



FELLOWSHIP FOR EMERGING LEADERS IN PUBLIC SERVICE ALUMNI CONNECTION

UPCOMING EVENTS

FELPS BOOK CLUB
Thurs., Dec. 2, 6:00pm
@ NYU Wagner
 Jersey Conference Room,
 295 Lafayette St.
 RSVP: markliu1@gmail.com

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**HOLIDAY PARTY**  
**Mon., Dec. 13, 6:30pm**  
**@ NYU Open House**  
 528 La Guardia Place  
 (W. 3rd and Bleecker)  
 Hors d'oeuvres and bar  
 drinks will be served.

**Alumni are complimentary.**  
**Significant others are invited**  
**at a cost of \$20 to partially**  
**defray the cost of their**  
**attendance.**

To attend, you must RSVP to  
 wagner.felps@nyu.edu.

### 2010-2011 ALUMNI BOARD

**Jeremy Coffey** ('09), President  
*The Clinton School for Writers  
and Artists*

**Mark Liu** ('08), Vice President  
*Memorial Sloan-Kettering  
Cancer Center*

**Sean Corlett** ('10)  
*Brooklyn Democracy  
Academy*

**Jessica Leavitt** ('08)  
*Per Scholas*

**Ly Nguyen** ('10)  
*Public Interest Projects*

**Taku Noguchi** ('07)  
*Goldman Sachs*

**Rhiannon O'Leary** ('09)  
*Teach For America*

**Samuel Pierre** ('09)  
*NYC Office of the Mayor*

### A MESSAGE FROM THE FELPS ALUMNI BOARD PRESIDENT

Dear Fellowship Alumni,

I hope you receive this edition of our quarterly newsletter well rested before the holiday season.

I would like to welcome Jessica Leavitt ('08) to the Alumni Board. Jessica is vice president of national expansion for Per Scholas, Inc., a nonprofit social venture committed to breaking the cycle of poverty through education and technology.

There are some fun ways to connect with alums coming up.

If you want to expand your knowledge about public service or love to read, you're invited to the kick-off of a new FELPS Book Club on December 2 at NYU Wagner. It will be a chance to decide on books, meeting times and more.

I also invite you to join the 2011 Class, the Alumni Board, and your fellow alumni for the FELPS Holiday Party on December 13. This year the event will be held at the NYU Open House Event Space at 528 LaGuardia Place between West 3rd and Bleecker Streets. Once again

we will be collecting donations for Toys for Tots.

The Alumni Board is planning a host of activities for the coming year, so please keep an eye out for information in the FELPS Classifieds in your inbox twice a month. I encourage you not only to read them, but also to send us new opportunities to share with the broader FELPS alumni community.

I hope to see you at the Holiday Party or another event soon!

Best, Jeremy Coffey ('09)

### FELPS WELCOMES THE 2011 FELLOWS



The 2011 fellowship year is now in full swing! On November 6, the 30 Fellows of the 2011 Class completed an Orientation filled with team-building activities, including a scavenger hunt through Greenwich Village and happy hour with alumni.



*Top: 2011 Fellows Cynthia Thaler, Chris Rominger, Tedde Tsang and Allie Bryan at Orientation.*

*Bottom: 2011 Fellows Phillip Kleefield, Hannah Robbins, Alison Ongvorapong and Matt Moran during the Orientation Scavenger Hunt.*

Two accomplished senior directors have joined the program as Career Guides this year: Jack Schnirman, vice president of Management Consulting at Bowne Management Systems, and Alexandra Sica, senior director at The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

We also have five incredible Alumni Guides: Jeremy Coffey '09, Jessica Leavitt '08, Mark Liu '08, Aden Munassar '10, and Ly Nguyen '10.

See the complete list and bios of the 2011 Fellows and Guides here: [wagner.nyu.edu/felps](http://wagner.nyu.edu/felps)

If you have questions or ideas for alumni programs or would like to say hello, please stay in touch!

Warmly,  
 Colleen SchwartzCoffey & Mo Coffey  
 colleen.coffey@nyu.edu and  
 wagner.felps@nyu.edu



## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: NEIL BLUMENTHAL

"If you think about it, the best business ideas are ones that solve everyday problems," Neil Blumenthal ('06) says. He knows firsthand. The company he co-founded, Warby Parker, sells high-quality, fashionable eyewear for less than a quarter of the price of comparable frames bearing the name of a luxury brand.

The idea behind Warby Parker is to give customers a better deal for a product of the same, or better, quality. Ever wonder why a plastic eyeglass frame at a store costs \$400+? As Neil explains, a couple of multi-billion dollar companies have had a stranglehold over every phase of the production of eyewear and lenses – from manufacturing to licensing to the retail shops where we shop. As a result, they have the ability to inflate prices with artificial fees and generate astronomical profit margins.

"We're trying to transfer wealth back to the consumer," Neil says.

