

MEET THE ALLIES



Everyone Leads.

Public Allies Connecticut Class of 2009-2010

Greater Bridgeport Team

Andrea Schraml

Operation Hope

Andrea was born and raised in Stratford, CT. A 2008 graduate of Western Connecticut State University with a BA in Social Work, Andrea decided to join Public Allies to gain more field experience as well as knowledge and resources of non-profits in the area. At Operation Hope in Fairfield, she is serving as an Outreach Specialist and Daily Living Skills Coach (DLSC). Andrea performs intake for the homeless shelter and meets with clients to help them reach their individual goals. After Public Allies, she hopes to pursue her Master's degree in the social service field while maintaining a position in the non-profit sector. In her free time, Andrea enjoys the arts and spending time with her friends and family.

Elizabeth Wilson

Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust

Lizzie graduated magna cum laude from Boston University in 2007 with dual degrees in International Relations and Philosophy. After college, she spent a year and a half teaching English in Ecuador, and then joined Public Allies in order to learn the skills necessary to make a difference in the non-profit world. Lizzie is placed at Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust, a small non-profit that creates safe, stable, healthy homes for Bridgeport families. She is managing the construction of a new website and overseeing the implementation of a fund development strategy. She also volunteers as a crisis counselor for victims of abuse, and hopes to one day work with victims of human trafficking.

Emma Tripp

The Kennedy Center, Inc.

Emma, a native of Farmington, Maine, holds a Bachelor's degree from UMass Amherst, where she studied Legal Studies with a concentration in Alternative Dispute Resolution and Racial Conflict. Emma came to Public Allies in order to strengthen her commitment to the social service field and to the community of Bridgeport. Emma is placed with the Kennedy Center, where she works with adults with diverse abilities, disabilities and experiences towards optimal participation in their community.

Erin McDermott

Southwestern CT Area Health Education Center (AHEC)

Erin, a greater Bridgeport area native and 2007 graduate of the University of Tampa, joined the Public Allies Connecticut team to get a feel for the nonprofit world and to make a



difference in her community. After spending two years in event planning, marketing and advertising in Florida, she decided the for-profit world was not for her. She moved back to her hometown of Monroe, and is looking forward to diving right into the nonprofit sector and making changes in the Bridgeport community. At Southwestern CT Area Health Education Center (AHEC), Erin works with local high school students interested in developing the skills, knowledge and training to pursue a career in the healthcare field. In the future, Erin would like to start her own nonprofit organization involving a mentoring program that employs collegiate athletic team members as mentors for high school athletes.

Luis Chavez-Brumell

Bridgeport Public Library

Luis graduated from the University of Connecticut in 2008 with a B.A. in Latin American Studies. Before coming to Public Allies, Luis worked as voter registration event coordinator and a substitute teacher in New Haven, and also volunteered at JUNTA for Progressive Action, New Haven's oldest Latino non-profit organization. Luis joined Public Allies to learn more about the non-profit sector and to continue giving back to the community. He is serving as the Volunteer Program Coordinator for the Bridgeport Public Library, where he coordinates volunteers for the computer literacy, youth development, and employment readiness assistance programs. After his term of service with Public Allies, Luis hopes to attend law school.

Jessica Ortiz

Optimus Health Care

Jessica, one of our youngest Allies at 18 years old, was born in Ceiba, Puerto Rico. A graduate of Bassick High School, Jessica was raised in Bridgeport, and was introduced to Public Allies by her older sister, a

graduate of the PA program. Her sister has also inspired her to pursue a medical career path, so it is very fitting that Jessica is placed at Optimus Health Care this year as an Outreach Eligibility Worker. After Public Allies, Jessica is interested in pursuing higher education to become a dental hygienist.

Uriela Overend

Career Resources, Inc.

