Applegate, Lou Jean Fleron and Megan Connelly along with guest speakers, topics covered included:

Local is powerful: economic development models that seek to address community needs

What is meant by “economic development”?

How has New York State policy supported efforts to democratize economic development practices?

Buffalo’s changing economy across the 20th Century

Examining which local, national and international forces shaped Buffalo’s history: from the Old Economy, growing and industrial, to a New Economy, shrinking and uncertain.

Understanding the importance of collective storytelling in shaping decision-making at individual and civic level.

Building the social economy: Buffalo and beyond

How community based organizations are working with government and private sector actors to develop equitable economic development policies and programs locally.

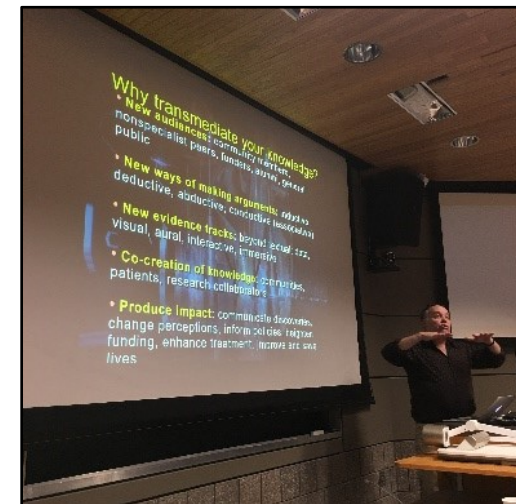
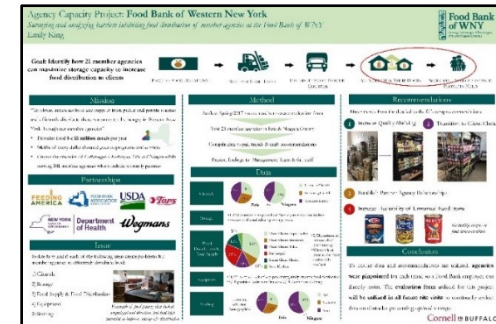
The power of civic capacities: leading change at the local level

What is civic engagement? How does a community build capacity in its residents and organizations to enable them to participate in governing economic development policies and practices? How does one become an engaged citizen?

Engaged Research and Transmedia Workshop

Covering tools and ethical principles of engaged research and creative ways to present and communicate work products.

Course requirements included a critical reflection essay on how a community redefines itself by retelling its own story and a poster on community-based organizations as problem solving agents.



CURRICULAR & CAREER CONNECTIONS

ENGAGED CORNELL + SOCIAL SECTOR STUDIES WORKING GROUP

The High Road Fellowships program is the flagship engagement opportunity for students within the Social Sector Studies (3S) Working Group at the ILR School. The 3S program provides a multi-disciplinary academic framework for students to study the dynamic social sector and its organizations. Curriculum explores the legal and institutional environment, the specific problems and issues that the sector seeks to address, the distinctive organizational and leadership challenges associated with generating revenues, managing volunteers and stakeholders, and the values and perspectives that distinguish the social sector as an alternative to the for-profit sector.

The 3S program works in collaboration with co-curricular resources to serve the career aspirations of ILR students as well as to strengthen connections to ILR alumni and friends who work in social sector organizations.

Since 2016, the Social Sector Studies Working Group has received funding from Engaged Cornell to develop curriculum and support engaged undergraduate and graduate research.

Additional curriculum will offer participants the unique opportunity to connect the personal impact of an immersive service experience with the intellectual resources that a university environment affords.

PARTNERSHIP FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD

The Partnership for the Public Good (PPG) builds a more just, sustainable, and culturally vibrant community through action-oriented research, policy development, and citizen engagement.

PPG is the ideal community partner for the High Road as along with its partners, PPG is driving a number of innovative initiatives moving Buffalo towards a just and equitable new economy.

PPG unites over 270 organizations that endorse its mission, vision, and principles. Partners are entitled to vote on each year's Community Agenda and to apply for High Road Fellows.

PPG provides a strong collaborative environment that ensures collective impact by leveraging existing relationships with community partners such as social enterprises, workforce development agencies, organized labor, service providers for refugees and immigrants, arts and cultural, and youth organizations.