Warby Parker partners with a manufacturer, lens maker, and assembly plant to produce its custom glasses, while removing the excess fees. For \$95,

customers get a stylish, exclusive design acetate frame fitted with prescription polycarbonate, anti-reflective lenses. Shipping is free.

For every pair that is bought, one is donated to a nonprofit that will distribute it to a person in need. To date, they have distributed glasses to 24 countries.

Neil's path to eyewear entrepreneurship isn't entirely out of the blue. After graduating from Tufts in 2002, he worked for VisionSpring – a social enterprise whose goal is to make eyewear affordable for people in need across the world. The company had one employee when Neil started. He worked in El Salvador and then helped the program expand to ten countries with a team of 20.

Neil saw firsthand the impact that a pair of eyeglasses could have on a person's ability to live and work in developing countries. He also saw the dire consequences of not being able to correct poor vision for farmers and workers whose livelihoods depended on the ability to see well. By the time Neil entered the



Wharton School of Business in 2008, he had not only become passionate about the cause, he had learned the workings of the eyewear manufacturing industry.

In his first semester at Wharton, Neil met the three future co-founders of his company. Through their conversations, the idea for Warby Parker soon crystallized around visions of high-quality product, a consumer-friendly culture and an overarching desire to create positive change.

Four weeks after launching out of an apartment in Philadelphia in February 2010, Warby Parker sold out of their top 15 lines and had a 20,000-person waitlist. The founders (still students at Wharton), their families and girlfriends found themselves working around the clock to fill orders.

Today, Warby Parker has an infrastructure to support its online sales model, having invested in innovative "virtual try-on" Web technology, a free home trial system and extensive customer service. The company moved into an office in Union Square and is poised to launch more designs.

The company has also been named one of *Entrepreneur* magazine's Annual 100 Brilliant Ideas and has been featured by media outlets including *GQ*, *Vogue*, and Daily Candy.

They recently partnered with the Susan G. Komen for the Cure foundation to create an exclusive pink frame, and \$50 of each sale goes toward breast cancer research and education. Warby Parker is also looking to increase its partnerships with nonprofits.

As Neil talks about product expansion and the future of his company, he asks, "How can we do more?" – for the product, consumers, employees and causes around the world.

- By Taku Noguchi ('07)

## PUBLIC SERVICE BOOK REVIEW: THE PRICE OF STONES

Over the past few years, a new Nyaka AIDS Orphans School in Uganda. The work is distinguished within the genre by entrepreneurship such as *Three Cups of Tea* and *Mountains Beyond Mountains* authorship; Kaguri writes about his own experience as a beneficiary of the bestseller lists and, in the entrepreneur and beneficiary process, enhanced popular community member.

awareness of some of the world's most intractable problems and innovative solutions.

Among the genre's newest additions is Twesigye Jackson Kaguri's *The Price of Stones*, an account of the development of the Upon his return to Uganda,

Kaguri is horrified by the ravages of AIDS and vows to open the country's first free school for AIDS orphans. Despite enormous obstacles, Kaguri relentlessly pursues and ultimately realizes this vision.

foregoes serious effort to connect the personal to the global. Kaguri is intent on simply telling a story. *The Price of Stones* leaves the reader to relate the story to broader questions about global problems and solutions.

- By Andy Felder ('09)

Kaguri relates his story in an intensely personal manner, vividly illustrating firsthand experiences and private emotions. This inward focus renders the book fresh and enjoyable, but it also limits the book's breadth, as Kaguri etc. Email: markliu1@gmail.com

Join the FELPS Book Club at 6:00pm on December 2 in the Jersey Conference Room at NYU Wagner. The get-together will be a chance to decide the types of books to read, meeting dates, work etc. Email: markliu1@gmail.com



### **SERIES ON SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP:**

#### **PRESIDENT'S SOCIAL INNOVATION FUND**

Amid political controversies, target limited resources where many people might have missed a new effort from the Obama Administration to put federal funds in the hands of social entrepreneurs. In July 2010, the White House, in partnership with private foundations, awarded \$123 million to 11 different nonprofits across the country. The new initiative is aptly titled the President's Social Innovation Fund (SIF), and will be run out of a new office in the White House. Of note to New Yorkers should be the large amount of money awarded to the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, which totals about \$5.7 million.

The SIF is dedicated to addressing increasing healthcare needs, closing the gap in achievement for low-income children and taking on economic challenges. To that end, the fund will be awarding money to a portfolio of organizations selected through a rigorous process that demonstrate the desire and ability to find solutions for problems in healthcare, education, youth development and personal financial management. The portfolio's efforts will reach across 20 states.

"This portfolio is a collection of extraordinary organizations with an unparalleled body of knowledge and expertise on growing what works," said Patrick Corvington, director of the organization managing the SIF. "They are all driven by the search for bold solutions and recognize that we must use evidence to

they will have the greatest impact."

The grants include \$74 million in private donations, which, when combined with federal funds, total \$123 million.

