

MEET THE ALLIES



Advancing diverse young leaders to strengthen communities, nonprofits and civic participation.



Class of 2008/2009

Diana Austria

Vision New America

Diana Austria, 22, serves Vision New America as the Internship Program Coordinator. Through her position, she recruits young people to participate in Public Policy internship programs that aim to increase civic participation among underrepresented groups. Diana is incredibly passionate about the complex, diverse, and often misunderstood struggles and experiences of Asian Pacific Islander American communities. This stems from what she has learned from her own personal experiences and her explorations during her time at Stanford. Through Public Allies she hopes to continually advocate and build solidarity among all communities of color.

Robert Bugarin

San Mateo County Jobs For Youth

Roberto Bugarin, 19, serves San Mateo County Jobs For Youth as the Assistant to Jobs For Youth Job Specialist. In his position he develops workshops and presentations to assist high school students in finding jobs. He works in conjunction with community and youth-based agencies to ensure that young

people are provided with support in finding meaningful work. Roberto is passionate about youth empowerment and believes that youth are an important part of every community. Roberto has been most inspired by his family who has shown him that change can be achieved. At the end of his year of service he hopes to be more articulate and grow as a leader in his community.

Philip Chui

Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health

Philip Chui, 29, serves Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health in Palo Alto as the Community Outreach Coordinator. Through his position, he works as a part of the foundation's Information Program, which seeks to influence policies and behaviors by bringing attention to key issues related to health. A UC Berkeley graduate, Philip is exploring the non-profit community in hopes of finding a field that he can apply his knowledge, skills, and energy in order to serve his community. Philip admires the leadership qualities of Abraham Lincoln for his judgment and character, and will emulate these qualities with his peers as he continues to grow this program year.

Rebecca Fisher

MidPeninsula Community Media Center

Rebecca Fisher, 23, serves MidPeninsula Community Media Center as the Media Access Associate. Through the programming classes she teaches, she inspires and empowers people to speak and act on behalf of their communities using television and the internet as references. Rebecca is passionate about criminal justice system reform, specifically youth incarceration. During her term at Public Allies she hopes to learn about herself so that she can come to terms with her own power and privilege, and to learn ways to deconstruct power hierarchies on a systemic scale.



Emma Marie Friez-Gallardo

City of East Palo Alto Community Services Department

Emma Friez-Gallardo, 22, serves The City of East Palo Alto Community Services Department as a Recreation Corps Youth and Young Adult Coordinator. Through her position, she facilitates teens and young adults between the ages of 12-24 in the planning and implementation of a Youth in Government Program called the East Palo Alto Youth Advisory Council (E-PAY-AC). Emma is passionate about youth empowerment and wants to increase the East Palo Alto youth voice within City Council, as well as increase the community's awareness of issues affecting youth. During her 10 months as an Ally, Emma hopes to make a significant contribution of service to her community to reciprocate the impact community has had on her own development as a young leader.

Timika Jackson

Planned Parenthood Mar Monte

Timika Jackson, 24, serves Planned Parenthood Mar Monte as the Teen Success Lead Child Care Provider. Through her position, Timika will develop and deliver monthly child development curriculum and activities for teen parents. She also manages other providers, assesses their training needs, and provides them with training, guidance and technical support. A San Jose native, her ethic of service is rooted in her family and spiritual values. She is currently attending DeAnza College in pursuit of a psychology degree. Guided by her passion about AIDS and Africa, she hopes to join the Peace Corps after Public Allies.

Sabrina Johnson

Japanese Community Youth Council/ Independent Living Skills Program, San Francisco

Sabrina Johnson, 23, serves the San Francisco Independent Living Skills Program as the Activities Coordinator. Through her position, she works with foster youth by assisting in the development of life skills training and enrichment activities. Sabrina aims to cultivate and enrich the lives of children and youth from diverse, multi-cultural communities throughout San Francisco and the Bay Area. By the end of her Public Allies

Term, Sabrina wants to implement a sense of permanency for at least one youth at her placement by providing life skills workshops, fun activities, and open intimate discussions. She also hopes that her fellow Allies will continue to support her in her growth as an activist in her community.

