

2015 High Road Fellows Record and Reflections





Erin Killian '17

Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper

- Composed a report on alternative financing models for monetizing environmental services and public/private partnerships.
- Collaborated on a pilot stewardship business structure that is now being considered by the County, City and the Buffalo Greenfund.
- Was asked to stay on after the end of the fellowship to continue working on an array of projects for Riverkeeper.

“Mainly, I see hope for Buffalo in the efforts of the community. I could not be prouder to be part of a grassroots organization like Riverkeeper when I see the engaged individuals that these nonprofits inspire. Buffalo is on the upturn.”



Daniela Archila '16

Center for Employment Opportunities

- Created a Workforce Development Map and Report as a resource for creating more unity and cohesion amongst organizations providing workforce development programming in Erie County.
- Met and interviewed the directors of over twenty nonprofits and foundations to discuss CEO’s services for previously incarcerated individuals.
- Collaborated with other High Road Fellows and partner organizations to discuss potential reuses for a property employing CEO’s clients.

“This experience gave me a chance to explore the beautiful city, and experience the love and sense of community that was in the air as many different types of people, regardless of their sexual orientation or ethnicity, came together.”



Kyle Friend '17

Coalition for Economic Justice

- Created a comprehensive policy brief about proposed earned sick time legislation in the City of Buffalo.
- Supported the Fight for \$15 movement, to raise 180,000 workers out of poverty and government assistance. Wrote an op-ed piece published in the Buffalo News urging the State’s Wage Board to support a \$15 minimum wage for fast food workers, which it eventually did.

“I am in awe that I’ve been living just three hours away from this growing, spectacular city my entire life, and I’ve only visited once before. I’ve been forced to feel uncomfortable and do new things, but most importantly, I’ve been forced to immerse myself in this wonderful city – the good parts and the bad parts – and I will take back to Cornell with me an experience unrivaled by any other that I’ve had.”

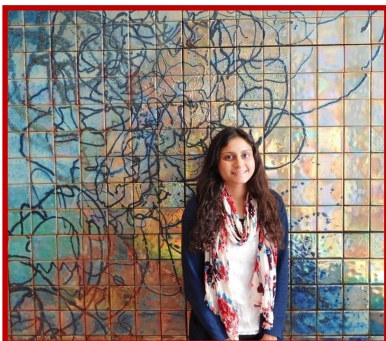


Kelly Bouzi '18

CWA and Health Sciences Charter School

- Researched new NYS bill regarding workplace violence and created policy for implementation at my organization.
- Created a presentation for staff regarding potential retirement plans for the future.
- Created policy for record retention and disposition.

“Yes, I’ve learned a lot from my workplace, but my fellow High Roaders have also pushed me mentally. Randomly engaging in stimulating conversation was a commonality. Most recently, we literally stayed up till 4 am talking about what “diversity” looks like on Cornell’s campus. Being surrounded by people from different states, cities, races & ethnicities, etc. allowed for great conversation as well as the sharing and internalizing of the ideas/perspectives of others. “



Nabiha Qudsi '18

***The Fargo House/
Assembly House 150***

- Interviewed stakeholders and created a strategic plan for the organization.
- Worked with other High Roaders to foster collaborations between organizations in order to find a viable community-oriented use for a local building.
- Researched different community art programming and woodworking schools in order to create a sample woodworking curriculum for ASSEMBLY HOUSE 150's future program.

"I will always remember Buffalo as a place of growth and community. The people here are dedicated to making the future promising. There are so many organizations that have come together to allow the city to flourish. People are working together to make a difference."



Melissa Bravo '16

Grassroots Gardens

- Created a guide on how to make community gardens accessible to all community members, included a tool to measure accessibility.
- Compiled list of organizations in the disability community to help with outreach.
- Assisted with workshops for children on the importance of community gardens.

"I've enjoyed the conversations I've had with fellow High Roaders because everyone comes from a different background and brings different experiences to the table that really shape the conversations into meaningful dialogues. I think these are the types of discussions some of my professors have tried to have in the classroom setting. But the exchanges are different, and I think more significant, when they come organically."



Seth Lutsic '17

***The John R. Oishei
Foundation***

- Assisted Vice President of Philanthropic Support, Knowledge Management Officer, and Director of Communications in the areas of fund development, governance, organizational development, strategy, and research.
- Coordinated a retreat for Oishei's leadership development initiative, Oishei Leaders, which included a creative Tape Art exercise.
- Analyzed and presented findings on local philanthropic educational investment.