Uriela Overend, a Bridgeport resident, decided to pursue Public Allies in order to gain some practical, real world experience in the non-profit sector after receiving her Bachelor's degree in Social Sciences from the University of Bridgeport. At her placement, Uriela is serving as a case manager in Career Resources' Fathers for Life program, which seeks to support and facilitate healthy and strong connections between parents and children. After Public Allies, she hopes to pursue a career in the non-profit sector, preferably working with youth. Uriela is also looking forward to starting her coursework for a Master's degree in Social Sciences. In her spare time, Uri enjoys moonlighting as a freelance photographer and spending time with her cat, Loaf.

Emily Corris – 2nd Year Fellow

The Kennedy Center, Inc.

Emily returned to her 1st year placement this year, serving as the Expressive Arts Specialist at the Kennedy Center. So far, Emily reports that the 2nd Year Fellowship has been a great experience. She has become a mentor and coach to the first year Allies, and has been able to utilize the trainings and knowledge she gained in her first year in her work with clients. She has learned how to plan meetings and how to work closely with a team.

Emily hopes to enroll in psychology courses at Southern Connecticut State University this year, and after completing her time with Public Allies, she hopes to continue her

education at Southern to receive her Bachelor's Degree.

Greater Hartford Team

Abigail Dym

Our Piece of the Pie

Abbie is serving as the Global Youth Service Day coordinator for Our Piece of the Pie. She recently moved back to Connecticut after graduating from Mount Holyoke College, where she studied international relations and history. After years of working with non-profit organizations that have dealt with issues of hunger, socio-economic inequities, and youth development, she is passionate about people and hopes to be a resource for individuals and communities on their journeys to empower themselves. Abbie's short-term goals include: organizing an incredible Global Youth Service Day and actually learning how to play the mandolin. Her long-term goals include: becoming a teacher and a farmer, continuing to work for non-profits, returning to Mexico, taking herself less seriously, and actually learning how to play the mandolin. Abbie thoroughly enjoys singing and cooking, particularly with family and friends, and is really excited about Public Allies.

Andrea Penta

Urban League of Greater Hartford

Fresh out of Bay Path College in Longmeadow, Massachusetts, Andrea has come to Public Allies ready to make a change in her community. This year, she is coordinating financial education classes at the Urban League of Greater Hartford. She has been thrilled with the new experiences she has gained so far in the program. A fierce frisbee player, Andrea also enjoys music events and action flicks.



Caitlin Millerd

YWCA Hartford Region

Caitlin Millerd, a recent graduate of the University Of Massachusetts Lowell, moved back to her home state of CT and joined Public Allies to further her knowledge of and growth within the nonprofit community. She has always had a passion for service, and always knew that her passion would one day become her profession. Caitlin is serving with the YWCA as a Youth Development/Parent Engagement Specialist, and also helps to run their Young Women's Leadership Corps program for young women ages 12-18 in seven schools within Greater Hartford. Her true passions will lead her towards a future working for women's empowerment, ending sexual violence, and the arts. Caitlin hopes to one day open up her own non-profit agency geared towards young women and men dealing with sexual assault and using the arts as the voice to end sexual violence.

Erica Vladimer

Urban League of Greater Hartford

Erica, who was born and raised in New Jersey, attended the University of Connecticut, where she studied sociology and criminal justice. During that time, she volunteered for Big Brothers Big Sisters and fell in love with helping at-risk youth achieve their highest potential. She joined Public Allies in hopes of finding new ways to reach out to urban youth and to learn the fundamentals of the nonprofit sector. Her placement at the Urban League has given her the opportunity to work in 4 different programs with high school students in the Hartford area, and has also challenged her to work as an independent professional. After graduation from the Public Allies program, Erica plans to attend law school, where she will study public interest law and focus on children's advocacy.

Jessica Callahan

Northwestern CT Area Health Education Center (AHEC)

Jessica joined Public Allies in order to increase her knowledge about the nonprofit sector and to determine what career path to pursue. She is excited to have the opportunity to work within her own community. At Northwestern CT Area Health Education Center (AHEC) in Greater Waterbury, Jessica is serving as coordinator for the Youth Health Service Corps (YHSC), with the goals of increasing the number of diverse high school students who matriculate into post-secondary health care education programs, and to increase the number of students serving the underserved in their communities. After Public Allies, Jessica hopes to finish college with a possible focus on Public Health, and wants to use her degree to help the local Waterbury community.

