

# 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 project 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 to serve as a resource for the purpose of creating more unity and cohesion amongst nonprofits in Buffalo engaged in this work.
- Met and interviewed the directors of over twenty nonprofits and foundations.
- Collaborated with other High Road Fellows and partner organizations to discuss potential reuses for a property utilizing 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 earned sick time legislation that might be implemented in the City of Buffalo.
- Supported the Fight for \$15 movement, which will raise 180,000 workers out of poverty and government assistance programs.
- Called for IDA reform in the Town of Hamburg.

*"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 I've been forced to 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."*



**Nabihah 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**

***Grassroot 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 we'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 creative Tape Art exercise for Oishei Leaders.
- 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."*



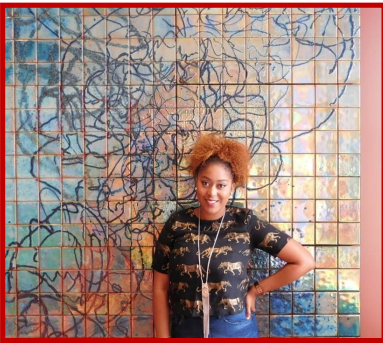
**Zachary de Stefan `18**

***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 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 WNY Environmental Alliance's "The People's Movement" Event .
- Developed Social Change Education Curriculum.

*"I helped to teach the most important lessons of life. tolerance + acceptance On the West Side of Buffalo, there is a plethora of different cultures and races tolerance + acceptance Those are the things that will ensure that the West thrives tolerance + acceptance Those are the things that will ensure that the city of Buffalo survives."*



**Carunya "Caro" Achar `18**

***Open Buffalo Community Justice Fellow***

- Created a one-page 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."*

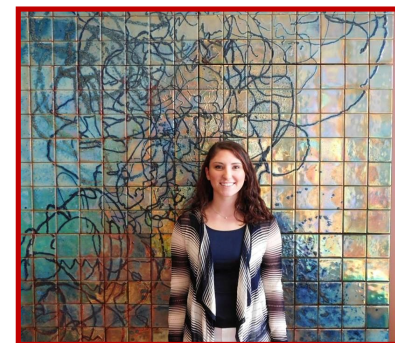


**Lauren Lang `17**

***Open Buffalo Leadership Development Fellow***

- Created a one-page document on the Emerging Leaders program which was chosen as 1 of 5 documents to be sent in Open Buffalo's annual report to the Open Society Foundation.
- 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***

- Authored briefs outlining various statistics and descriptions of the refugee and immigrant community
- Coordinated and organized "Working Successfully with Immigrants and Refugees" training, which had a turn-out of 100 community members
- Created and edited Cultural Fact Sheets to inform the community about numerous ethnic groups

*"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."*

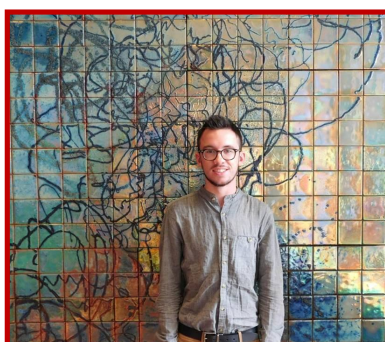


**Robert Johnson III `17**

***Partnership for the Public Good***

- Compiled a nearly 2,000 word report on racial disparities in Buffalo.
- Helped amass data about the black labor market in Buffalo compared to the county, state and nation.
- Helped the Living Wage Commission enforce compliance measures for 1st and 2nd quarters of 2015.

*"During my time here I have seen people of all identifications that may in one context or another, be describe 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."*

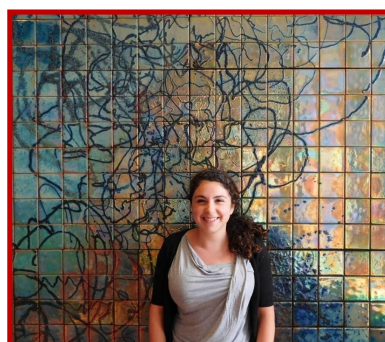


**Cole Norgaarden `17**

***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."*

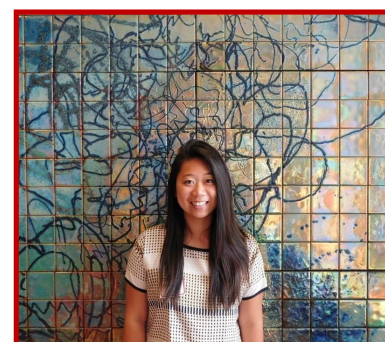


**Shira Kotz `18**

***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 UWBECC 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 Governor's Cuomo nail salon campaign in New York.
- Established a regional outline of nail salons in Erie County for canvassing purposes.
- Created a statistical report on wages, safety and health precautions in nail salons.

*"I understand now, that if I want to be an ally, an advocate, and a friend, then I should learn first-hand from their stories, experiences, and hardships."*





**Emily Sharp-O'Connor '18**

**WNY Law Center**

- Gained an understanding of the 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, and doing this fellowship/job, which 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. "*