CURRICULAR & CAREER CONNECTIONS

HIGH ROAD ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A dedicated group of Cornell alumni and Buffalo stakeholders serve on an advisory committee to help guide and support the program while deepening community and University connections through their unique expertise and networks.

- **Ramone Alexander** (Director of Inclusivity & Community Building, Nichols School)
- **Matt Connors** (Cornell HOTEL '09, Vice President of Development, Sinatra & Co.)
- **Cathy Creighton** (Cornell ILR '87, Attorney, Creighton, Johnsen and Giroux)
- **Steve Deisig** (Cornell ILR '96, Director of VISTA and Opportunity Corps, The Service Collaborative of WNY)
- **Warren Emblidge Sr.** (Cornell ILR '65, President, S.J. McCullagh, Inc.)
- **Marc Hennig** (Deputy Executive Director, Learning Disabilities Assoc. of WNY)
- **Dennis Maher** (Cornell Arch. '99, Professor, University at Buffalo School of Architecture)
- **Hon. Amy Martoche** (Cornell ILR '92, Buffalo City Court Judge)
- **Jack McGowan** (Cornell Ag '80, Project Manager Insyte Consulting, President)
- **Matthew Nagowski** (Cornell ILR '05, Vice President, M&T Bank)
- **Laurie Riester Collins** *Chair* (Cornell ILR '06, HR Leader and Talent Advisor, Columbus McKinnon)
- **Matthew Scherer** (Cornell ILR '11, Associate, Hodgson Russ)
- **Paul Tesluk** (Cornell ILR '91, Dean, UB School of Management and Professor, Department of Organization and Human Resources)



CORNELL CLUB OF GREATER BUFFALO

Since 1880, Buffalo Cornellians have been actively supporting the University. Today, the Cornell Club of Greater Buffalo is dedicated to engaging area alumni, students, parents, and friends of Cornell with each other, the University, and Buffalo civic life. There are over 2000 Cornell alumni in the area, and Cornell currently enrolls over 175 students from the Buffalo-Niagara region, or around 45 students in every entering class year. A not-for-profit association, the Club remains an independent entity from the University although it retains close ties with the alumni office in Ithaca.



CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The High Road exposes students to the dynamism of the metro economy and introduces them to diverse careers and professional occupations, particularly in the social sector. Networking and mentorship is also available to students through the Cornell Club of Greater Buffalo and the High Road Advisory Committee. Previously Assembly Member Sean Ryan provided State funding for a program on careers in public service.

For the first time High Road Fellowships received support from a corporate sponsor, M & T Bank. The funding was awarded through M & T's Human Resources Department because it is seen as a valuable investment in attracting promising young people to Buffalo.

With this gift, Cornell added two undergraduates to the 2017 High Road Fellowship program, bringing the placement total to 22. This partnership also expands involvement with M&T's Buffalo Promise Neighborhood (BPN) by exposing students to this collaborative effort providing a life-changing continuum of cradle-to-career services on the East Side of Buffalo.

HAPPENINGS

FRIDAY PRACTICUM CLASSES

JUNE 9TH

HISTORICAL ASSETS AND CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES: NEIGHBORHOODS, HERITAGE AND POVERTY

There have been pockets of immense growth in the city of Buffalo over the past decade, which has created a number of opportunities. But there still are intense pockets of poverty throughout the city as well. This is an enduring challenge and tension. History matters. Communities do not reach extreme levels of poverty quickly. Poverty and disadvantage in these communities tend to concentrate there over many years. High-poverty communities do not appear overnight. High levels of poverty in these communities are the product of long-term, complicated economic and social dynamics, as well as deliberate public and private-sector actions. Students discussed planning strategies and visited historic sites to learn about conserving and incorporating heritage into development.