Kaitlin Nickerson

The Village for Families & Children

A 2009 graduate of the University of Connecticut, with a degree in Political Science and Sociology, Katie was excited to become a Public Ally in order to gain experience in the nonprofit sector and to learn invaluable leadership and teamwork skills. She is placed with The Village for Families and Children's Truancy Court Prevention Project in Hartford, where she serves as a Case Manager for eighth graders with a history of absenteeism, with the goal of giving them the tools they need to successfully be promoted to the ninth grade. She plans to pursue a joint JD and MSW degree in the near future.

Kimberly Sanchez

Co-Opportunity

Kimberly graduated from Eastern Connecticut State University with honors, with a B.A. in political science and a minor in Spanish. Prior to joining Public Allies, Kim

interned with a Connecticut state representative's office and was heavily involved in the recent presidential campaign in El Salvador. This year, Kim is coordinating the FAFSA program at Co-Opportunity. After completing the Public Allies program, she plans to pursue a career in public administration.

Lindsay Diaz

The Village for Families & Children

Born and raised in Hartford, Lindsay always had a passion for working within her community. After attending Trinity College, Lindsay joined Public Allies to gain the tools necessary to make change. She is placed at The Village for Families and Children, where she is serving as a Positive Youth Development Worker for an afterschool program at Alfred E. Burr School. She works with a large group of 7th and 8th graders focusing on academic enrichment and positive youth development skills. In her free time, Lindsay enjoys watching movies and spending time with loved ones.

Nathan Fox

Community Renewal Team

Nathan, a native New Englander, started his long journey to Public Allies in 1995 when he began attending Community Prep, a grade school in Providence, RI. It was at CP that Nathan formed a fond attachment to urban living and diversity as a way of life, and decided that he wanted to spend his life working towards building strong communities. This commitment was strengthened when Nathan moved to the grandest urban setting of them all, New York City, for college. He graduated with a BA in Metropolitan Studies from New York University in 2009, and his studies and internships there further increased his desire to serve the community around him. Thus, Public Allies seemed to be the best next step for Nathan to take.



Through serving the community, developing strong connections in the non-profit sector, and learning new skills and strategies, Nathan is beginning to feel better prepared than ever to work for those most in need. At the Community Renewal Team, he is learning more about the homeless population of Hartford, one of the neediest and yet most hidden populations in Connecticut. Nathan hopes to emerge from PACT better able to advocate on behalf of those most at-risk to lose their homes.

Patrick McKenna

True Colors, Inc.

A graduate of the University of Connecticut and a native of Waterbury, CT, Patrick joined Public Allies in order to learn how to best impact the community. This year, he is serving as the Gay-Straight Alliance Coordinator at True Colors. Patrick works hard to help spread awareness and tolerance, and to further True Colors' mission of creating a world where people are affirmed and appreciated regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Renee Hamel, 2nd Year Fellow

Hartford Children's Theatre

After working in social development for the City of Cape Town, South Africa, Renee came to Public Allies in 2008 because she was interested in gaining experience with nonprofits benefiting those in her own community. As a second year Fellow, she has gained experience in the fields of project planning, communications, youth development and is currently implementing afterschool drama programs for Hartford Children's Theatre. Grateful for the chance to work with diverse people in a supportive environment, she hopes to go back to South Africa to exchange and explore new ideas, and also to pursue a Master's degree in social work. Her social justice passions and interests include positive youth development, hunger

and homelessness, and institutional racism.

Greater New Haven Team

Cleophas Hanciles

Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History

Cleophas recently returned to the New Haven area after completing college at La Salle University in Philadelphia. He applied to Public Allies because he thought it would be a good opportunity for him to learn about the non-profit world and a chance for him to give back to his community. Cleophas is placed with the Yale Peabody Museum, where he helps to run the Evolutions After School Program. Evolutions gives students a chance to learn how to make themselves competitive for college, explore what they want to do with life and make great friends from other schools who are as serious as they are about education. Cleophas hopes to be a great resource for these students as they go through the process of deciding what the next steps in their lives will be.