'Amelia Kolokihakaufisi

Foundation For a College Education

'Amelia Kolokihakaufisi, 26, serves the Foundation For a College Education as the College Bound Program Associate. Through her position, 'Amelia sets up and hosts educational meetings with college representatives, and supervises Academic Excellence sessions where students receive individual and group tutoring. Last year 'Amelia served with the Community Services Department of the City of East Palo Alto where she worked with high-school students to establish the East Palo Alto Youth Advisory Council (E-PAY-AC). From that experience she saw how vital access to a quality education had in creating a holistically healthy young person. After completing her second year of Public Allies, she will finish pursuing her undergraduate degree and go on to law school.

Brian Lau

The Working Group

Brian Lau, 22, serves The Working Group as the Not In Our Town/Not In Our School Silicon Valley Community Organizer. Through his position, he works alongside staff to compile and edit an array of stories and practices from Bay Area groups engaged in fighting hate and violence. This content is used in an online toolkit for the Not In Our School and Not On Our Campus presentations. Brian is passionate about education and non-profit work, and he attributes these passions to both of his parents who have been a tremendous influence on him. Without the strong examples they set about what it means to be a good person, he would not be here doing the work that he does. Through Public Allies Brian wants to grow, professionally, personally, and as a leader in his community.

Ruyi Lu

Glow Foundation

Ruyi Lu, 24, serves the Glow Foundation as a Program Associate. Through her position, she works to organize and coordinate financial education classes for approximately 100 low-income, college-bound high school seniors and juniors. She also recruits and manages volunteers who serve as mentors/advisors to the high school students. A UC Berkeley graduate, Ruyi was raised in Asia and the United States. This has instrumentally shaped who she is and allowed her to discover the value of questioning the frameworks of conventional concepts. Not surprisingly, she joined Public Allies for its "non-linear", innovative leadership skills that are apt for this time.

Muniba Mohammed

InnVision The Way Home

Muniba Mohammed, 22, serves InnVision The Way Home as the Volunteer Coordinator. Through her position Muniba recruits and manages volunteers for hands-on site projects that provide homeless and at-risk families, and individuals with the tools they need to secure sustainable housing. Muniba is most passionate about healthcare access, especially in underserved populations, as well as educating others on public health issues such as control of infectious diseases, sanitation, and effects of environmental hazards on health. Through her Public Allies experience Muniba hopes to further develop her leadership skills and become a more confident and well-spoken individual.

Joan Osbual

Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties

Joan Osbual, 21, serves as Second Harvest Food Bank's Volunteer Coordinator. By recruiting over 100 volunteers monthly, Joan supports the food box program to serve a significant portion of San Jose's community members and transient population. Joan, mother to Ashwin Anoki, age 2, was originally born in the Philippines, yet has lived in the United States for the past 19 years. Service is an essential part of her life. A City Year graduate, Joan describes her commitment as a need to serve. "I need a job where I can give my all and know I'm making a difference."



Lauren Patron

Vision Literacy

Lauren Patron, 24, serves as the Mayfair Literacy Program Coordinator at Vision Literacy. Through her position, Lauren works to recruit adult learners, identify volunteer tutors, and develop and implement a progressive ESL curriculum for the adult learners. A graduate of CSU Monterey Bay in the field of Communications, Lauren feels her experience at Public Allies is building the next chapter of her life and putting her passions to work. By the end of her service, she hopes to have promoted an effort of supporting education and service powered not by numbers, but by impact and awareness for social change.