Panel Discussion on *preservation, renewal and development*

- Bradley Bethel, Jr., Preservation Buffalo Niagara
- Christiana Limniatis, Preservation Buffalo Niagara
- Karen Stanley Fleming, Restore our Community Coalition

Professor Shannon Gleeson on Civic Engagement

- Tour and Lunch** at the African American Heritage Corridor
- Nash House, with George Arthur
 - Colored Musicians Club, with Danny Williams
 - Michigan Street Baptist Church



JUNE 16TH

GREEN AS THE NEW GROWTH: WATER, ENERGY, AND THE BINATIONAL REGIONAL ECONOMY



With an economic development boom underway in Buffalo, community groups are working hard to make sure 'green' is a key component. Tools such as community benefit agreements that incorporate green principles are being effectively utilized more often. Struggles for racial, economic, and climate justice; for true democratic governance, transparency and accountability; for equity being seen as a legitimate growth mode with prosperity rooted in interdependence with the earth's natural systems—are all deeply interconnected. This day raised the question of how Buffalo be a model in creating a new green economy promoting the triple bottom line of people, planet and profit.

Panel Discussion on *assets and strategies for a green-blue Buffalo-Niagara*

- Lynda Schneckloth, Professor, University at Buffalo School of Architecture
- Rahwa Ghirmatzion, Deputy Director, PUSH Buffalo

Lunch at Empire State Development with Sam Hoyt, ESD Regional President

Tour Buffalo Waterfront, Silo City and Outer Harbor

JUNE 23RD

NEW AMERICANS: REFUGEES, IMMIGRANTS, AND THE AMERICAN DREAM



Buffalo has a rich history as a city of immigrants. From 2000 to 2010, the Buffalo-Niagara Metro Area saw a 33% rise in foreign-born population. The main reason for this increase is the number of refugees being resettled in Buffalo. This day examined how and why localities are (or are not) being proactive in creating policies and structures that increase access and accommodation for immigrants and refugees.

Panel Discussion on *access, protection and accommodation policies*

- Jessica Lazarin, City of Buffalo Office of New Americans
- Gamileh Jamil, ACCESS of WNY
- Fidèle Menavanza, Erie County New American Committee

Lunch at the West Side Bazaar

Tour of Bak USA



EDUCATION AND OPPORTUNITY: PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THE PUBLIC GOOD

School inequality in Buffalo and the surrounding metropolitan area are built on extreme residential segregation.

On this day students explored barriers and solution to inequity in public education. What role can the State and advocates play in legislating policy to effect positive change in school districts? What innovative practices is the District implementing to create change? How can community-based organizations collaborate with these other actors to strengthen our local economy by investing in the education of our city's future workforce?

Panel Discussion on *education policy and community-based initiatives for success*

- Will Keresztes, Buffalo Public Schools
- Hon. Crystal Peoples-Stokes, NYS Assembly
- Emily Wyckoff, Say Yes to Education
- Todd Hathaway, NYSUT

Lunch and M & T Bank Human Capital Presentation
Presentation Buffalo Promise Neighborhood, with Glenn Jackson, M & T Bank



CULTURAL CAPITAL: THE ROLE OF THE ARTS IN ECONOMIC VITALITY



The creative arts not only enhance the human experience, reflect the beauty of nature, and promote cultural uniqueness, but also, in many various ways, highlight and seek solutions to some of our community's most pervasive problems. The importance of narrative was a key theme of the summer. In order to build a more equitable local economy, one critical component is to change the stories that Buffalo tells about equality, justice, and democracy. This will draw upon the arts sector's strength as the most racially inclusive and united part of the community.

Panel Discussion on *creativity, innovation and community*

- Dana Saylor, Emerging Leaders in the Arts Buffalo
- Ekrem Serdar, Squeaky Wheel and WAGE
- Karima Amin, Storyteller
- Aitina Fareed Cooke

Lunch at the AK Café

Tour of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery

Tour of the Frank Lloyd Wright Darwin Martin Campus



INNOVATION-BASED DEVELOPMENT: HIGHER ED, ENTREPRENEURS, AND ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS

The day examined the different local actors that are driving innovation to spur productive, inclusive and sustainable economic development. Nationally and locally there has been an inability of traditional politics and policies to address economic failings. This has fueled an extraordinary amount of experimentation by activists, economists, academics, policymakers and socially minded business leaders. Cities are home to valuable assets—clusters of urban institutions and organizations that both foster and benefit from the growing collaborative nature of innovation. “Anchor institutions”—research hospitals and universities—have become one of the primary catalysts of this community-based change. How are these assets leveraged to grow the culture of innovation? What policies are necessary to support and sustain this movement? How can this community increase accessibility to entrepreneurial opportunities for more people?

