

Public Allies Alumni

2nd Year Allies



Jeanette Pena, 24 is a 2nd Year Ally, and Mentor to four 1st Year Allies. She is now building on the foundation she helped create last year with American Sunrise Learning Center. She is implementing an innovative and structured environment for 37 economically and academically disadvantaged children that reside in the Prospect Hill Neighborhood. Jeanette has developed her skills to evaluate the childrens' reading and comprehension levels. With this system, nine children have been accepted into KIPP Aspire Academy – a middle school college preparatory program and two other students were accepted into Tafolla – a multilingual middle school.

Nicholas Espinoza, 19, is a 2nd Year Ally and Mentor to three 1st Year Allies. Nick's first term of service gave him the opportunity to learn and provide a support network for struggling father figures in San Antonio. This support system delivered free counseling, pro-bono legal assistance, and Raising Children with Pride sessions to over 300 fathers. Nick took on his second challenge by becoming a 2nd Year Ally at a new placement. His new position, Volunteer Outreach Coordinator for Catholic Charities- Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program, has him coordinating with 500 volunteers. His detailed planning of volunteer training and scheduling has projected at least 1,500 volunteer hours for the 2009 tax season.



Vivian Fernandez, 29 is a 2nd Year Ally and Mentor to three 1st Year Allies. Vivian took on one of the most challenging placements at the Rape Crisis Center. She educated over 5,000 students ranging in ages between Pre-K to university level on a variety of awareness issues including: safety danger, bullying, unhealthy relationships, sexual harassment, and rape. Vivian's second year with Public Allies connected her with Girl Scouts of Southwest Texas. As a Program Specialist, she facilitates curriculum to at least 1200 girls that encourages self-esteem and art creativity. Vivian also attends San Antonio College and will graduate with a Degree in Psychology in 2010. Her other commitment includes being a Youth Leader at her local church mentoring 65 youths.

Karen Martinez, 29 is a 2nd Year Ally and Mentor to three 1st Year Allies. She is currently placed at Project Quest. Her first year utilized her knowledge of income tax preparation and she successfully completed over 250 Tax Returns for low income families located on the Westside of San Antonio. Karen's 2nd year takes her experience to the next level, where she now manages the Low Income Tax Clinic. Karen assists Westside residents with tax controversies and prior year returns. To date she has assisted over 86 families disputing their tax audits.



Shannon Calderon, 30 is a 2nd Year Ally and Mentor to four 1st Year Allies. She is currently placed at the San Antonio Public Library Foundation where she is one of the first staff members in the new Community Outreach Department. After her first year as a Job Career Recruiter for Project Quest, she has used these networking skills to connect with the non-library card holders. She also transports the Bookmobile to over 15 locations a month that reach out to Bexar County Residents who do not have immediate access to a library in their neighborhood. She is confident informing the public about the services the library provides will assist in decreasing the illiteracy rate in San Antonio.

Hired by Partner Organizations



Katherine Cox, 23 was placed at Respite Care of San Antonio. Katie's year incorporated her love of teaching and medical interest. She was able to develop her position into a direct liaison for children with special needs and their medical providers. Katie did so well, Respite Care offered her a position as Family Services Coordinator when she completed her term of service. Now she supervises a 2008-2009 Ally. Also, Katie has been accepted at the University of TX Southwestern Medical School, where she will study Developmental Pediatrics. She plans on utilizing her talents and knowledge to give back to her community

Vicente Escobedo, 21, became a single parent at the age of 16. Vicente took the initiative to seek out resources that would develop his character as a father and values as a Latino male in the San Antonio community. After joining Public Allies, he was a perfect match for the American Indians in Texas (AIT)- Fatherhood Campaign. Vicente was an essential part of the AIT team reaching out to over 150 fathers a month. During his term, Vicente was invited to participate in the One Star Foundation Mentorship Initiative. This training further developed his skills at coordinating mentorship volunteers and understanding the role he plays in encouragement and retention. AIT asked Vicente to stay on and continue his work connecting with not only fathers but with their Youth Collaborative program as well. Vicente's goal is to be a leader in the expansion of sex education in San Antonio School Districts and continuing to teach teen fathers the importance of their role in their children's lives.



Stacy Valentin, 20 was placed at the Bexar County Community Investment Department where she served as the staff support for a number of community programs including: Tenant Based Rental Assistance, Down Payment Assistance, American Dream Down Payment Initiative and Harm Reduction Needle Exchange. After serving her term, Stacy applied and was interviewed by the department's Executive Director who offered her a full-time position as an HIV Advocate Clerk of the Ryan White program. Stacy oversees the HIV San Antonio Planning Counsel which reallocates money for a variety of HIV funding categories. Stacy also studies Public Administration part-time at San Antonio College.

Sarah Salazar, 26 was hired by her partner organization Children's Association for Maximum Potential (CAMP). Sarah is the Volunteer Services Specialist; she recruits and retains over 400 volunteers for CAMP's programs. At camp, children with physical and/or mental disabilities are able to have a summer camping experience while still being provided the care that they need. Sarah recently received her Associate of Science degree and is currently attending University of Texas San Antonio, where she is working on a Bachelor of Business Administration Degree in Management.



Melissa Aguilar, 27 was placed at Centro Med – a community health care clinic. Her placement title was the Breast and Cervical Cancer Clinic Prevention Coordinator. In her term of service, Melissa assisted in the screening of over 600 low income and uninsured women. After graduating from Public Allies, Centro Med recruited her to help streamline their Electronic Medical Records (EMR) process. In her new position as EMR Administrative Specialist, Melissa is developing a sustainable clinic operation that encompasses the mandatory Electronic Medical Records by 2012 and the program initiatives of Centro Med. She is determined to use her knowledge in the San Antonio community and become a leader in national policy change for improving access to health