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BUFFALO, NY

ILR School

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WHERE THE HIGH ROAD WORKS

In the beginning of 2019, the Cornell ILR Extension office reorganized its economic development and civic engagement programming under a new title, the ILR Buffalo Co-Lab. The Co-Lab advances an equitable economy and democratic community, collaboratively integrating scholarly and practical understanding to strengthen civic action.

The Co-Lab researches and promotes **HIGH ROAD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** — a policy strategy that emphasizes high quality jobs, environmental sustainability, corporate accountability, and broad access to opportunities for all community members.

High Road Fellowships annually bring Cornell undergraduates to Buffalo to work on the frontlines of equitable and inclusive economic development. Fellows are immersed with community-based organizations through the Partnership for the Public Good, a think tank that provides research and advocacy support to a broad range of partners.

In 2018 the Co-Lab launched Careers in Public Service, an initiative that will provide coursework, internships, programming, engaged learning, policy forums and networking activities to generate interest and appreciation for civil society, democracy and public service for Cornell students. This year marks the first cohort of Democracy Summer Fellows who worked with WNY State legislators.

The 2019 High Road and Democracy Summer is dedicated to the memory of Lois Gray, the inaugural director of ILR's first Extension office here in Buffalo. Never tempted by ethical compromise or low road approaches, Lois modeled high road practices throughout her life. Now it is our responsibility to carry her legacy into the future. High Road and Democracy Summer Fellows will do just that.



STUDENT PROFILES







ASHLEY BIVENS

SULPHUR, OKLAHOMA / ILR CLASS OF 2022



WHY I TOOK THE HIGH ROAD

"I decided to take the High Road this summer as a way to get involved with community based organizations with **engaged partnerships**. I was looking to participate in hands on activities as well as learn more about non-profit work in large communities."



WORK HIGHLIGHTS

- Worked with LDA, The Parent Network and EPIC (Every Person Influences Children) to develop a collaborative program that addresses the complex and disruptive effects of adverse childhood experiences (ACES) on a child's development.
- Identified programmatic synergies and then created a Venn diagram of program overlaps between the Learning Disabilities Association, EPIC, and Parent Network. Proposed next steps and collaborations based on dual programming for the organizations.
- Studied other national ACES studies and programs.
- Researched ACES screening tools and home visiting programs nationally and locally to determine possible fits for the three organizations.

Learning Disabilities Association of Western New York

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.



BUFFALO HIGHLIGHT Fourth of July weekend: Bisons Game, Philharmonic Orchestra, Canalside Fireworks, and the Eternal Flame hike. Also, first karaoke experience.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT Friday tour of the Martin House: Frank Lloyd Wright has a hotel in Bartlesville, OK it was exciting to see another of his creations.

INTERESTS Diverse cultural experiences, engaged communities, learning Buffalo's history, creating equitable opportunities.

CONVENTIONAL AND UNCONVENTIONAL SKILLS Time management, organizational outreach, mouse trapper, transportation specialist.

tangible impact



**YUAN
CHEN**

NEW YORK, NY / ILR CLASS OF 2022



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.



BUFFALO HIGHLIGHT Enjoyed exploring different places for Buffalo wings. Currently, Duff's is in the lead with their BBQ and Medium wings.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT Enjoyed the bus tour of Buffalo on our first day. This was an eye opening experience illustrating the social and economic disparities on the East and West Sides.

INTERESTS Red Cross, Guiding Eyes dogs, Asian American studies, La Croix, cows, boba, public finance, corporate social responsibility, impact investing.

CONVENTIONAL AND UNCONVENTIONAL SKILLS Basic proficiency in Mandarin, Microsoft Office, Excel, Powerpoint, Outlook, Squarespace, and Wix. Master proficiency in making bubble tea.



WORK HIGHLIGHTS

- Published an 80 page report on reinvestment opportunities and bank profitability in underserved communities.
- Constructed an interactive database of over 50 reinvestment coalitions across the country. This resulted in direct partnerships between the BNCRC and other coalitions.
- Facilitated a banking tour with financial regulators from the Comptroller of the Currency, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, and the Department of Finance.
- Researched the ways that banks can enhance their bottom line by reinvesting in the communities they often prioritize profiting from over serving.

WHY I TOOK THE HIGH ROAD

“I decided to participate in the fellowship program this summer because I’ve had experiences in the financial services sector and social advocacy organizations, but wanted to intertwine my interests and make **tangible impact** through finance for communities like mine that need it most.”





WHY I TOOK THE HIGH ROAD

“As someone who is interested in starting my own nonprofit to service my community, the High Road Fellowship seemed perfect. I’m participating because I want to understand the true impact that universal public good practices can have on a community and to **be inspired** on ways that I can implement those practices and standards into my nonprofit organization in the future.”



SHAYLA COMBS

MIDDLETOWN, OHIO / ILR CLASS OF 2022



WORK HIGHLIGHTS

- Created an engaging and intellectually substantive 6-week programming agenda for teen leaders.
- Facilitated a weekly curriculum included giving a workshop on storytelling for change and personal narrative.
- Assisted youth in taking personal responsibility for their communities, arranged fulfilling internships, and helped them understand the underlying systems in Buffalo that affect their lives.
- Designed a methodology guide for working with youth. This included observations made in the implementation lesson plans with the Youth CAN participants and experiences of other community members working with youth.

Cornell Cooperative Extension

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

BUFFALO HIGHLIGHT Going to Niagara Falls for the first time, karaokeing Happier at the top of our lungs, eating an exorbitant amount of wings, and standing up for worker’s rights by attending SPoT union picketts.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT The community organizing 101 trainings, discussing the state of youth education with Galenia Smallwood from Say Yes, and learning how to use art as visionary resistance from Aitina Fareed Cooke.

INTERESTS Reforming dated approaches to positive youth development and engagement. Using storytelling and performance to advocate for social change.

SKILLS Programming and curriculum development with followed facilitation, public speaking and advocacy, qualitative research and tangible production of action steps, and group leadership and accountability.

be inspired

Buffalo Center for Arts and Technology

The primary vision of Buffalo Center for Arts & Technology (BCAT) is to provide community-enhancing tools to reduce the effect of poverty on families. The mission of BCAT, as part of Buffalo's economic revitalization is twofold:

- 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.
- 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.



BUFFALO HIGHLIGHT How much there is to do in Buffalo. Walking around Delaware Park a couple times was beautiful. Thankfully, there was a lot of good weather.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT The community organizing lessons taught by Micaela Lipman on Wednesdays. There was a lot to be learned, and it was engaging.

INTERESTS Outside of academics, reading and also debating with Cornell's Worlds Debate team.

CONVENTIONAL AND UNCONVENTIONAL SKILLS Learned about the importance of power mapping. Also, how to cook for myself and plan meals for a week.

CARSON CRANE

HOUSTON, TEXAS / A&S CLASS OF 2022



WHY I TOOK THE HIGH ROAD

"I think nonprofit work can be some of the most **worthwhile** and engaging work. You often get the opportunity to see changes you strive for actualized. My motivation for participating was to engage with nonprofits in a professional manner to explore possibilities for future work. I have always enjoyed my work with community development, and I wanted to see what people who work in that do day-to-day."

WORK HIGHLIGHTS

- Developed a new recruitment plan for the volunteer and internship program. This included new on-boarding and retainment policies.
- Researched and compiled a database of area colleges, community organizations, and other potential sources of interns and volunteers in the local community focusing on new teaching academies and relevant programs.
- Served as a teaching assistant for the youth arts and adult workforce programs in collaboration with teaching artists.
- Updated and enhanced the organization's web site.
- Learned how to better use social media for the visibility and advocacy of a nonprofit organization.





