



PUBLIC ALLIES CHANGE-MAKER Award Winners 2005

This year Public Allies recognized 10 outstanding program graduates for their life's work in social change, and for living the Public Allies' values of collaboration, diversity and inclusion, focus on assets, continuous learning and integrity. Each local Public Allies site selected one honoree. From this pool, a national Public Allies Change-Maker was selected by the Public Allies National Alumni Advisory Board. These winners represent a small sample of the amazing work being done by 1,800 program graduates across the country.

MENTORING THE NEXT GENERATION:

Esteban "Steve" Ramos National Change-Maker New York, Class of 2000



I currently direct New York City's only youth-run food pantry. Since I started here as a Public Ally, I have been personally responsible for distributing 25,000 bags of food for people in need. I also am able to use my experience at Public Allies as the supervisor and trainer of our AmeriCorps members. Public Allies was the catalyst for my success.

During the past five years, Steve's leadership of after-school community service programs for youth have empowered dozens of young people in the Washington Heights neighborhood of New York and served over 25,000 bags of food to local residents. As an Ally, Steve developed an after-school program for 60 children that rescued a dying food pantry at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church serving 300 families a week.

Steve's success led to the creation of a second food pantry at Mount Washington Presbyterian Church, the development of a core group of committed youth who have maintained average grade points of at least 3.0, and a swift rise through the organization to Associate Executive Director. Steve has accomplished all of this while working toward a BA in Social Work at Lehman College where he has received many honors and serves on the school's advisory committee, and meeting his family obligations as a husband and father of two. Steve is a tireless advocate and mentor for hundreds of young people helping them get off the streets, out of violence, and into opportunities for growth. He has also been an active volunteer with Public Allies, and an exemplar of the values and leadership initiative we hope to see in our Allies.

TRANSFORMING NEIGHBORHOODS:

April Kunze

Chicago, Class of 2000
and



Aquil Charlton

Chicago, Class of 2001



Our organization's mission specifically states that we are coming together to work across social barriers. That came from working with Public Allies.- Aquil Charlton

With a group of Public Allies alumni and friends, April and Aquil created the Crib Collective, an organization that empowers young people in the racially divided communities of Chicago's North Lawndale and Little Village. The Crib Collective was founded to create a culture of understanding, creativity, and social entrepreneurship. Through the Crib Collective, April and Aquil train young people to work across social boundaries to transform their communities. The organization operates many programs serving 1,500 youth, including a recording studio, social entrepreneurship program, and graphic arts programs. The Crib Collective has also partnered with the new Little City Multiplex High School in Little Village to ensure leadership roles for students in the development and oversight of four new high schools.

KEEPING COMMUNITY PRIORITIES:

Richard Rone, II

Cincinnati, Class of 1999

I didn't realize how passionate I was towards the community. The apprenticeship program reinforced my thinking about whether it was time to chase money or what is good for my community.

In his year as a Public Ally, Richard served 500 inner city youth in a reading-based enrichment program through the Cincinnati Youth Collaborative. Richard has continued to lead efforts for local youth by increasing the number of mentors at Community Family Support Center and leading a pregnancy prevention program that emphasizes self confidence, individual assets and the importance of community and family for 1,500 youth at three schools and five community centers through Services United for Mothers and Adolescents. Richard has also been an active volunteer in the community, leading a sports program that matches athletics with critical thinking and serving as a mentor and trainer of Allies. He has also continued his learning, pursuing a Bachelors degree in Business Administration.



SHAPING STATE GOVERNMENT:

Emily Falcon

Delaware, Class of 2002

Public Allies gives you the opportunity to learn in an open environment and opens your mind up to new thinking. The skill set provided by Public Allies prepared me for graduate school and my current position in state government.

Since apprenticing at AIDS Delaware, Emily Falcon has worked for change by combining LGBT activism and the political process. Emily is currently one of Governor Ruth Ann Minner's youngest policy advisors with responsibility for housing and education issues. A member of the Delaware Stonewall Democrats, Emily made history in 2004 as Delaware's youngest and first openly gay delegate to the Democratic National Convention. She has also served as the secretary of Delaware Pride and on several boards including the Equality Forum, Brandywine Proud Chamber of Commerce and the New Castle County Democratic Party Executive Committee. Emily earned her Masters Degree in Public Administration at the University of Delaware with a scholarship earned as an Ally.



ORGANIZING ON ISSUES THAT MATTER:

Evelin Montes

Los Angeles, Class of 2000

Public Allies enabled me to realize that heading a nonprofit organization was a goal I could accomplish. I'm currently the co-director of a grassroots nonprofit and have Public Allies to thank for the exposure to the nonprofit world, and for further developing my skills.