"This has been an eye-opening service learning opportunity. ILR prides itself on its service-based learning and this program exemplifies that commitment. I've been able to interact with communities that I would not have otherwise, inside and outside of work."

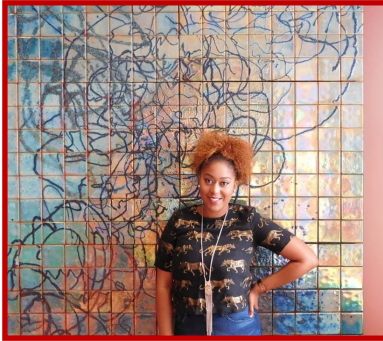


Zachary de Stefan '18

***Learning Disabilities
Association of WNY***

- Assisted with the implementation of the Pathways to Employment program by networking with local nonprofits and matching clients with relevant volunteer and job opportunities.
- Developed and co-taught a 90 minute seminar on the identification of personal leadership skills.
- Spearheaded a brainstorming committee for the LDA's annual Business Mingle event.

"This entire experience has been one of constant self-discovery, reflection, and personal growth, and has shown me that I am more than capable of assimilating to a work environment far removed from my greedy childhood fantasies, and I really don't think I'd trade in this opportunity for anything else."



Kibrett Facey '16

Massachusetts Avenue Project

- Created and taught a workshop on Privilege, Class, and Disparities for MAP's summer youth.
- Successfully assisted with marketing and outreach to promote the WNY Environmental Alliance's "The People's Movement" Event .
- Developed Social Change Education Curriculum.

"I learned a lot about the struggles Buffalo has gone through in the past and what efforts are being made today to make it the bustling city that it once was. I was made certain that I am really passionate about community work and making the world a better place at the grassroots level. Engaged service learning at community-based organizations really interests me and is very fulfilling."



Carunya Achar '18

Open Buffalo Community Justice Fellow

- Created a summary document defining community oriented policing to help provide clarity in how it could be best applied in Buffalo.
- Made an annotated index of power in Buffalo outlining and describing individuals/ organizations who could influence efforts to implement community oriented policing .
- Researched national best practices of community oriented policing.

"Over these past two months, Buffalo, I have been lucky enough to interact with your people. And, as I've roamed your streets and explored your sectors and driven down your roads and attended your festivals , I've come to think of myself as one of your people. So, dear Buffalo, thank you. Thank you for everything you've done for me."



Lauren Lang '17

Open Buffalo Leadership Development Fellow

- Created an introductory document describing the inaugural Emerging Leaders program which was chosen as 1 of 5 documents to be sent in Open Buffalo's annual report to the Open Society Foundations.
- Developed a paper and online application for the Emerging Leaders Program.
- Successfully recruited mentors for the inaugural class of the Emerging Leaders Program.

"After spending my entire summer in Buffalo, 'community' is really the best term I can use to describe this place. From the bus, to the workplace, to the people — everyone has a sense of pride in this City. A sense of hope for a better tomorrow."



Deandra Fike '18

Partnership for the Public Good

- Coordinated and organized "Working Successfully with Immigrants and Refugees" training focusing on language access issues for service providers working with refugees and immigrants, which had a turn-out of 100 community members.
- Created and edited six Cultural Fact Sheets to inform the community about numerous ethnic groups.
- Updated a brief outlining various statistics and descriptions of the local refugee and immigrant community.

"This internship has surrounded me with people who will stay up until four in the morning debating reforms of affirmative action or the systematic oppression of minorities because we care. Because we notice. Because we really want to be the ones to help it change."



Robert Johnson III '17

Partnership for the Public Good

- Authored a report on racial disparities in Buffalo.
- Analyzed data about the black labor market in Buffalo compared to the county, state and nation.
- Helped the Living Wage Commission enforce compliance measures for first and second quarters of 2015.

"During my time here I have seen people of all identifications that may in one context or another, be described as 'in', be unafraid to recognize their privilege and how it obstructs the equitable allocation of justice and opportunity to 'others'. I am honored to have witnessed this radical movement for equitable development and hope that the work I've done adds, even marginally, to the movement's objective of re-conceiving Buffalo as place that affords justice and opportunity to all who call it home."