WHY I TOOK THE HIGH ROAD

“Growing up in Brooklyn, inequity is everywhere. I have long sought ways to end this divide and have learned a lot about economic justice through my education here at Cornell. My participation in the High Road has provide me a new, more sustainable method to work toward **economic justice** and hopefully given me the tools to apply those principles to my own neighborhood.”



SHERELL FARMER

BROOKLYN, NY / ILR CLASS OF 2022



WORK HIGHLIGHTS

- Analyzed discharge evaluations to determine what barriers prevent CEO participants from completing programming.
- Worked with the Cornell Project for Records Assistance to develop resources on the employment rights of the formerly incarcerated and presented to CEO participants.
- Created and taught workshops to support the mental health of program participants.
- Spent time job coaching, which included helping to write and edit resumes for program participants and conducted mock interviews.
- Wrote a concept paper for the WNY Foundation Capacity Building Grant.
- Represented CEO at a number of various coalition and public meetings.

economic justice

Center for Employment Opportunities

For more than 30 years, the Center for Employment Opportunities’ goal has been to provide immediate, comprehensive, and effective employment services for men and women returning from incarceration. CEO offers comprehensive employment services exclusively for people with criminal records. CEO’s model is based on a highly structured program of life skill education, short-term paid transitional employment, full-time job placement, and post-placement services.



BUFFALO HIGHLIGHT Going on a public art tour in which we went to multiple parts of Buffalo and learned the history behind some of its most prolific murals.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT Wednesday night dinners with Micaela Lipman when we learned about community organizing and action. I have a background in activism but learned so, so much from her!

INTERESTS How identity informs our understandings of justice, equity, and activism, creating community-based jobs for folks with criminal backgrounds, and fighting inequality in education.

CONVENTIONAL AND UNCONVENTIONAL SKILLS Ability to write for and in various mediums, public speaking, Coalition Building. Ability to make tasty vegetarian/vegan food and ublic transport expert.



People United for Sustainable Housing

The mission of PUSH Buffalo is to mobilize residents to create strong neighborhoods with quality, affordable housing; to expand local hiring opportunities; and to advance economic justice in Buffalo.



BUFFALO HIGHLIGHT July 4th at Canalside and biking through Delaware Park.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT The Friday Speakers, whose stories and knowledge contributed to every Friday being an amazing learning experience.

INTERESTS Policy and public service, housing, transit, and ranked-choice voting. Astronomy, trumpet and piano.

CONVENTIONAL AND UNCONVENTIONAL SKILLS Policy research, Spanish, and video production.

CYNDER HAINES

MIAMI, FLORIDA / A&S CLASS OF 2021



- Served as a researcher with the Organizing Department for the summer.
- Researched a number of progressive policies including:
 - Low Income Housing Tax Credit, a federal tax incentive responsible for a majority of the affordable housing developments in the United States;
 - Single Transferable Vote as a voting system to elect politicians who better represent their constituents' interests;
 - Community Land Trusts as a vehicle for preserving affordable housing for decades into the future.
- Attended a housing forum where tenants, landlords, and local politicians discussed the Rent Act of 2019 prior to being passed in New York State.
- Participated in a weeklong planning retreat for the organizing department.

WORK HIGHLIGHTS



WHY I TOOK THE HIGH ROAD

“This summer I was **part of a movement** to create affordable housing in the West Side of Buffalo. I am obviously a new and very small part of this movement, and thus I could not be what I ought to be in this movement without the past and present work of everyone else involved. The research I did will better inform PUSH’s efforts, so I’ll be helping everyone else do better work.”



part of a movement



LAURA HOLLAND

PORT CHESTER, NY / ILR CLASS OF 2022

WORK HIGHLIGHTS

- Created a tool kit to advance implementation of recently passed progressive bail reform in NYS.
- Conducted interviews with the Erie County District Attorney, local defense attorneys and local activists to inform the tool kit.
- Did court observations in Buffalo City Court at bail hearings.
- Attended meetings of the Police Oversight Committee for the Buffalo Common Council.
- Represented PPG at a working group on Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD).
- Completed workshops on the 2020 Census and working with interpreters.

WHY I TOOK THE HIGH ROAD

"I decided to take the High Road this summer because I wanted to work with marginalized communities and help find solutions to their issues. I have never done research, or this kind of work, before and I wanted to **challenge myself** because that's how you grow. This fellowship helped me become a better citizen, person, and professional who can take these skills and help even more communities."



Partnership for the Public Good

The Partnership for the Public Good is working to build a more just, sustainable and culturally vibrant Greater Buffalo through action-oriented research, policy development and citizen engagement. With over 270 affiliated partners, PPG develops an annual Community Agenda of policy planks, hosts a weekly radio show, and produces publications and other resources to give the nonprofit community and citizens a stronger voice in public policy.



BUFFALO HIGHLIGHT Picketing outside of Spot Coffee, fireworks on the 4th of July, T.I. concert at Canalside, Food is Art event, Juneteenth, and eating lots of wings and Paula's donuts!

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT ILR instagram takeover, trips to Canada and Niagara Falls, Buffalo River tour, and watching The Bachelorette every Monday night at Canisius with the other fellows.

INTERESTS Law, government, social justice, film, music.

CONVENTIONAL AND UNCONVENTIONAL SKILLS Writing, public speaking, and film making. Volleyball, random knowledge from The Bachelor, and the ability to binge watch any show way too quickly.

challenge myself

build and exercise power

Western New York 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.



BUFFALO HIGHLIGHT Visiting the Colored Musicians' Club and learning about the union history associated with founding that radical space. (Also, standing on the same ground Ella Fitzgerald once stood on.)

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT Hearing from Aitina Fareed Cooke about the intersection of art and activism, and practicing using spoken word as a tool of movement-building and connection.

INTERESTS Poetry, literature, bluesy rock music, building worker power.

CONVENTIONAL AND UNCONVENTIONAL SKILLS Community organizing, campaign strategizing, relationship-building, collaborative problem-solving, conducting research.

YANA KALMYKA

BROOKLYN, NY / ILR CLASS OF 2021



WORK HIGHLIGHTS

- Assisted SPoT Coffee workers with their union drive through helping establish and train a worker-led Organizing Committee, supporting the authorization card signing process, and planning a community support rally.
- Spearheaded a series of interest meetings around building meaningful community-labor partnerships in Western New York through a process called Bargaining for the Common Good.
- Helped the Area Labor Federation host meetings for union leaders about the Green New Deal and the importance of collaboration between climate justice work and labor organizing.
- Sat in on a collective bargaining session at Kaleida and witnessed negotiations about a contract serving 7,200 workers in hospitals across Buffalo.



WHY I TOOK THE HIGH ROAD

“My fellowship at the Area Labor Federation informed my future career goals in labor organizing. I hope to make a difference in people’s lives through this work by helping communities **build and exercise power** over corporate actors that drive policies impacting working people and their many relevant identities, including class, race, gender, immigrant status, incarceration history, and more.”





ALICE KREHER

CLARENCE, NY / HUM EC CLASS OF 2021



positive
change



WORK HIGHLIGHTS

- Examined New York's lead poisoning prevalence and the sources of lead exposure in New York State.
- Researched a proposal for New York State to take over administration and enforcement of the RRP rule, requiring lead-safe work practices during renovation, repair and painting (RRP), since the EPA currently lacks the resources for strong enforcement.
- Conducted interviews with stakeholders and other states who manage their own RRP programs to determine the costs and benefits of state programs and learn best practices.
- Summarized a recommendation for New York State to take over the RRP rule and analyzed the costs and benefits.