Evelin had been an activist for social justice before joining Public Allies and serving at National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ). During her senior year at Occidental College, she received a \$10,000 grant from the Donald Strauss Foundation to coordinate a community health assessment project in the MacArthur Park/Westlake community. Currently, Evelin is the Director of Community Organizing at Collective SPACE (Social Power through Action and Community Education), where she helps residents of MacArthur Park raise their voice on a variety of issues such as the lack of affordable housing, need for after-school programs and affordable childcare, to ongoing threats to public safety in the area. Evelin has also facilitated workshops on diversity and community organizing for dozens of Los Angeles residents.

IMPROVING PUBLIC HEALTH:

Rafael Acevedo, Jr.

Milwaukee, Class of 1999

Public Allies set the stage for my nonprofit career. I learned about funding, organizational structure, and was able to get all that experience at my Ally placement. I'm using a lot of the skills I learned then, today.



Rafael's skills at management and collaboration have made him an effective and sought after leader in Milwaukee's Latino community. Serving as an Ally at the Nonprofit Management Fund, Rafael gained critical skills and knowledge of local organizations and their needs, which helped him rise up to become a Program Director at Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin and now Executive Director of Latino Health Organization. In a short time, Rafael has doubled outreach and fostered partnerships to increase awareness and access

for Latino residents to groups working on HIV/AIDS, diabetes, breast cancer, smoking cessation and more. Rafael is also sought after as a board member, currently serving on the boards of the Children's Health Alliance of WI, the National Kidney Foundation of WI, the UW-Milwaukee Alumni Association, the UW-Milwaukee Helen Bader Institute for Nonprofit Management and Future Milwaukee.

MOBILIZING THROUGH TECHNOLOGY:

Ruby Sinreich

North Carolina, Class of 1995

I wanted to connect local progressive people to local issues as a way of helping them get actively involved in those issues.



Ruby Sinreich has trained and supported thousands of people on using technology to advance social justice. Serving at the Women's Center in Chapel Hill as an Ally, Ruby was stunned by their limited use of technology. She then led a program through the North Carolina Justice Center to support online advocacy among grass roots organizations. As the Manger of Planned Parenthood of America's organization-wide Get Active hub, she developed online messaging, advocacy and fundraising strategies that mobilized 800,000 members and provided training and support to 123 affiliates. In 2003, Ruby founded lotusmedia.org, a consulting business that has, for example, created a Reform the Patriot Act blog for the ACLU and launched Orangepolitics.org, an award winning blog for North Carolina residents to discuss progressive politics which has logged more than 10,000 comments to date, and which people are seeking to replicate across the country.

CONNECTING STUDENTS TO COMMUNITY:

Melia Dicker

Silicon Valley, Class of 2004

I had learned how to make use of every community resource available. Without Public Allies' philosophy of asset-based community development and the formation of community partnerships, launching the Spark Program



would not have been possible.

Melia Dicker wants to see educational system foster the natural curiosity of students, rather than be stymied by teaching to standardized tests. Melia started out as the After-School Program Coordinator at the Mountain View Whisman School District. After two years, Melia led a group of five young teachers who came together to form Resonate, a new nonprofit organization that gives young people a voice, an engaging academic and communal experience, and a chance to explore their skills and interests through apprenticeships. Their Spark program places 6th to 8th grade students in apprenticeships at businesses and organizations during the month of July, where they complete a project under the guidance of a mentor while also participating in communal training.

EMPOWERING TEENS THROUGH ARTS:

Paul Griffin

Washington, DC, Class of 1994

Public Allies gave me a solid set of skills, as well as an opportunity to practice working in the non-profit world. It continues to be a lifelong support network for me and others making a difference.

Paul Griffin is the President of City at Peace, an international organization he founded as an Ally that empowers youth through a cross-cultural program fusing arts and civic engagement. Through City at Peace, youth work on a year-long creative process exploring their lives and communities to develop a full-length theatrical work about their lives, exploring the ever-changing complexities of growing up in America and articulating their vision for what must change. Youth direct, act, build the set, light and lead every facet of the performance. After receiving national attention from an HBO documentary, Nightline with Ted Koppel and other media, calls poured in to replicate the program, which is now in 7 US cities, Israel and South Africa. To date, 2,000 youth have completed the City at Peace program, creating 32 original musicals and performing for over 90,000 live audience members. In 2005, there will be over 250 youth in U.S. programs and over 200 youth in programs in Israel.