Elizabeth Weissberg

Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services (IRIS)

Elizabeth Weissberg was born in New Haven and graduated from Yale University in 2009. She became a Public Ally in order to gain first-hand experience with nonprofits, deepen her connection to New Haven, and to give to the community that has already given so much to her. Elizabeth is serving as Volunteer Coordinator for IRIS, an agency that helps to resettle refugees from around the world into the New Haven community.

Jaime Myers-McPhail

Community Alliance for Research & Engagement (CARE) at Yale University

Jaime's journey to Public Allies was a somewhat long and winding road. For the past 5 years he lived in

Portland, ME, where he worked in social services providing direct support and case management to adults with developmental disabilities. During that time she also completed a Bachelor's degree in Sociology from the University of Southern Maine. While at USM, he was a research assistant for a faculty member in the Sociology and Women & Gender Studies departments, providing manuscript and editorial assistance in addition to researching women's health, medical history, and the social contradictions underlying vice crime law. He also served as a volunteer mentor for LGBTQI-youth. This summer, Jaime moved to New Haven with his partner and never wants to leave! She plans to take the skills he acquires through his Public Allies' service and apply them to the study and practice of civil & human rights law. He enjoys a handful of recreational activities, including biking in inclement weather and judging fonts.

Jessica Cartagena

FRESH New London

19-year-old Jessica has been volunteering and working with FRESH New London for over three years. The mission of FRESH (which stands for Food: Resources, Education, Security, and Health) is increase food security and to transform the food system in New London into one that is healthful, universally accessible, sustainable, just, and beautiful. This year, Public Allies has given Jessica the opportunity to continue and expand her relationship with FRESH, where she is serving as a Community Organizer this year. Jessica is passionate about FRESH and about her community, and hopes to attend college after her time with Public Allies.

Jewu Richardson

Teach Our Children

A 30-year-old New Haven native,



Jewu came to Public Allies in order to fulfill his need to be part of the solution in a community that has many issues and hardships. At Teach Our Children, Jewu is serving as an Organizing Apprentice, helping to organize New Haven parents to become advocates for their children's education. His passions include being the best father possible to his daughter, contributing to the empowerment of his community, and hip-hop. Jewu is always adding new skills and interests to his repertoire, and has recently become interested in learning more about real estate and club & artist promotion.

Kevlon Hutchings

Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services (IRIS)

Kevlon is a New Haven native, born and raised. 27 years old with a background in community and nonprofit work, Kevlon joined Public Allies to utilize his skills from previous experiences to assist his community, as well as to gain more experience. He expects the next ten months to be very intriguing and engaging! Kevlon is serving as the Coordinator of Housing and Donations at IRIS. After Public Allies, he plans to continue working, return to school, and above all, to continue assisting his community in any way he can.

Kristine Din

Easter Seals/Goodwill Industries

A recent graduate of the University of Connecticut with a degree in Molecular and Cell Biology, Kristine decided to steer off the science path and to answer her inner calling to work with youth. This year, she is serving at the John S. Martinez School's Family Learning Center (an Easter Seals/Goodwill Industries program), where she assists in the creation and implementation of programs for students and their families. Kristine also provides academic enrichment (and fun!) for a

group of 5-7-year-olds in the after school program. After Public Allies, Kristine is interested in pursuing a Master's degree in education with a focus on multiculturalism and policy. When she is not out-and-about fighting the achievement gap, she can usually be found eating at sushi bars, ballroom dancing, or playing guitar with her brother.

Melane Thomas

Greater New Haven NAACP

A 2009 graduate from the University of Connecticut (Storrs), Melane decided to join Public Allies after consideration of other AmeriCorps programs. Knowing she wasn't quite ready for graduate school, she wanted to do something meaningful with her time while figuring out her next steps. A New Haven native, Melane is excited to be a part of an organization that will help New Haven become a better place: the Greater New Haven National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). She is helping to build the capacity of the organization by reorganizing and supporting various committees in their missions, as well as through re-connecting members to the organization. She hopes to someday pursue a career in High School Guidance Counseling and maybe even going further to become a High School Principal. She also would like you to know that she loves dogs/cats, Harry Potter, Twilight (series/saga), scary movies, ice cream, and spending time with her friends.