WHY I TOOK THE HIGH ROAD

"Being a High Road Fellow allowed me to work closely with an impactful community organization to translate my Policy Analysis and Management education into **positive change** for an area that is close to my heart."

Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo

The Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo is a 501(c)3 public charity holding more than 800 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 the 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 grantmaking in these areas, the Community Foundation also acts as a community leader and convener to address specific pressing needs in our region.



Community Foundation
for Greater Buffalo

BUFFALO HIGHLIGHT The General Mills plant is right near my workplace, so outside the office it usually smells like Cheerios! (And sometimes it smells like Lucky Charms)

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT Meeting local elected officials, including Congressman Brian Higgins, Assemblymember Sean Ryan, and Mayor Byron Brown. It was empowering to speak with such influential individuals.

INTERESTS Public policy and how economics and statistical research can be used to make informed policy decisions. Especially in policy related to food/agriculture, health, education, and trade.

CONVENTIONAL AND UNCONVENTIONAL SKILLS Qualitative research through interviews. Now experienced Buffalo driver including understanding all the one-way streets and sharing the road with a train.

stimulate growth



JACK MILLAR

HAMBURG, NY / ILR CLASS OF 2022



WNY 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.



BUFFALO HIGHLIGHT Going to the Allentown Arts Festival with the other Fellows.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT Tie: Getting to work with Steve Halpern at the Law Center and brunch at Sean Ryan and Cathy Creighton's house.

INTERESTS Cooking, nutrition, weightlifting, yoga, violin, Buffalo sports, German Shepherds.

CONVENTIONAL AND UNCONVENTIONAL SKILLS Research, public speaking, and Microsoft Suite. Describing various cheeses, charcuterie boards, and oysters to guests at the Grange Community Kitchen.

WORK HIGHLIGHTS

- Helped facilitate a bank regulator visit to the East side of Buffalo with representatives from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, New York Department of Financial Services and BNCRC coalition members.
- Interviewed BNCRC member organizations and learned what different assets, strengths and views they brought to the coalition.
- Created a research report encompassing the history of the Community Reinvestment Act, redlining, and the work of the BNCRC.
- Helped create social media pages and a website for the BNCRC.
- Wrote an op-ed arguing for banks to invest in traditionally redlined communities for economic and moral reasons.

WHY I TOOK THE HIGH ROAD

"I grew up in the Buffalo area and have a lot of pride and affection for the city. I feel strongly that an equitable economic development approach is the best method to **stimulate growth** as well as benefit the people in the city."





SOFIA PETRULLA

WILLIAMSVILLE, NY / ILR CLASS OF 2022



WHY I TOOK THE HIGH ROAD

"I decided to take the High Road because I wanted to **gain exposure** to research and learn about revitalization as it happens currently in Buffalo. I was able to become more familiar with the process of implementing programs and developing a network of resources for community members."



WORK HIGHLIGHTS

- Researched federal, state, and local government funding sources for different homeless initiatives including drop-in centers, emergency shelters, transitional housing, and rapid rehousing.
- Interacted and learned highly effective practices from local service providers and agencies providing linkages, resources, and stability for individuals experiencing homelessness.
- Learned about the systems of Continuum of Care and HMIS and how to enforce and foster collaboration amongst community agencies to improve on gaps in services.
- Became familiar with the trends, demographics, and other statistics regarding youth homelessness.
- Developed a comprehensive "how-to" business plan for a transition aged youth Drop-In Center that will be available for any organization to be used in the construction and operation of such a center.

Homeless Alliance of WNY

The Homeless Alliance of Western New York is the lead agency for both the Continuum of Care (CoC) and the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) in Buffalo, Niagara Falls, Erie, Niagara, Genesee, Wyoming and Orleans Counties. While not a direct services agency, the Alliance's work fosters collaboration in the community to implement best-practice models ensuring everyone has a home.



BUFFALO HIGHLIGHT Being immersed in the greater Buffalo community by attending several events and activities with other Fellows throughout the summer.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT Becoming aware of persistent inequality in the city of Buffalo and becoming more passionate about solving these issues through discussion, raising awareness, and community action.

INTERESTS Human Resources, corporate social responsibility, social enterprises, volunteering, music, art, trying new foods, plants, stickers, politics.

CONVENTIONAL AND UNCONVENTIONAL SKILLS Microsoft Office, marketing, communication, problem solving, team-oriented. Juggling, playing the bassoon, camping.

empowerment

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, 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.



BUFFALO HIGHLIGHT Exploring the city and going to all the different art museums, meeting people from Buffalo, visiting Niagara Falls, eating mochi and sushi for the first time, and Taste of Buffalo.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT Doing detours with other fellows, African American Heritage Corridor, WSPN Leadership Program, watching movies and Tamara taking us to Sonic at 12AM.

INTERESTS Empowering youth through a holistic approach to education, discussing politics and current events with others. Finding inspiration for photos and art.

CONVENTIONAL AND UNCONVENTIONAL SKILLS Research and data analysis, project creation and management, translation, group facilitation, being able to sleep no matter how much coffee I drink.

MELISSA RUIZ HERNANDEZ

IMMOKALEE, FLORIDA / ILR CLASS OF 2022



WORK HIGHLIGHTS

- Created an official Community Schools “Best Practices Guide” for Say Yes and Buffalo Public Schools.
- Collaborated with the Community Schools Director to collect and synthesize data for the Best Practices Guide.
- Researched effective Community Schools programs nationally and summarized them into narrative pieces.
- Completed West Side Promise Neighborhood Leadership Program and received certification in facilitation training, use of public data and financial planning.
- Worked with another fellow to initiate communication between Community Schools Parent Centers and the Center for Employment Opportunities.



WHY I TOOK THE HIGH ROAD

“Sustainability and justice are important to me and the High Road is exactly that. In addition, as someone from a community facing great inequality, I now have a greater understanding that nonprofits and nongovernmental organizations play a big role in the **empowerment** of those who are often left out of the conversation.”





WHY I TOOK THE HIGH ROAD

“After taking a class focused on community-based research, I knew that I wanted an opportunity to experience it. Growing up ‘near’ Buffalo (and being a huge Bills fan!), I am extremely excited to continue to learn what makes Buffalo Buffalo and to be shaped by those experiences in my **future career.**”



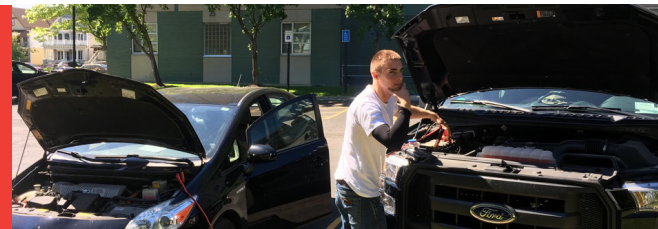
WILL SEIP

ALLEGHANY, NY / CALS CLASS OF 2020



WORK HIGHLIGHTS

- Was a team member of the New Economy Department.
- Researched community solar models and how to “transfer” the energy produced by these panels to the PUSH tenants.
- Researched the pros and cons of purchasing refurbished solar panels when compared to new solar panels.
- Utilized spatial analysis to determine the best location for a community solar array within PUSH’s Green Development Zone.
- Worked on calculating potential costs and a set of guidelines for a greenhouse that will be located with PUSH’s sustainability training center.
- Attended community planning meetings for the Niagara Street Corridor.