George Ramirez

Youth Community Service

George Ramirez, 27, a San Jose native, serves Youth Community Service (YCS) as the After School Coordinator. Through his position, he coordinates YCS Service and Leadership Clubs for Palo Alto and East Palo Alto middle school and high school youth. The leadership clubs are designed to promote service projects and cultivate student leaders. George's passion for serving his community can be summarized in his favorite quote by Emma Goldman, "The history of progress is written in the blood of men and women who dare to espouse an unpopular cause, as, for instance, the black man's right to his body, or a woman's right to her soul."

Jeanette Ramirez

San Mateo County Jobs For Youth

Jeanette Ramirez, 22, a Redwood City native, serves at San Mateo County Jobs for Youth as the Assistant to Jobs For Youth Job Specialist. She comes from a family steeped in rich cultural tradition. Her mother's family are descendants of the Tarascan Tribe from Michoacan. Her grandfather arrived in the United States through the bracero program. Through her family, she has been instilled with a strong work ethic and a passion for human rights. She works with Jobs for Youth to provide essential job skills for the youth of San Mateo County. But more than that, she works to instill in them a powerful sense of self and confidence in their own abilities. Currently a student at the College of San

Mateo, she is looking forward to continuing her education at the University of Michigan as a law and sociology double major before creating her own non-profit.

Emily Smith

InnVision The Way Home

Emily Smith 25, serves InnVision The Way Home as the Learning Zone Program Coordinator. Through her placement, she coordinates the after-school Learning Zone program at InnVision's Women & Families programs, assists homeless school-aged children with their homework, and plans enrichment activities. Emily is passionate about issues facing homeless women and children. More specifically, Emily is deeply connected and committed to the women and children she serves at her placement. During her term at Public Allies, Emily hopes to explore her strengths and weaknesses as a leader, as well as gain the skills and tools she will need for her future career in the non-profit sector.

Danise Sugita

Asian Americans For Community Involvement

Danise Sugita, 24, serves Asian Americans for Community Involvement as the Civic Engagement Specialist. She brings together community members and partner organizations for a monthly event called South Bay First Thursdays. This event invites volunteers and community members to participate in educational dialogue regarding issues that impact the Asian American community. As a 2nd Year Ally, Danise wants to build more unity within the Asian Pacific Islander (API) community in the South Bay, and develop more networks and solidarity within the greater Bay Area. Through the Ally program, Danise hopes to continue building lasting relationships and build greater connections with her fellow Allies, so that they can all become change agents together.

Klaressa Ortiz

City of Redwood City Fair Oaks Community Center

Klaressa Ortiz, 18, serves the City of Redwood City Fair Oaks Community Center as a Human Service Specialist. In addition to providing translation for clients, Klaressa is responsible for doing weekly intake,

assessment, referral, and follow-up for a minimum of 20 clients who are in need of food, safety, shelter, and other emergency resources. A recent graduate of Redwood High School, she is now attending college and majoring in psychology and criminal justice. Klaressa feels fortunate to have been given resources that have guided her away from gang violence and drugs. She now wants to provide resources for youth, not only in her community, but similar communities, so that they can become the leaders of tomorrow.

Folola Takapu

City of East Palo Alto Community Services Department

Folola Takapu, 22, serves as a Recreation Corps Youth and Young Adult Coordinator for The City of East Palo Alto Community Services Department. Through her placement, she mentors and recruits youth and young adults at various Peninsula High Schools to participate in the East Palo Alto Youth Advisory Council. Youth empowerment is one of Folola's greatest passions due to her own personal experiences. Different people, situations, and events in her life have instilled a feeling of empowerment which has drastically changed her life for the better. By the end of her term with Public Allies, Folola hopes to inspire the youth in her program to see themselves as a valuable part of their community. She also has plans to start up a non-profit of her own.

Lily Tapia

BUILD

Lily Tapia, 22, serves BUILD as the E1 Program Assistant. In her position, she empowers youth from under-resourced communities to excel in education, lead in their communities, and succeed professionally through real-world entrepreneurial experience. Lily has been most inspired by her parents who, after many sacrifices, have worked very hard to keep the family together and through their actions have motivated her and her siblings to work with their hearts. During her Public Allies experience Lily hopes to learn how her work at a nonprofit will guide her role as a leader in her community.