Melissa Mangini

Common Ground High School

Melissa is a Connecticut native and 2006 graduate of Manhattanville College, where she studied Communications and World Religions. This year, she is excited to be working with Public Allies and is placed at Common Ground High School, where she coordinates an Academic Enrichment program and

helps to create individual student learning plans. Melissa loves music, film and baking, and coordinates volunteer activities with Project Dragonfly CT in her spare time.

Robert Goehrke

Solar Youth, Inc.

Robbie hails from Cleveland, but moved to New Haven to attend Yale University. After graduating with a degree in Psychology, Robbie hoped to stay in New Haven to work with kids. He was very excited to find Public Allies, and loves his placement at Solar Youth, where he leads after-school programs that develop youth through environmental education, community service, and leadership training. Robbie hopes to take the experience and knowledge gained this year and apply it to Urban Youth Ministry. He also likes playing piano, paddling canoes, speaking Hindi and being vegan.

Ruth Vaughan

Community Alliance for Research & Engagement (CARE) at Yale University

Ruth comes to Public Allies after recently graduating from Yale Divinity School with a Master of Arts degree in Religion. Originally from Memphis, Tennessee, she graduated with a B.A. in Religion from Emory University and was heavily involved in racial reconciliation and social justice activism. She is particularly interested in gender justice and how grassroots community development can respond to and mobilize around women's rights and social change. This year, she is serving as Community Outreach and Research Assistant at CARE, a public health research initiative focused on community-based research and interventions. She hopes to continue in the nonprofit sector and to eventually move into international community development work with a specific focus on impoverished women's economic access and mobility.



Sarah Perkins***Music Haven***

Sarah, a native of the New Haven area, received her Bachelor's Degree from Bard College in Sociology. While a student there, Sarah also studied violin under the Colorado Quartet and volunteered teaching violin lessons with a young string instrumentalist program in Poughkeepsie, NY. Sarah joined Public Allies this year to support her growth and re-entrance into the New Haven community. Sarah is filling the newly created position of Program Coordinator at Music Haven, an organization committed to building community by establishing long-term mentoring relationships between professional musicians and inner-city children in New Haven.

Kerry Ellington, 2nd Year Fellow***Youth Rights Media***

23-year-old Kerry is spending her second year with Public Allies serving at Youth Rights Media (YRM), a New Haven based nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering youth to know, protect and advance their rights. YRM builds youth power and leadership by engaging young people in video production and community organizing, so that they are equipped with tools, skills, and strategies for affecting change within themselves and their communities. As a fellow and youth organizing coordinator, Kerry plays a key role in developing and implementing YRM's youth organizing program. She teaches youth how to organize around issues of their concern. In addition, she recruits youth into the organization and coordinates screenings to display their media creations. Kerry is looking forward to gaining a lot from her second year with Public Allies. She hopes to gain and improve her professional skills and experience and to continue growing professionally and personally. After Public Allies, Kerry hopes to pursue

a career in teaching and advocating for education in America.

Jane Hendrickson, 2nd Year Fellow***Clifford Beers Clinic***

Jane became interested in the intersection of social justice and faith during her time at Wesleyan University, where she majored in Biology. She had plans of becoming a doctor until spending a summer working in a community health clinic, when she decided that she wanted to work in a non-profit or as a social worker. She is close to finishing a Master's degree in Divinity. She came to Public Allies in 2008 after moving to New Haven, and was able to connect with local non-profits and community members in exciting ways through her placement at the Commission on Substance Abuse Policy & Prevention at the City of New Haven. Her first experience was so enriching, personally and professionally, that she jumped at the opportunity to apply for a second year fellowship with Public Allies, serving at the Clifford Beers Clinic. She hopes to use the year for further professional development opportunities, as well as discernment about future endeavors.