PUSH Buffalo

The mission of PUSH Buffalo is to mobilize residents to create strong neighborhoods with quality, affordable housing; to expand local hiring opportunities; and to advance economic justice in Buffalo.



BUFFALO HIGHLIGHT Any of the nights spent walking the streets of Buffalo while eating and talking with the locals.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT Boat tour of the Buffalo River and trip to the Colored Musicians Club. Being a tenor sax player, hearing the names of the people who played at the club was very awe-inspiring!

INTERESTS Considering how the past and present influence the future and incorporating more community engagement when making decisions.

CONVENTIONAL AND UNCONVENTIONAL SKILLS Structured Decision Making (experience with SDM and its application to natural resource management) and spatial analysis.

future career



Westminster Economic Development Initiative

The Westminster Economic Development Initiative (WEDI) began as a mission of Westminster Presbyterian Church to improve the quality of life for residents of Buffalo's West Side, but became a separate 501 (c) 3 organization by 2007. In 2013, WEDI revised its mission and now focuses on offering "business and educational opportunity to people of Buffalo's West Side" in hopes of achieving its vision for a vibrant, stable, and inviting community. WEDI continues to bring together people with determination and desire to turn the West Side into a successful neighborhood and people who have the resources to make it happen.



BUFFALO HIGHLIGHT Visiting the Richardson Olmstead Campus, a National Historic Landmark, and the Hotel Henry on the property with my two supervisors.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT The Friday Education day. Learning about the NYS Teachers Union from Elizabeth Vignaux and the work of Say Yes and Gellenia Smallwood was inspiring.

INTERESTS Social justice, travel, art, spinning, photography, podcasts, sports.

CONVENTIONAL AND UNCONVENTIONAL SKILLS Communication, graphic design and social media, curiosity, self-advocacy, creativity.

ELIZA SHERMAN

PITTSFORD, NY / ILR CLASS OF 2021



WORK HIGHLIGHTS

- Started the creation of a 4-year business development program for incoming vendors at the expansion Bazaar, including providing a format for future trainings to be created and how to continue the process after this summer.
- Developed a comprehensive resource list for vendors to find help in community and online resources.
- Conducted interviews with potential business mentors for West Side Bazaar vendors.
- Brainstormed upcoming events to engage community members with the West Side Bazaar.
- Developed presentation materials for outreach sessions about WEDI's new initiative, the Kitchen @ the Market.



WHY I TOOK THE HIGH ROAD

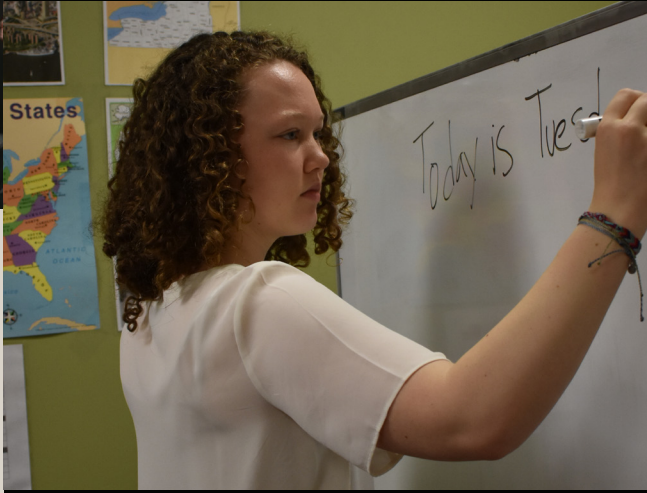
"Growing up in upstate New York, I have been exposed to the glaring disparities in our community. The High Road Fellowship provided me with the initial skills and knowledge necessary to **make an impact** in upstate New York and my community. Although I'm not sure what I want to pursue after graduation, I hope to bring what I learned this summer into future positions in the workplace and continue to stay engaged in whatever community I end up."





OLIVIA SMITH

CINCINNATI, OHIO / ILR CLASS OF 2021



WHY I TOOK THE HIGH ROAD

"I am passionate about equality in the world, and have a specific interest in helping underserved groups of people. I chose to participate in this fellowship program because I want to **make a difference** in the world when I graduate, and this program helped show me what I can do in my community to make it a better place."



WORK HIGHLIGHTS

- Was a member of the English Second Language Initiative (ESL) where she taught daily ESL and citizenship classes to a diverse array of students from Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Sub-Saharan Africa.
- During the summer, three of her students passed their citizenship tests.
- In collaboration with a Democracy Summer Fellow, planned and taught a voting workshop where the students participated in a mock election.
- Scheduled a workers' rights workshop through the WNY Council on Occupational Safety and Health for students to learn about work issues and their rights.
- As "Teacher Livvie" enjoyed the variety of ethnic cuisines her students brought her to show their appreciation!



Jericho 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.



BUFFALO HIGHLIGHT Immersing myself in the greater Buffalo community by attending several events and activities with other fellows throughout the summer.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT Living in one place with the fellows which allowed us to cook, eat, and hang out together all the time. The fellows are the best part of the High Road program; I have made lifelong friends!

INTERESTS Immigrant and Refugee rights and social justice.

CONVENTIONAL AND UNCONVENTIONAL SKILLS Jumped a car with Will. Strengthened my public speaking skills through teaching and learned how to advocate for myself.

make a difference

WNY Women's Foundation

In 1999, the United Way of Buffalo and Erie County and the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo recognized that there was not enough funding or focus on the unique needs of women and girls in our region. Together with a group of diverse women, they created the WNY Women's Fund. They defined a shared vision by establishing a modest endowment fund to support programs specifically geared towards women and girls. An expansive group of leaders and supporters worked tirelessly to grow the WNY Women's Fund into a self-sustaining, independent organization. Nearly two decades later the WNY Women's Foundation is a separate 501(c)3, non-profit organization continually expanding efforts to make Western New York a great place for women and girls to live, work, and grow.



BUFFALO HIGHLIGHT Joined the "Gender in Theodore Roosevelt's Time" reading and conversation series at the TR Inaugural National Historic Site with my supervisor. Amazing conversations took place.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT Living with and spending time with other women who share the same passion for social justice as me. Reading some beautiful poetry and blogs written by other fellows.

INTERESTS Viewing inequality from an intersectional and radical feminism lens including Marxist-feminism, equitable workplaces, and art: museums, galleries, theatre, open mics, architecture and everything in between.

CONVENTIONAL AND UNCONVENTIONAL SKILLS Writing memorandums, letters, and blog posts, making proposals and presenting them, navigating a new city, devising work deliverables and time management.

RIJA TAYYAB

LAHORE, PAKISTAN / ILR CLASS OF 2021



WORK HIGHLIGHTS

- Presented a proposal for GenW to the Board, a new program that will serve as a network of likeminded women, a mentorship program and a learning collaborative. Members will learn from each other, WNYWF Board Members, guest speakers and partner organizations.
- Researched and designed 'Reconnection', a new program to facilitate the reentry of women into the workforce to be integrated into the ALL IN program for Buffalo businesses and individual women.
- Read and evaluated 34 Impact Grant applications with the WNYWF Board and Committee. Learned grant writing and the process of evaluation and grant making by non-profits.
- Completed Essentials of Nonprofit Management Certificate.



WHY I TOOK THE HIGH ROAD

"I loved living with and spending time with other women who share the same passion for social justice as me. We talked about issues in a class setting on Fridays and Wednesday dinners but would **continue the conversation**. I learned so much by just talking to them about their work, interests and passions. I read some beautiful poetry and blogs, learned about different communities, their policies and made lifelong friends."