Cole Norgaarden '17

PUSH Buffalo

- Created a flyer and slideshow presentation to be used at information sessions for local property owners interested in PUSH's Main Streets grant program.
- Performed compliance inspections of three properties previously assisted by the program.
- Catalogued and researched the status of 97 existing vacant sites in PUSH's Green Development Zone.

"I have a new goal of pursuing an education in architecture that combines planning, social justice, and design after I graduate from Cornell. Through my work at PUSH and exposure to people like Brendan Mehaffy at Buffalo City Hall, I think the High Road has given me a clearer picture of what the practice of city planning actually is, how I fit into it, and the steps I can take to get myself there."

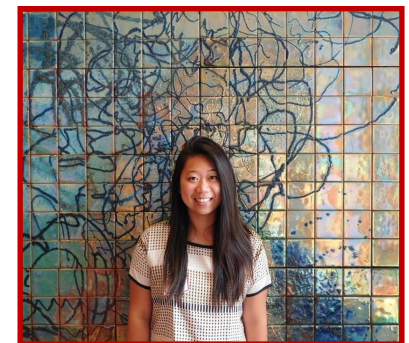


Shira Kotz '18

United Way of Buffalo and Erie County

- Authored an 11 page community brief on high school graduation rates in Erie County.
- Created a marketing document publicizing high school graduation rates for social media using Infoactive and Excel.
- Formulated an advocacy letter to New York State Assembly Member Crystal Peoples-Stokes in support of the Community Schools Act.

"My experience in UWBEAC has taught me that oftentimes the most effective solutions in education are tailored to a particular school district or high school. The research I am doing isn't halfway across the globe in a place I could only imagine, but is right in front of me, constantly surrounding me."



Maria Chak '18

WNYCOSH Worker Center

- Executed a research plan to support Gov. Cuomo's nail salon campaign in New York.
- Established a regional outline of nail salons in Erie County for canvassing purposes and visited a number to gather qualitative data.
- Compiled a statistical report on wages, safety and health precautions in nail salons. Utilized art and creative representations of the information to enhance messaging and outreach.

"While interning in Buffalo this summer, I discovered my interest in direct advocacy for immigrants and refugees. I was engaged with my project to advocate for nail salon workers for better wages and safer working conditions. This led to an expansion of my knowledge in the impact community engaged service learning has and the difference it can make."



Emily Sharp-O'Connor '18

WNY Law Center

- Gained an understanding of the mortgage foreclosure process, as well as common problems experienced by those facing foreclosure.
- Authored a report on the foreclosure process with analysis linking a foreclosure process with minimal delays to an increased chance of being approved for a loan modification.
- Contributed to a study on discriminatory practices by auto insurance providers.

“Buffalo itself continues to surpass my expectations. Like most people you meet more than ten feet outside the city limits, my (completely unsubstantiated) feelings were pretty simple: Rust Belt, six feet of snow—I’ll pass. But I’m amazed every day by the art, culture, and vibrant communities that Buffalo claims as its own.”



Abigail Philips '16

Young Audiences of WNY

- Produced resource packet to distribute to students on career, college, and post-high school options.
- Delivered a presentation on resume-building and professionalism to 30 ArtWorks apprentices.
- Coordinated logistical details: coordinating college tours, ordering supplies, supervising when needed.

“I think that leaving my comfort zone, geographically and mentally through fellowship, challenged me, and made me a better person in all areas. This experience has strengthened what I already know, I have to work with youth or at least people in some way, because it is not only my passion, but what I am good at. This experience will be great to bring to Cornell, to bring to my future jobs and experiences, and just to reflect on myself.”

With great appreciation to the community that makes this program possible and the individuals who have contributed much to building the High Road:

High Road Advisory Committee

Elaina Mulé, Advisory Committee Chair, Cornell ILR '11, MS '13, Market Research Analyst, United Way of Buffalo and Erie County

Matthew Nagowski, Previous Advisory Committee Chair, Cornell ILR '05, Vice President, M&T Bank

Ramone Alexander, Director, UB Liberty Partnership

Shannon Buffum, Cornell ILR '04, Attorney, Harris Beach

Matt Connors, Cornell HOTEL '09, Vice President of Development, Sinatra and Company

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

Jax Deluca, Executive Director, Squeaky Wheel Film & Media Art Center

Warren Emblidge Sr., Cornell ILR '65, President, S.J. McCullagh, Inc.

