



FELLOWSHIP FOR EMERGING LEADERS IN PUBLIC SERVICE ALUMNI CONNECTION

UPCOMING EVENTS

POLICY DISCUSSION GROUP

Sun., May 1, 6 pm

RSVP to Khalid El Khatib '11:
khalidelkhatib@gmail.com

FOOD CRAWL

Thurs., May 12

Contact Ly Nguyen '10:
lnguyen921@gmail.com

BOOK CLUB

Thurs., May 26, 7 pm
@ Stone Creek on 27th

RSVP to Mark Liu '08:
markliu1@gmail.com

FELPS PICNIC

In honor of
Connor Donohue '09
Sat., June 4
@ Central Park

RSVP: wagner.felps@nyu.edu

A MESSAGE FROM THE FELPS ALUMNI BOARD PRESIDENT

Dear Fellowship Alumni,

As we wait for the spring weather to finally arrive, I am thrilled to report that the FELPS alumni network is as strong as ever.

More than 30 alumni attended two FELPS events in April: the Wine and Cheese Tasting and the FELPS Day of Service.

We also conducted an alumni survey with an impressive 43% response rate. Your responses will help us direct future alumni programming and engage alumni outside of NYC. Congratulations to DJ Pizzani '09 and Julie Quintero-Schulz '06 on winning \$25 Amazon gift certificates for participating in the survey.

Additionally, the 2011 Fellows have connected with more than 40 different alumni for informational interviews. Thank you to all alumni who continue to make themselves available to answer Fellows' questions about careers and graduate schools.

We encourage you to take advantage of the wealth of knowledge and resources FELPS alumni can offer. One easy way is to join and post updates and discussions to the FELPS LinkedIn and Facebook groups. In addition, an updated **FELPS Alumni Directory** is attached to this newsletter.

In the coming months, alumni in the NYC area are invited to attend the May 1 event on "President

Obama's First Term" hosted by the **Policy Discussion Group** started by 2011 Fellows, the **Food Crawl** on May 12, the **Book Club** discussion of *Game Change: Obama and the Clintons, McCain and Palin, and the Race of a Lifetime* on May 26, and the **FELPS Picnic** in honor of Connor Donohue '09 on June 4.

We hope you find the FELPS Classifieds on the 15th and 30th of each month helpful and encourage you to submit announcements to felps-alumni@googlegroups.com.

I look forward to seeing you at one (or more) of the many upcoming events this spring!

Best,
Jeremy Coffey ('09)

SPRING EVENTS BRING ALUMNI & CURRENT FELLOWS TOGETHER

The FELPS Alumni Board has been busy hosting events to connect alumni with each other and current Fellows. More than 20 alumni came to the annual Wine and Cheese with Fellows on April 4.

On Saturday, April 16, 16 FELPS volunteers participated in the FELPS Day of Service in conjunction with Hands On New York through NY Cares. Volunteers worked to restore Jenny's Garden located on 12th Avenue and Riverside Drive between 135 and 142nd Streets, and shared a delicious lunch from Dinosaur BBQ in Harlem.



FELPS volunteers prepared Jenny's Garden for the spring.

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

Samuel Pierre ('09)
NYC Office of the Mayor



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: MONICA AGER '08

With the arrival of spring came the wave of notification letters to anxious prospective students. Like many FELPS alums, I am interested in pursuing graduate school, so I was eager to speak to Monica Ager '08. Monica is almost finished with her third and final year of law school at UC Berkeley and was excited to share her insight on the experience with me. Before law school and FELPS, Monica graduated with her Bachelor's from Columbia and worked as a District Representative and Case Worker for Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney.

Monica's particular interests are in public health issues and gender studies; during FELPS she wanted to figure out what she should do career-wise to impact these issues. Monica decided that law school was right for her – a decision driven by a belief in law as the strongest tool in policy making. She was also drawn to the opportunities afforded by a law degree. She notes, "There is no door that is closed with a law degree, and your potential is only heightened."

She admits that some of the horror stories about the first year law school experience are true, and it can be challenging when it feels as if you're taking required courses that have no relation to what interests you. But Monica points out that taking advantage of opportunities outside of the classroom is extremely valuable.

During her time at UC Berkeley, Monica spent a semester working full-time at the US Department of Justice in Washington, DC and spent summers at the California District Attorney's office and the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs. These opportunities allowed her to contextualize and apply the knowledge and skills she was learning in class.

For those considering a law degree, Monica stresses that visiting schools to get a sense of their culture is very important. I asked her about the concern many people have about adjusting to the routine of a student and she points out that although the transition from employee to student is certainly



tough, particularly in law school, "learning is your job, and you have nothing but time to really focus on things that you care about."

Monica also acknowledges that as graduation approaches, there is a large push to steer students toward a corporate, private sector track. For those interested in public service, it is important to anticipate and prepare for government and nonprofit recruiting, which typically happens on a different timeline.

After three years in the classroom, Monica says she is "ready to go out and use the law and the tools that she's learned

to make a difference."

After taking the New York bar exam she will join a law firm Steptoe & Johnson. In the fall of 2012, Monica will clerk on the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals in Detroit, an experience she is looking forward to.

While Monica is confident in the decision that she made to go to law school, she knows how challenging it can be to weigh different grad school options. If you have questions about the application process or the law school experience, she is happy to talk with you. You can reach her at monica.ager@gmail.com.

- By Ly Nguyen ('10)

STAY IN TOUCH!