SIDNEY MALIA WAITE

TUSCON, ARIZONA / ILR CLASS OF 2022



WHY I TOOK THE HIGH ROAD

"I decided to take the 'High Road' and participate in this program because of my passion to engage in non profit work specifically. I wanted to get involved in an organization where **implementing equality** and opportunity were the main goals."



WORK HIGHLIGHTS

- Experienced grassroots campaigns and projects firsthand.
- Created foundational documents for the organization including a financial procedures policy and a personnel policy.
- Learned about Black Land Liberation and researched land trusts as a method for reparations.
- Participated in board recruitment for the organization and a hiring process for a new AmeriCorps volunteer.
- Wrote a successful media advisory for a community update regarding the progress and future of the Land Trust.
- Worked on outreach to the Fruit Belt neighborhood community.
- Participated in an Advocacy Institute workshop to learn about NYS government and strategies to organize and advance policy.

Fruit Belt Community Land Trust

The F.B. Community Land Trust (FBCLT) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization whose mission it is to maintain permanent affordability through community control of land. The FBCLT is a champion for values-aligned development that does not displace longtime residents in the historic Fruit Belt and beyond.



BUFFALO HIGHLIGHT The weather and the abundance of art and murals all around the city.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT The Friday we did a poetry workshop with Atina Fareed Cooke ("A.I. the Anomaly").

INTERESTS Social justice, civil rights law, film - documentaries.

CONVENTIONAL AND UNCONVENTIONAL SKILLS Writing.





VALERIE WEISBECK

ALDEN, NY / CALS CLASS OF 2020

Partnership for the Public Good

The Partnership for the Public Good is working to build a more just, sustainable and culturally vibrant Greater Buffalo through action-oriented research, policy development and citizen engagement. With over 270 affiliated partners, PPG develops an annual Community Agenda of policy planks, hosts a weekly radio show, and produces publications and other resources to give the nonprofit community and citizens a stronger voice in public policy.



PARTNERSHIP
FOR THE
PUBLIC GOOD

BUFFALO HIGHLIGHT Attending the Bisons game with the High Road cohort even though none of us knew anything about baseball, plus the birthday party that the High Roaders threw for me which was extremely thoughtful.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT The workshops: one with John Washington from PUSH Buffalo who talked about inequity and the poetry workshop with Aitina Fareed Cooke.

INTERESTS Urban agriculture, animal agriculture, food systems, youth development, popular/informal education, agricultural education, urban sociology, demography..

CONVENTIONAL AND UNCONVENTIONAL SKILLS Public speaking, creating presentations, teaching/leading classrooms, time management and planning, engaging the public. Makeup, baking, gardening.



WORK HIGHLIGHTS

- Created a universal course outline template that can be used for any one- to three-hour civic education course.
- Completed research on high school civic education requirements across the country to identify gaps in the curriculum in order to empower young adults to vote and get involved in their own communities.
- Wrote pitches to market civic education courses to high schools, block clubs, and non-profit organizations.
- Taught a course across two days to 4-H Youth CAN participants on Buffalo and local government, how to get involved in one's own community, and how to effect change on an issue.
- Edited and updated local government fact sheets on PPG's website to reflect newly elected representatives.

unique

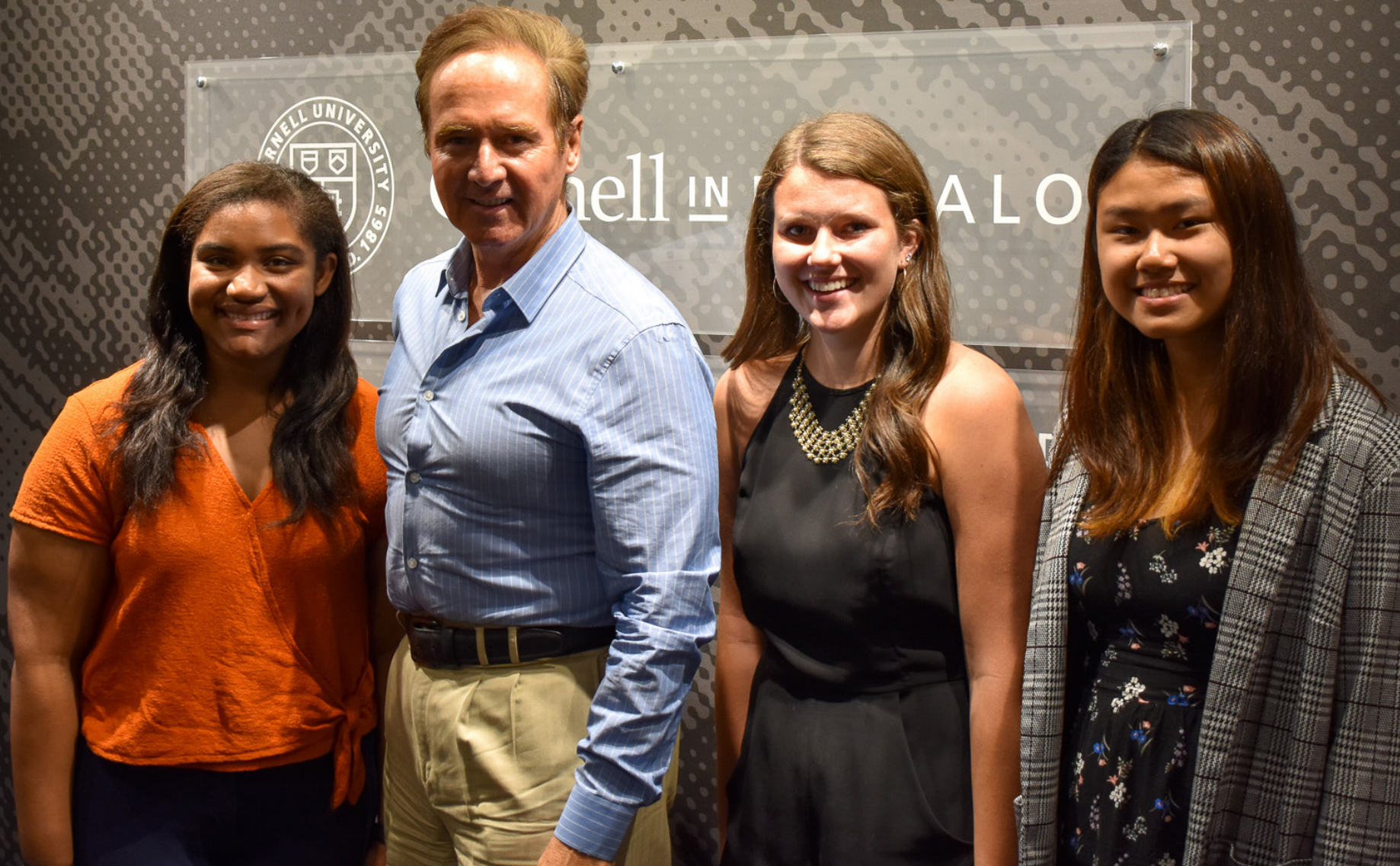


WHY I TOOK THE HIGH ROAD

"I did High Road because I wanted to learn about and give back to the city that I care so much about because it's a really **unique place**, and I'm proud to have grown up here. Through my work I was able to apply skills and knowledge that I have gained during my Cornell career."