Marc Hennig, Deputy Executive Director, Learning Disabilities Association 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, Cornell Club of Greater Buffalo

Laurie Riester Collins, Cornell ILR '06, Pepsi, Sr. Manager of Talent Acquisition

Paul Tesluk, Cornell ILR '91, Interim Dean, UB School of Management

Cornell ILR Social Economy Faculty Working Group

Ronald Applegate, Labor Relations, Law, and History

Marya Besharov, Organizational Behavior

Diane Burton, Human Resource Studies

Shannon Gleeson, Labor Relations, Law, and History

Cornell Engaged Learning + Research

Richard Kiely, Director

Partnership for the Public Good Board

Matthew Nagowski, Chair, M&T Bank

Karima Amin, Vice-Chair, Prisoners are People Too

Aaron Bartley, Secretary, PUSH Buffalo

Robert Morgan, Treasurer, United Way of Buffalo and Erie County

Ramone Alexander, University at Buffalo Liberty Partnerships Program

Sheila Brown, WUFO 1080 AM

Rahwa Ghirmatzion, Ujima Company

Stephen Halpern, University at Buffalo

Devonya Havis, Canisius College

Ba Zan Lin, Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper and Burmese Community Support Center

Faculty and Staff Profiles

Lou Jean Fleron

High Road Fellowships 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 previously served as director of ILR Western Region and director of workforce, industry and economic development for Cornell ILR. She is also currently co-director of the Partnership for the Public Good.

Megan Connelly

High Road Fellowships Associate Director

Megan serves a dual role as Associate Director for the High Road Fellowships and Director of Policy Advancement for the Partnership for the Public Good. Admitted to practice law in New York, she previously worked at Neighborhood Legal Services on the Homeless Task Force 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.

Clint McManus

High Road Graduate Fellow

A recent graduate from Cornell University's City and Regional Planning Master's Program, Clint served as the High Road Fellowship's inaugural Graduate Fellow. He completed an internship with the Partnership for the Public Good during the summer of 2014 and returned to Buffalo to serve as a resource and mentor for 2015 fellows.

Sam Magavern

Adjunct Faculty, Cornell ILR

Sam is adjunct faculty of Cornell ILR, teaching and mentoring High Roaders on economic development, law and policy. He also teaches at the University at Buffalo Law School. Sam is currently co-director of the Partnership for the Public Good. He grew up in Buffalo and graduated from Harvard College and UCLA Law School. When not teaching, he writes fiction, non-fiction, and poetry.

Ron Applegate

Lecturer, Cornell ILR

An economic and labor historian, Ron is a lecturer at Cornell ILR in the Department of Labor Relations, Law and History. Previously, he devoted two decades to community and labor organizing. His current teaching and research on the history of U.S. political economy focus on collective action to increase public and community control over economic development.

The High Road...

The High Road Runs Through the City summer fellowships give Cornell students a unique opportunity to explore the rich variety of creative organizations and enterprises that are transforming Greater Buffalo into a new, innovative, high road economy.

Since 2009, 104 Cornell students have been awarded fellowships in applied research, active learning and service in community-based economic development in Buffalo. Every year is unique as the High Road is a journey through current events, new development projects, evolving challenges, and everyday innovation and change. Students' projects are coordinated through the Partnership for the Public Good (PPG), a community-based think tank with a growing number of over 190 richly networked partners, each of which is eligible to apply for a High Road Fellow. Students work at their individual placements from Monday through Thursday and then participate as a group in Friday activities including speakers, tours and interactive discussions on some of the most pressing economic and community development issues in the region.

High Roaders, as the student fellows have come to be called, explore the city through the lens of the public good. Their work and study reveal the linkages between the worlds of policy and practice, the profit and nonprofit sectors of the economy, and academia and the "real" world. They meet with public officials, testify in public hearings, write for online publications, speak with the press, participate in civic events and live democracy in action.

The High Road thrives on collaboration, and we are especially grateful for support from former ILR Dean **Harry C. Katz**, current ILR Dean **Kevin Hallock**, ILR Career Services staff and Director **Regina Duffey Moravek**, ILR faculty and staff, and for assistance from Cornell's Center for Community Engaged Learning + Research.