An updated copy of the **FELPS Alumni Directory** is attached to this newsletter.

You can update your information by visiting:
http://wagner.nyu.edu/leadership/leadership_dev/felps/alumni.php

PUBLIC SERVICE BOOK REVIEW: *JOIN THE CLUB*

We generally think of "peer pressure" in negative terms – an unwanted influence that motivates destructive behavior. In her wonderful new book *Join the Club*, journalist Tina Rosenberg challenges the conventional connotation and illuminates the potential of peer pressure to "transform the world."

Join the Club tells the stories of people who have successfully employed alternative models of social activism based on changing behavior by helping



people obtain the acceptance and respect of their peers. Rosenberg illustrates this "social cure" through rich case studies including a South African HIV prevention program and a Serbian democracy movement.

Rosenberg's persuasive analysis demands that change-makers adopt social cure strategies into their arsenals. She complements her argument with practical reflection on how the strategies might be applied to current global problems.

The combination renders *Join the Club* an inspiring read, an insightful argument and a valuable playbook for anyone interested in the mechanics of social change.

- By Andy Felder ('09)

Join the **FELPS Book Club** at 7:00pm on **Thursday, May 26** at Stone Creek, 140 E. 27th St. This month's book is: *Game Change: Obama and the Clintons, McCain and Palin, and the Race of a Lifetime*.

RSVP to: markliu1@gmail.com



SPOTLIGHT ON INNOVATION:

ANNE MAHLUM, BACK ON MY FEET



Anne Mahlum grew up with an understanding of addiction. Her father suffered from drug, alcohol and gambling addictions which left a lasting impact on her family. When she was 16 her father gambled away her family's savings, shattering her sense of safety.

With that memory in mind, Anne left her North Dakota home and set out in the world without a sense of direction. In 2007, having moved to Philadelphia for a nonprofit job, Anne, now 27, was offered a position at Comcast. She vacillated for weeks, asking everyone she knew to help her make the decision only she could make.

A lifelong runner, Anne often spent time running through the more depressed neighborhoods of Philadelphia. Every day she passed the same homeless shelter and the same group of men sitting outside. One day, in the midst of her dilemma over the Comcast job, Anne, began to wonder why she kept running by these men instead of stopping to offer help.

It was in that moment that she decided to start a running club at the shelter. She contacted the director and asked him to make an announcement to see if the residents would be interested in joining. A week later, Anne started her running club with nine men. She also accepted the Comcast job, asking them for

five weeks to get the club launched before starting work, to which they agreed.

Within a few weeks, the initial nine runners grew to 20, and Anne started to find volunteers who also wanted to run in the clubs. Within those first five weeks Anne established running clubs in other shelters and raised money to support the efforts. A day before she was to begin at Comcast she called and declined the offer, instead opting to establish a nonprofit centered on homelessness.

This was the spring of 2007. Today, in 2011, the organization, called Back on My Feet, has blossomed to a \$5M operation with six sites throughout the nation and plans to expand. Anne was named a CNN hero and has been highlighted across the country. This "tiny white girl from North Dakota," as she puts it, created a nonprofit organization that uses running as a way to promote the self-sufficiency of the homeless population. Her constituents don't just run; they also earn financial stipends for the number of miles they run that can be used for education or housing. Her organization takes a simple concept and turns it into a lifesaving program.

Her message to emerging leaders: Listen to your heart; it will always guide you if you take time to listen.

- Jessica Leavitt ('08)

CURRENT FELLOW SPOTLIGHT:

AVIVA TEVAH '11



Aviva Tevah is the founding Reentry Education Transition Specialist for the Transition to Post-Secondary or Vocational Education for Formerly Incarcerated Adults Initiative at the New York City Department of Correction Educational Services Unit. To say her full title alone is a demanding task, but the scope of her work is daunting.

Aviva accepted the newly created position in December. The goals of the initiative, spearheaded by the NYC Mayor's Office of Adult Education, are to organize and strengthen the jail-to-education-careers pipeline; improve the effectiveness of post-incarceration programs by helping individuals achieve mainstream credentials; and define and promote the growing network of organizations that serve formerly incarcerated individuals.

Each morning, Aviva commutes from Brooklyn to Rikers Island, where her office trailer is located. No two days at work are ever the same. She may strategize with the Executive Director, head to a meeting at the Mayor's Office, attend a program graduation, or represent the initiative at service provider network meetings. Her short-term goals are to develop a comprehensive understanding of the city's jail system, its educational resources and the interrelated needs of incarcerated people. Aviva believes that this understanding will allow her to "strategize to successfully meet the goals of the initiative [and] to better

support the formerly incarcerated and service providers."

As an undergraduate at Wesleyan University, Aviva emerged as a leader of a student-organized Prison Education program. After earning her Bachelor of Arts in African-American Studies, she began working for a cutting-edge recidivism reduction organization. There she mentored and advised inmates preparing to transition out of jail. Her relationship with inmates and experience as a service provider continue to inform her work as a program administrator.

When people ask Aviva, "Why should we spend our tax dollars on programs for offenders?" she passionately responds, "Formerly incarcerated individuals have the ability to contribute to society if given the necessary resources and support...Not providing resources ends up far more costly for society."

Aviva says, "FELPS has taught me to take control of who I want to be and where I want to go in public service. It has been empowering." With this support, Aviva will continue to be an important advocate for the success of incarcerated individuals.

- By Sean Corlett ('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>