DEMOCRACY SUMMER





Assemblymember Sean Ryan

Assemblymember Ryan was elected to the NYS Assembly in 2011. He currently chairs the Committee on Libraries and Education Technology. Assembly Member Ryan is a graduate of SUNY College at Fredonia and Brooklyn Law School, and is admitted to practice law in New York State. Assemblymember Ryan's broad legal experience includes work for Neighborhood Legal Services, private law practice collaboration with the Learning Disabilities Association of WNY, concentrating on the rights of disabled students, and the Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo. In 2008, Assembly Member Ryan began working with People United for Sustainable Housing, Inc. to create the Buffalo Neighborhood Stabilization Company, Inc. (BNSC). He served as the Executive Director and General Counsel of BNSC and worked to create a redevelopment plan for a section of the West Side of Buffalo.

BUFFALO HIGHLIGHT Attending and tabling at World Refugee Day-meeting new people, learning about their experiences, and encouraging them to fill out a survey about citizenship and voting.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT Hearing from different non-profit organizations, and meeting new people, I learned so much more about Buffalo. It was most exciting hearing about all of the incredible solutions to various issues.

INTERESTS Law and public policy, economic development, immigration and refugee policies.

CONVENTIONAL AND UNCONVENTIONAL SKILLS Communication skills-written and verbal. Problem solver-takes initiative. Open mindedness-always willing to listen to others opinions and learn from them.

EMILY BLANCHARD

ALBION, NY / ILR CLASS OF 2021



High Road values

WORK HIGHLIGHTS

- Interviewed refugees and community leaders around Buffalo learning about their experiences.
- Administered a survey to refugee and immigrant communities asking about the barriers to citizenship and voting. Attended cultural festivals and community meetings to raise awareness about the survey.
- Met with a number of stakeholders including the director of the City's Office of New Americans to inform her research.
- Brainstormed policy reform with the office and researched potential solutions to address these barriers to voting and citizenship for refugees.
- In collaboration with the High Road Fellow at Jericho Road, planned and conducted a Voting Rights Workshop for refugees.
- Attended press conferences, meetings, and tours.



WHY I TOOK THE HIGH ROAD

"I hope that my contributions this summer empower members of the community that I call home, to acknowledge the difficulties we are facing, and to use the **high road values** to address these issues. I hope that my work can support the equitable economic, social, and political development that the high road values."





WHY I TOOK THE HIGH ROAD

“My US government professor once said, ‘all action and change starts from the **grassroots level**’, and that quote stuck with me. The High Road Fellowship provided numerous opportunities for me to understand this quote. The High Road Fellowship reflects a lot of my passion and interest in social justice and helping people, and I met equally passionate students in this Fellowship.”



WENDY LAU

NEW YORK, NY / A&S CLASS OF 2022

WORK HIGHLIGHTS

- Wrote 39 constituent correspondence letters on various topics including transportation, health, education, environmental conservation, elections, and finance.
- Conducted outreach to various organizations as part of event planning for the Say Yes Dorm Room Drive and the Single Mom's Club Event Summer in the City. Volunteered to build a community garden at Summer in the City.
- Sat in on meetings the Senator had with Planned Parenthood, Cheektowaga Town Supervisor, and Lackawanna Council President.
- Researched the past 50 years of transportation bond acts in NY state and research on different forms of sustainable transportation across the US for possible implementation in NY state.



Seantor Timothy Kennedy

Senator Kennedy was sworn into office in January 2011 and currently chairs the Transportation Committee. Whether it's advocating for better funding for first responders, demanding state fixes to crumbling roads and bridges, working to get the fair share of treatment facilities for those suffering from prescription drug addiction, or fighting for more residential options for those with developmental disabilities, the Senator is a strong voice for Western New York. A lifelong Buffalonian, Senator Kennedy received his bachelor's and master's degrees at D'Youville College. Recognizing that any challenge is an opportunity, he was inspired to get involved in government to help move the community forward.

BUFFALO HIGHLIGHT I almost missed my stop on the bus ride to work, thankfully my bus driver remembered me and my stop, and gave me a reminder that it was my stop - city of good neighbors for you!

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT Giving a speech for the first time at the Youth Climate Rally in front of City was exhilarating and meaningful and ending with the MLK Jr.'s quote on our input of the environment

INTERESTS Swimming, exploring new places, trying new food, watching Trevor Noah videos on Youtube, and anything related to policy, politics, service work, sustainability, and helping people.

CONVENTIONAL AND UNCONVENTIONAL SKILLS Organized, read the news everyday, cook basic meals, good listening skills. Licensed as a lifeguard, can eat rice everyday and not get tired of it.

grassroots level

new community

Assemblymember Crystal Peoples-Stokes

Crystal D. Peoples-Stokes has faithfully served New York State's 141st Assembly district since 2003. In January 2019, she was elevated to become the majority leader of the New York State Assembly. An advocate with clear and principled service, she has always put people and policy before politics. She was appointed as Chair of the Assembly's Committee on Governmental Operations in 2015. In June 2017, she was voted by her colleagues to be Chair of the New York State Legislative Women's Caucus which is a bi-partisan and bi-cameral group. Assembly Member Peoples-Stokes continues to fearlessly fight for diversity in New York state. She has been an integral part of ensuring that Minority and Women Owned Businesses have a fair chance in obtaining state contracts.

BUFFALO HIGHLIGHT Visiting Niagara Falls.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT Attending the Press Conference for the African American Veteran's Monument.

INTERESTS Public policy.

CONVENTIONAL AND UNCONVENTIONAL SKILLS Writing and poetry.

TAMARA PALMS

LAKE CHARLES, LOUISIANA / ILR CLASS OF 2022



WORK HIGHLIGHTS

- In support of the pending Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act, researched and wrote a memo on how legalization could be rooted in racial and economic justice including revenue being prioritized towards impacted communities.
- Reviewed how other municipalities have legislated marijuana decriminalization and identified challenges and solutions concerning criminal justice issues
- Assisted with a press conference for the new African American Veteran's Monument.
- Attended the NAACP Annual Fundraiser and the Buffalo Community Action Organization Fundraiser.
- Helped organize a community movie night in the district.
- With senior staff, represented the Majority Leader at community events and assisted with constituent relations.



WHY I TOOK THE HIGH ROAD

"I decided to take the High Road this summer to broaden my experiences by immersing myself into a **new community** while also engaging in community-based participatory research."



IMPACT

“The work the students provided was **invaluable** as it was work that myself or others had previously attempted to pursue, but were unable due to other priorities and constraints on our time. Their work has the potential to bring in additional funding for our work and to expand our leverage in regards to our Community Benefits Agreements.”

Kathryn Franco, WNY Law Center

“Valerie and Laura exceeded our expectations this summer. They brought their own ideas and **innovative methods** to every project. Valerie used her expertise in youth engagement to help us build a new civics curriculum, and Orlando wants it on the record that he has dubbed her a future US Secretary of Agriculture. Laura used her background in media to produce a bail reform toolkit and short documentary, and Andrea was impressed by her diplomatic approach – surely an asset for her future career in public service!”

Andrea Ó Súilleabháin & Orlando Dickson, Partnership for the Public Good



“Rija was able to help us create a plan for the development of our young leadership council to allow for a smooth launch in a couple of months. This will be impactful for young women who are interested in pursuing leadership positions, and provide an arena for them to skill-build and network with more experienced leaders. The second project will have an impact on women returning to the workplace after being out of the workforce for a period of time. These women will have the opportunity to reengage and not lose traction on pursuing their goals, which will **impact their lifelong income and independency**.”

Mary Ieraci, WNY Women's Foundation

“Eliza was an **asset** to WEDI during her time here. Eliza understood the mission and vision of our organization very well and the training programs that she developed will be used for the new clients intakes at the expansion Bazaar space. Eliza has various skills in developing training programs, finding resources and partners programs in the community, graphic design, and even face painting!”