Mayra Tapia

Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties

Mayra Tapia, 20, serves Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties as a Community Outreach Coordinator. Through her position, she helps to provide food to low-income households in the Santa Clara County. Mayra does this through food stamp outreach in low-income communities as well as supporting families through the food stamp process. Mayra is passionate about helping low income children become more aware of their potential to go to college. Through her Public Allies experience, Mayra hopes to gain more understanding of the underlying causes of the issues affecting her community.

Roselyn Thomas

Youth Community Service

Roselyn Thomas, 22, serves Youth Community Service as the Marketing Coordinator. Through her position she engages youth in community service activities that promote increased awareness of the needs of their communities. Working in collaboration with community organizations, Roselyn promotes, plans, and implements community projects to raise awareness about Youth Community Service. By the end of her term, Roselyn hopes to learn how to be a good leader, to have patience with herself and others, to learn how to advocate for change in her community as well as in public policy, and explore her own oppressions to better understand how they impact her ability to be transformative in this world.

Colina Williams

Job Train

Colina Williams, 22, an East Palo Alto native, serves JobTrain as a Youth Counselor in the SASSY (School After School for Successful Youth) Program. Colina, once a member of the SASSY program, now works with youth from the surrounding school districts to provide enriching after school programming that support the students' development through classes and hands on experiences focused in the areas of culinary arts, digital multimedia, fine arts design, office skills, and electronics assembly. Colina is passionate about youth empowerment; she feels that youth need creative and productive outlets so

they can be productive instead of destructive. By the end of her term, Colina hopes to strengthen her leadership within community and inspire youth as she was inspired by community leaders in her life.

Tiana Woodridge

Palo Alto Family YMCA

Tiana Woodridge, 26, serves The Palo Alto Family YMCA as the Ventura Computer and Youth Development Coordinator. Through her position, she runs the after school program as well as the Ventura Teen Center, where she designs enriching after school programming that enhance the well being of the teens in the Palo Alto area. Early on in life, Tiana experienced some of the best and worse things about life. She received unwavering love from her mother and sisters; however, she also experienced discrimination, such as racism and sexism before the age of ten. All these things have brought her to where she is today. Tiana always wanted to be a part of something "big" but she never knew what that meant. As a 2nd Year Ally, Tiana can no longer sit blindly and enjoy privileges that her loved ones, sisters, brothers, friends, and Allies are blatantly denied. This is what fuels her service, as she believes change must start with her.

LaJean Woods

Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties

LaJean Woods, 28, serves as a Community Outreach Coordinator for the Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties. Through her position, she outreaches to members of low-income communities to provide them with information about food resources including food stamps and food box programs. LaJean is passionate about educating her community on the availability of resources, and making sure that families are able to attain the food they need to sustain their children's nourishment. By the end of her term with Public Allies, she would like to have signed up over 500 families for the San Mateo Food Stamp program. Through Public Allies, LaJean hopes to gain training and experience to enable her to facilitate discussion groups within her community.

Jessica Wright

Big Brothers Big Sisters of The Bay Area

Jessica Wright, 24, serves Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Bay Area as the School Based Program Site Supervisor. Through her work, she works to partner "littles"(young mentees) with "biggs" (mentors). She joined another AmeriCorps program while at San Jose State University focused on bridging the borders for immigrant communities in San Jose. This sparked her interest in a career in service work. With a growing passion to create cultural and environmental awareness (especially through art) she found herself at the doors of Public Allies. Through this experience, she hopes to gain confidence, and the courage to make positive change with her heart in efforts within her placement and her community.



"When we are really honest with ourselves we must admit that our lives are all that really belong to us. It is how we use our lives that determine what kind of men we are. It is my deepest belief that only by giving our lives do we find life." –Cesar Chavez