Panel Discussion on *higher education in society and the economy*

- Paul Tesluk, UB School of Management
- Susan McCartney, Buffalo State College Small Business Development Center
- Patrick Whalen, Niagara Global Tourism Institute
- Paul Hogan, John R. Oishei Foundation

Lunch at Larkinville with Jack McGowan, Insyte Consulting and WNY Venture Association

Tour Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus



JULY 21ST

EQUITY CHALLENGES IN THE NEW ECONOMY: ON AN UPHILL HIGH ROAD



Any good economic development system will have to do more than spur growth; it will need to increase equity. Students met with local leaders in the public and social sectors to discuss policies and initiatives to promote inclusive development.

Social Impact Careers and Recruiting with Regina M. Duffey Moravek, Director, ILR Career Services

Breakfast with Franchelle Hart, Open Buffalo

Meeting with Assembly Member Sean Ryan

Lunch with Emily Stewart and Andrew Delmonte

Tour and Meeting at City Hall with Mayor Brown



JUNE 4TH

2017 ORIENTATION



The 2017 High Road kicked off with an orientation for fellows which included an overview of administrative basics, a discussion of High Road values, and individual and group goal setting for the program. Supervisors from the fellowship hosts joined the cohort for a lunch and brainstorming session of not to be missed Buffalo assets for the summer. Fellows then went on a guided bus tour of the city with PPG's Sam Magavern and Tim Tielman of the Campaign for Greater Buffalo.



JULY 28TH

2017 HIGH ROAD CONTRIBUTIONS TO GREATER BUFFALO: GRADUATION, RECOGNITION, AND CELEBRATION

Final Presentations by High Road Fellows
Remarks:

Lou Jean Fleron, *High Road Fellowships*

Harry Katz, *Former ILR School Dean*

Presentation of Certificates

Lunch and End of Summer Soiree

High Road Builders Awards:

Matthew Nagowski, ILR '05

Jack McGowan,

Cornell Club of Greater Buffalo

"I am deeply optimistic because I am certain, if we: build bridges by building relationships, work locally, demand intellectual honesty, work with tantrum-throwing urgency, and put our true talents on the table, the solutions will come, along with a way to implement them... and then, we will, in fact, rise to meet the demands of this historical moment."

Address by Maria Whyte, *Deputy County Executive*



THE GIG ECONOMY AND THE AMERICAN DREAM WITH PROFESSOR LOUIS HYMAN



The High Road was honored to welcome Professor Louis Hyman as the annual Cornell ILR faculty speaker. In collaboration with the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site and the Cornell Club of Greater Buffalo, Professor Hyman's talk, "The Gig Economy and the American Dream" explored the gig economy from a historical perspective and examined current challenges and necessary policies to make this economy work better for people. Leading the lively discussion that followed was Nicole Hallett, assistant clinical professor at the University at Buffalo School of Law. Professor Hallett is director of the Community Justice Clinic, which represents low-income local residents on issues that include immigration, employment and civil rights, and also is the inaugural Open Buffalo Public Research Fellow.



Immense thank to the John R. Oishei Foundation and Karen Spaulding for making Tape Art possible this summer!

On June 17th the Lipsey Buffalo Architecture Center came alive with the buzz of creative problem solving. High Road Fellows, Oishei Leaders from local nonprofit organizations and members of the Architecture Center worked together to create four Tape Art murals assisted by the extraordinary Tape Art team: Michael Townsend, Kristen Carbone, Leah Smith and Sam White.

The theme of the day was "Navigating Narratives," the challenge to change the story and picture from a problem to a solution. Too often the narratives of Buffalo and similar cities are dominated by a focus on problems and struggles. These problems become ingrained in the identity of the community in a ways that make them that much more difficult to overcome.

For this project the participants were tasked with retelling these stories, recasting these images, with radical solutions. They tackled four tape drawings representing the most pressing issues facing Buffalo: Income Inequality, Segregation, Disenfranchisement, and Sprawl. In teams, fellows worked with local community leaders to transform these "monsters" into counter narratives. The day ended with a discussion of the power of collaboration in solving problems and the power of using narratives in community development work.