Purnima Mohan, Westminster Economic Development Initiative

“Sophia put together a business plan for a potential Transition Age Drop-In Center that will be used as a basis for providers to apply to funders sources to implement. It has the potential to **positively affect the lives of thousands** of homeless and couch surfing youth.”

Dale Zuchlewski, Homeless Alliance of WNY

“Shayla served as a mentor to the teens in the program and **modeled success**. They appreciated her being there and that added a lot of value to our summer program. The amount of time she saved me added a lot to my sense of sanity!”

Sara Jablonski, Cornell Cooperative Extension

thank you supervisors

HAPPENINGS

COLORED MUSICIANS CLUB



FRIDAY IMMERSIONS

JUNE 7

The Economy is Not the Weather: Popular Political Action for a Just Economy

PRESENTATION ON BUFFALO-NIAGARA: HOW ARE WE REALLY DOING?

- Jaison Abel, NY Federal Reserve

DISCUSSION ON COMMUNITY CONTROLLED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Aaron Bartley, ILR Visiting Activist Scholar

LUNCH WITH NYS ASSEMBLYMEMBER SEAN RYAN

TOUR PUSH GREEN DEVELOPMENT ZONE WITH RAHWA GHIRMATZION



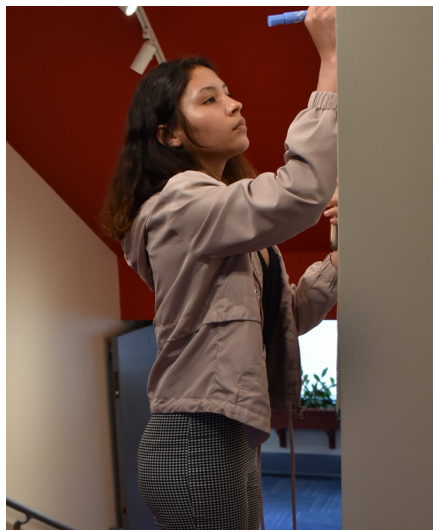
JUNE 14

Fighting Inequality

POWER + PRAXIS THEORIES OF CHANGE AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZING Fellows explored what is meant by economy, its relationship to ecology, and to learn about steps that can be taken to create a more just, sustainable and participatory economy for workers, community members and the planet.

- John Washington, PUSH Buffalo

TOUR NORTHLAND WORKFORCE TRAINING CENTER an industry-driven, public-private partnership between employers, educational institutions, community and faith-based organizations and state and local government focused on closing the skills gap of the local labor pool and creating economic on-ramps for Western New Yorkers



JUNE 21

A Green City: Prioritizing Environmental Justice

PANEL DISCUSSION ON ASSETS AND STRATEGIES FOR A GREEN-BLUE BUFFALO-NIAGARA

- Lynda Schneekloth, Sierra Club
- Harper Bishop, PUSH Buffalo

DISCUSSION A JUST TRANSITION A successful joint campaign built between a local environmental justice organization and organized labor in response to a coal fired power plant in the decommissioning process.

- Richard Lipsitz, WNY Area Labor Federation AFL-CIO
- Rebecca Newberry, Clean Air Coalition

YOUTH CLIMATE JUSTICE RALLY

TOUR OF THE BUFFALO RIVER



JUNE 28

Closing the Equity Gap in Education

PANEL DISCUSSION ON EDUCATION POLICY AND COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVES FOR SUCCESS How nonprofit organizations and labor collaborate with other actors to strengthen the local community and economy by investing in the education of the city's future.

- Gellenia Smallwood, Say Yes Buffalo
- Elizabeth Vignaux, NYSUT

TOUR FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT DARWIN MARTIN HOUSE



JULY 12

Art and Activism

POETRY AS A VISIONARY

RESISTANCE To honor the power of poetry and spoken word in shifting culture, expanding possibilities, and shaping revolutionary ideas and actions.

- Aitina Fareed-Cooke, Get Fokus'd Productions

LUNCH WITH ILR ASSISTANT DEAN OF HR DENISE BROWN-HART

TOUR OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE COORIDOR

- George Scott, Colored Musicians Club
- George Arthur, Nash House
- Lillie Wiley-Upshaw, Michigan Street Baptist Church



JULY 19

Building the Next Buffalo

MEET WITH US CONGRESSMAN BRIAN HIGGINS

PANEL DISCUSSION ON POLICY, POWER, AND RADICAL IMAGINATION

- Andrew Delmonte, PUSH Buffalo
- Kathryn Franco, WNY Law Center

LUNCH WITH PROFESSOR SHANNON GLEESON ON THE TOMPKINS COUNTY IMMIGRANT RIGHTS COALITION

MEET WITH MAYOR BYRON BROWN
TOUR OF CITY HALL



PRIOR TO PLACEMENT...

PRE-COURSE

ILR Buffalo Co-Lab faculty and staff have developed credit courses to enhance Fellows' field experiences and to deepen their academic understanding of the social economy. During the spring semester, Fellows take a pre-course that introduces them to the types of organizations they'll be working with, familiarizes them with economic development theory, gives a brief economic history of Buffalo and explores the challenges, opportunities and assets of this classic rust-belt city experiencing a dynamic revitalization.



ORIENTATION

HIGH ROAD VALUES

WELCOME LUNCH FOR 2019 FELLOWS WITH SUPERVISORS

BUFFALO STORIES WITH KARIMA AMIN "Knowing that every culture has its stories, I believe that storytelling is a perfect medium for teaching about the customs, traditions, and history of a people.... listeners come to know that we are united by common human experiences in spite of our differences."

GUIDED TOUR OF BUFFALO

- Aaron Bartley, ILR Visiting Scholar
- .Orlando Dickson, Partnership for the Public Good





“D” (ISCOVERY) TOURS

High Road and Democracy Summer Fellowships are true immersions. As part of the fellowships, students had the opportunity to participate and support a number of community initiatives and discovery tours – “High Road Detours”. Over the course of the summer in groups and as individuals, students completed over **280 hours** of cultural, civic and service events throughout the city.

Highlights included Juneteenth Festival, volunteering with the Salvation Army’s Kids Night, Shakespeare in Delaware Park, Buffalo Reading Invasion, and First Friday at the Albright Knox.



BCAT Food is Art event



Students on the hunt for the best wings in East Aurora



Taste of Diversity Festival



A Community Discussion on the Rise of Hate, Racism, and Intolerance with Bill Fletcher

FACULTY SPEAKER SERIES

As part of the annual Cornell faculty speaker series, the High Road welcomed **Sergio Garcia-Rios**, Assistant Professor of Government and Latina/o studies at Cornell University, to Buffalo for a talk titled “Making It Home: How Immigrants are Redefining Incorporation, Assimilation, and Identity”.

The talk chronicled his research findings that Latinos are not outliers, but a continuation of a long tradition of immigrants, who came to this country and enriched its identity and culture with their own. The event was co-sponsored by the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site, Cornell Club of Greater Buffalo and Partnership for the Public Good.

During his visit Professor Garcia-Rios also met with students and fellowship hosts including the West Side Bazaar and Say Yes to Education.



CORNELL CLUB OUTINGS

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. This summer, fellows joined alumni for a **Potluck Picnic** and the **Class of 2023 Student Send-Off**.



