

MEET THE ALLIES

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



Class of 2007/2008

Shiera Chandler

Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network

Shiera Chandler is a Student Organizing Associate at GLSEN, the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network. She provides ongoing support to their National Student Jumpstart Leadership Team in the Midwest Region. She conducts outreach for GLSEN's Days of Action, which occurs during the school year, and works with the newly established NYC Chapter. Shiera admires the range of GLSEN's purposes from Public Policy to Education, Research, and Student Organizing. GLSEN strives to assure that each member of every school community is valued and respected regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. Shiera appreciates the opportunity to communicate with different students and learn about their needs and struggles of LGBTQ youth. She hopes to continue her involvement with GLSEN, working directly with the students and developing the NYC Chapter. Furthermore, Shiera plans to obtain a degree in Public Health or Social Work so that she can continue working with young people.

Ronald De La Cruz

Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation

Ronald is currently at Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation where he is a Youth Organizer. His job entails assisting youth to find their voices and wages campaigns in their local high schools. Ronald feels a deep sense of pride to not only work for Cypress Hills, but to also to better the lives of residents in the community in which he resides in East New York, which happens to be where Cypress Hills is located. Ronald is presently pursuing a Bachelors degree at Brooklyn College and plans to become a Doctor.

Charlene Garcia

Next Steps at Project Renewal, Inc.

Charlene is presently at Project Renewal where she is assisting homeless clients by providing job opportunities through their Next Step program. She provides employment support to the clients in hopes of transitioning them into the mainstream culture. Charlene exposes the clients to critical skills, interviewing techniques and how to overcome employment barriers.

Charlene's enthusiasm for helping others who are in need of services led her to Public Allies and Project Renewal.

Charlene's future plans consist of obtaining a nursing degree from Bronx Community College where she is currently enrolled and to one day open her own non-profit substance abuse clinic where she can utilize both her nursing skills and her zeal to serve others.

Syreeta Gates

Project Reach Youth, NYC

Syreeta Gates is fervent about improving the community in which she lives and works. That passion is what led her to Public Allies New York. She works as an Outreach Specialist at Project Reach Youth; her tasks include but are not limited to assisting the students whose priority is to create equity for all and working closely with the families in the school to inform them of their child's progress, and finally drafting a school newsletter. She is a social entrepreneur and involved in a wide array of community initiatives. Syreeta is working on inspiring young people to do more work in their communities.



Vanessa Hatter

Planned Parenthood

Vanessa is presently at Planned Parenthood, where she educates on the issues of diversity and cultural competence. Her tasks include drafting a quarterly diversity newsletter, which is viewed by their national affiliates, coupled with cultivating events for various diverse holidays to raise awareness of cultural customs. Vanessa is ardent about improving the global state of affairs and strongly believes in diverse leadership and the necessity for it. Vanessa began her educational career at the SUNY University of Buffalo as an "Exercise Science" student and plans on returning to school after graduating from Public Allies.

Nafiysa James

Youthline America

Nafiysa serves as a Mapping Consultant at Youthline America, where she teaches weekly courses on community mapping to freshman students at the Park West High School. In her role at the high school, she is bridging the cultural gap between the service providers and the youth. Nafiysa is passionate about improving her community and the lives of others. She has gained over 2,000 hours of service in the last year alone. In 2005, Nafiysa took her passion abroad to volunteer three times a week as an arts and science teacher in Guatemala. Nafiysa is pursuing her degree at Lehman College of Latin American and Caribbean studies. After Public Allies, Nafiysa plans to continue her pursuit of a Bachelor's degree and aspires to be a certified teacher and/or trainer.

Ryun Montenegro

Cornerstone Learning, INC

Ryun Montenegro is a recent college graduate from The School of Visual Arts where he majored in film with a focus on directing. Ryun is presently working as a Site Coordinator at Cornerstone Learning Center whose mission includes helping youth succeed in school and life as well as tutoring children in reading or math. Cornerstone matches each student with one volunteer for weekly tutoring sessions in reading or math. Ryun performs a variety of tasks while at Cornerstone, primarily managing, providing guidance and support to the tutors and the middle school students. Ryun has made a tremendous impact on the middle school student's lives. He is passionate about filmmaking and hopes to one day become an independent filmmaker.

Randy Rosa

Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network

Randy is currently at GLSEN where he serves as a Facilitator in the Department of Education's "Respect for All" division, which seeks to eradicate bias's within the LGBTQ community. Randy is most proud to be part of such a dynamic organization as GLSEN and hopes to become a future consultant there, assisting with the various trainings that are conducted. Randy has some ambivalence regarding his specific plans for the future. However, he knows that whatever the future may hold for him, educating others will definitely be a part of it!

Shameka Shepard

Urban Justice Center

Shameka is a legal advocate at the Urban Justice Center; she works passionately with various clientele performing an array of tasks. Her vital responsibilities include pre-screening families for food stamp benefits, and educating them on benefit eligibility. Shameka is enthused about working for the Urban Justice Center as she one day dreams of becoming a lawyer. She has pride toward her connection to such a vibrant organization. Shameka's future endeavors include completing her B.A. in 2009, obtaining a master's degree at Columbia's School of Social Work, attending Law School, and finally working for a non-profit organization where she can continue on the path to serving others.

Tahirah Talib-Din

Good Shepherd Services

Tahirah is a graduate of LaGuardia Community College where she obtained an Associates degree in Liberal Arts and Humanities. She is thrilled to be working at Good Shepherd Services at the Barbara Blum Non-Secure Detention home. Some of her responsibilities include reaching out to organizations to facilitate workshops, performing case management, and assisting the youth who reside at the residence. While working at Good Shepherd Services and being in Public Allies, Tahirah has learned a plethora of leadership skills that includes time management, interpersonal skills, and professional development. Tahirah is excited about the transformation she is currently undertaking.