Of that remarkable sum, \$7.7 million will go to Jobs for the Future, an organization that provides training and technical education to unemployed adults to provide them with marketable job skills. The two-year grant will be used to expand the organization's operation, allowing it to work with more than 23,000 low-income individuals while addressing the skill needs of more than 1,000 employers.

Other organizations receiving grants include the National AIDS Fund, which will receive \$3.6 million, and the Edna McDonnell Clark Foundation, which will receive \$10 million. Of the 11 organizations receiving funds, eight will be selecting subgrantees.

Paul Carttar, director of the Social Innovation Fund, said the program "offers an avenue for community-driven solutions to grow and demonstrate their value."

Funding will be awarded by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). The CNCS was established in 1993 to meet the needs of the United States' most vulnerable citizens.

- By Meghan McCormick ('09)

### **CAREER GUIDE SPOTLIGHT:**

#### **LETICIA SMITH-EVANS**



When you read Leticia Smith-Evans's bio, the instant reaction is "Wow." Leticia's career has spanned sectors – from government to elementary and post-secondary education to the private sector to civil rights – and along the way she has earned several degrees and received

in college, however, History of the 1960s, she had a change of heart.

Currently, Leticia works at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund (LDF) as an assistant counsel, where she focuses specifically on beginning their careers in public education-related cases and service: "Take advantage of every initiative. Her work opportunity, whether that encompasses a wide range of opportunity is what you thought issues, from desegregation of schools to school disciplinary can, network, think about what policies and practices. For you're passionate about, be Leticia, the best part of her job is humble and kind, and always working with people who are all remember to give back."

Leticia also believes it is important for those starting their careers in public service to understand that change won't happen immediately and if and when it happens, it may not be exactly the change you want to see. These victories shouldn't be taken lightly, however; they still signify an important impact.

Dedicating her life's work to racial justice comes from a deep connection to issues of race and inequity that Leticia has cultivated since she was young, having grown up with many strong civil rights advocates.

What's next for Leticia? For now, she is enjoying her work at LDF and intends on staying put. She is also excited about continuing

Like many of us, Leticia's passion for public service comes from an inherent desire to help people. Service, she says is "just part of her core." To fulfill her personal mission of helping others, Leticia initially thought she would pursue medicine. After one class

to serve as a Career Guide. In the future, you may find Leticia on TV or radio; one of the things she would love to do is host her own broadcast program. With a career as diverse as hers, this next step would be no surprise.

- By Ly Nguyen ('10)

Stay in touch! Visit the FELPS Web site and click on the alumni connection link to update your information and see what the alumni network has to offer: <http://wagner.nyu.edu/FELPS>



**NEW YORK UNIVERSITY**

## Fellowship for Emerging Leaders in Public Service Upcoming Events

### FELPS Holiday Party

December 13, 2010, 6:30 – 8:00pm  
NYU Open House Event Space  
528 Laguardia Place

Join us to connect with fellowship alumni and current fellows! Hors d'oeuvres and drinks will be served. In the spirit of the holidays, we invite you to bring a new and unwrapped children's toy or book to donate to Toys for Tots.

Significant others are invited to join us at a cost of \$20 to partially defray the cost of their attendance.

RSVPs are required. Please RSVP by December 7 to:  
[wagner.felps@nyu.edu](mailto:wagner.felps@nyu.edu)



### FELPS Book Club

December 2, 2010, 6:00pm  
Jersey Conference Rm., NYU Wagner  
295 Lafayette Street

Want to expand your knowledge about public service, read fascinating books and connect with current fellows and alumni? The new FELPS Book Club, an alumni-led initiative, is holding an informal planning meeting to determine the types of books to read, meeting dates, times, etc. To participate or get more info, email Mark Liu: [markliu1@gmail.com](mailto:markliu1@gmail.com)

### White House Fellows Program Information Session

December 9, 2010, 5:30-7:30pm  
Rudin Conference Room, NYU Wagner, 295 Lafayette Street

The White House Fellows Program is one of America's most prestigious programs for leadership and public service, offering first-hand experience working at the highest levels of the federal government. Learn more about the program at an event featuring former White House Fellows, including Diane C. Yu, Chief of Staff and Deputy to the President of New York University. RSVP to:  
<http://www.wagner.nyu.edu/events/rcla-12-08-2010>



### Young Nonprofit Professionals Network Professional Development Fair

December 10, 2010, 5:00-8:30pm  
University Settlement 273 Bowery @ Houston St.

Come and learn about fellowships, certificate programs, and networking organizations that can help further your career! The Research Center for Leadership in Action will be hosting a table to share info about FELPS – come swing by! You can also meet representatives in areas ranging from public policy to social entrepreneurship and everywhere in between. The event will also feature a panel from 6:00 - 6:30pm on "Leadership and Your Professional Development." Event is \$5 for nonmembers and free for YNPN members. <http://ynpnnyc.org>