SUMMER SHOWCASE

Students capped their summer off with a community performance of **campaign speeches, poetry, photography, and videography** at Ujima Theatre Company. Audience members included friends, family, placement supervisors, as well as guests from Engaged Cornell and George Boyer, ILR Academic Dean.



High Road Poem
By Sherell Farmer

Like my father
Me
And my sister
And brother,
Are fluent in hood and academia.
In speaking both languages, I realize there is very little
difference between the two.
Supply and demand economics touch the streets of Bed
Stuy the same way that
Goldwin Smith & Klarman hall seem to hold hands with
one another.

So,
Why it increasingly so, that I feel as if I have to choose
which language, which world, my mouth belongs to?
Especially, since I feel as if it belongs to both.
I love the way that my tongue curls when I say “facts”
and “nah,” the same way I relish the syllables bouncing
off of my lips when I say furthermore.

When two entities don’t understand each other,
Do not touch one another,
They’ll always reject each other.

I long to see Brooklyn Black Mothers &
Buffalo Refugee Fathers pursuing PhDs coexisting with
professors who understand that rap music is not all
drugs and strippers, but the cultural expression of a
people .

Until we live in a society that doesn’t promote such a
strict dichotomy,
That doesn’t foster a continuous us vs them narrative,
inequity shall persist.
Identity is rooted in more than in institutions.

Political
By Sidney Malia Waite

The problem
Is my response to the question
The question:
Why do politics matter?
My response:
I have absolutely no idea.
So that is the problem
And equally the point.
You would think
That if politics were so important
They would then be more accessible
Politics would be taught
In your average school
Elementary. Middle. High
Private. Charter. Public.
Maybe I got duped.
No politics in my school.
Or we all got duped.
No politics in any school.
“That’s too political”
“Stay neutral”
“We don’t discuss that in the classroom”
So politics must not be
Very important at all.

The Token Black
By Tamara Palms

A token for your thoughts, a token for your efforts,
But, no longer will they be needed.
I’m afraid to say, that The Token Black will no longer be
an acceptable form of payment.

I know that this may cause some dismay,
But there is a bright side to doing things this way.

You can keep your Darnell’s at home, and Javon’s locked
away.
No longer must you claim February as your favorite
month
Or pretend you have a clue about the meaning of that
crazy Erykah Badu.
The days of dangling trivial black culture in your pockets
are through.

But, even though the Token Black may not be accepted
Appropriation can still be as easy as expected.
Forms of payment? That’s easy.
Just pay us with that bill; that represents us.

Oh dear, there isn’t a bill
What about that Harriet Tubman bill?
That wasn’t a done deal?

Well that’s too bad
The Token Black is no longer accepted.
The Dollar Black is now expected.



Black Metamorphosis by Sidney Malia Waite

Defining Good Together: An Agenda By and For the Community.

OUR PRIORITIES FOR 2019 >



Partnership for the Public Good (PPG) is a backbone organization building a more just, sustainable and culturally vibrant Buffalo. PPG partners run the gamut of Buffalo's dynamic social sector including: block clubs, prisoners' rights groups, legal services, organized labor, arts and cultural, human service agencies and social enterprises.

Each year Partnership for the Public Good directs an annual **Community Agenda** process which identifies the most pressing policy issues. The Agenda is a blueprint for PPG's strategy for applied research and policy development. A true practice of grassroots democracy, each plank is a community-identified need with suggested policy solutions. Some High Road projects are built around Community Agenda planks—showing the interconnectedness of the work, building capacity for partner organizations, and allowing students to make meaningful contributions to these initiatives.

In 2016 PPG and Cornell ILR created **Buffalo Commons** as a model of university-community produced knowledge for the public good. Collaborative and democratic in design and purpose, Buffalo Commons is a digital library, a network and a space for collective knowledge sharing, promoting greater understanding of the local area via reports, policy briefs, fact sheets, radio shows, and artistic expressions. Buffalo Commons hosts a diverse network of faculty, students, practitioners, and community partners dedicated to exploring Buffalo-based inquiries.

PPG is the ideal community partner for the High Road Fellowships. Student projects vary in topic and skill building but they all reflect the strong network that PPG has fostered in its vision to build a better Buffalo.





High Roaders and Democracy Summer Fellows with City of Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown.

FACULTY AND STAFF



Lou Jean Fleron
Director of ILR Buffalo
Co-Lab

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

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 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.



Micaela Lipman
Graduate Assistant

Micaela Lipman is a Postgraduate Fellow with the High Road Fellowships. She was a High Road Fellow herself in 2012 while completing her bachelor's degree at Cornell University. Since graduation in 2015, she worked in academia and the nonprofit sector to explore creative solutions where food policy, economic equality, and community organizing meet. She has worked on county-level projects with food policy councils, regional projects in upstate New York, and international projects in Uganda, Rwanda, Ecuador, and Colombia. Micaela will begin a doctoral program at the University of Buffalo in 2019 to continue her research on using community development as a tool to counter systemic inequalities within the food system.



Nicole Golias
Communications and
Program Support
Specialist

Nicole Golias is the Communications and Program Support Specialist for ILR Buffalo Co-Lab assisting the High Road Fellowships and Buffalo Commons. She earned a BS from Cornell University's College of Human Ecology in 2017 studying how to craft and implement effective policy that takes all people into account. Prior to joining the extension office, she taught middle school special education. During her time at Cornell, Nicole conducted research as part of the Policy Analysis and Management Lab and was a Brand Ambassador for Teach For America.



Sam Magavern
Adjunct Professor,
Cornell ILR

Sam Magavern is a senior policy fellow at the Partnership for the Public Good and teaches at the Cornell University ILR School and the University at Buffalo School of Law. A graduate of Harvard University and the UCLA Law School, he also serves as an attorney for the City of Buffalo Living Wage Commission and as a Niagara River Greenway Commissioner. His publications range from scholarly articles to comic books, including a non-fiction book (Primo Levi's Universe), a novel (Ooh La La), a movie (The Last Word), and a book of poetry (Noah's Ark).



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. 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.



Shannon Gleeson
Associate Professor,
Cornell ILR

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. 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. Her 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).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cornell University and the ILR School live their Land Grant mission, creating knowledge for the common good across New York State, and beyond. The brilliant research, teaching, and community engagement of campus colleagues anchors and enriches our applied field work. The collaborative two-lane high road between Ithaca and Buffalo is continuously built by countless collaborators. Special thanks to:

PROFESSOR KATHERINE MCCOMAS, Vice Provost for Engagement and Land Grant Affairs

PROFESSOR ALEXANDER COLVIN, ILR School Dean

PROFESSOR GEORGE BOYER, ILR Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

CORNELL UNIVERSITY OFFICE OF ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES

MANY RESIDENT AND EXTENSION FACULTY ACROSS SCHOOLS AND DEPARTMENTS

Community partners are the grassroots innovators, organizers, leaders and practical experts who are building a better Buffalo in daily life. Special thanks to:

WESTERN NEW YORK STATE REPRESENTATIVES

Especially Assembly Member Sean Ryan, Assembly Majority Leader Crystal Peoples-Stokes and Senator Tim Kennedy

HIGH ROAD ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ERIE COUNTY EXECUTIVE MARK POLONCARZ

MAYOR BYRON BROWN

LEGISLATOR APRIL BASKIN

CORNELL CLUB OF GREATER BUFFALO

CANISIUS COLLEGE

UJIMA THEATRE

OISHEI FOUNDATION



THE HIGH ROADS PROGRAM

DOES GREAT THINGS FOR BUFFALO

THANK YOU HIGH ROADERS

ILR Buffalo Co-Lab

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Haiku by George Boyer, ILR Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs