



PUBLIC ALLIES CHANGE-MAKER Award Winners 2006

Public Allies alumni are part of a dynamic and growing national network of diverse young leaders committed to a lifetime of working for community and social change. This year Public Allies recognized outstanding program graduates for their life's work in social change, and for exemplifying the five Public Allies values of collaboration, diversity and inclusion, a focus on assets, continuous learning, and integrity.

Public Allies advances diverse young leaders to strengthen communities, nonprofits & civic participation.

MENTORING YOUNG PEOPLE

Sarah Ballard

Public Allies Fellowship at Eagle Rock School
Class of 2005

Public Allies got me back on track with social change and activism. Eagle Rock exposed me to the power teaching has on young people.



Sarah Ballard is using her Public Allies experiences to develop and highlight the assets of young people in Louisville. Sarah currently develops and oversees a mentoring program in a Louisville housing project through Big Brothers Big Sisters. Her work has enabled hundreds of young people to connect with and have meaningful relationships with thoughtful and caring adult mentors. Sarah attributes much of her success to her learning and practice of the values of community participation, inclusion and collaboration. Sarah also has a special interest in using her teaching, youth development, and fine arts background to help more women claim their power through art therapy.

LGBT SUPPORT AND ADVANCEMENT

Kurt Dyer

Milwaukee Class of 2000

I owe Public Allies for where I am today. Public Allies helped strengthen and inform my ideas and thoughts about social justice and become articulate about the issue.



Faced with the struggles of being a gay teenager, Kurt Dyer was motivated to co-found Project Q, a support program for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth. Project Q has since become a program of the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center and serves over 4,000 Milwaukee-area LGBT youth each year through a drop in center, support groups, a speaker's bureau, and peer counseling. Kurt remains the program director and ensures that it collaborates with more than 20 organizations and has participants from diverse backgrounds.

REBUILDING NEW ORLEANS

Chicago Program Graduates

Many delegations are being planned as a result of our trip; we've taken New Orleans back to our individual communities at work, school and social circles and home. We are committed to sharing the unheard stories, and organizing delegations in solidarity as families move back home with the hopes of rooting their lives once again in the city.



In a spirit of solidarity and responsibility a contingency of Public Allies alumni and friends headed to New Orleans to join and assist a long time colleague and friend. Omar Buckner and his family are resurrecting his block and neighborhood, and put out a call for help. Vanessa Acuna (2005), Olivia Canlas (2005), Gema Gaete (1996), Derek Johnson (1996), Alex Juaniza (2004), Keith Lewis (1997), Freddy Miranda (2005), and Nicholas Woytek (2004) raised funds and traveled to Louisiana to help with our country's largest community rebuilding effort. This group of Latino/a, Asian and African American brothers and sisters came together to help clear debris, landscape and rebuild homes. They were touched by the beautiful spirits and strong-willed survivors submitted to inhumane circumstances. The group did what they felt was not just their duty, but privilege.

ORGANIZING FOR WOMEN'S ISSUES

Theresa Garrett

North Carolina Class of 2005

I know how to use my community assets and build collaborations. They are tools that I use over and over throughout my work.



Since completing Public Allies, Theresa Garrett has used her skills as a student leader at North Carolina Central University. In addition to co-founding VOX: Voices for Planned Parenthood, she has also planned a week of Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Awareness, including presenting the Vagina Monologues as a fundraiser attended by more than 2,000 students and community members and raised \$5,000 for the North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Theresa will continue her work to support women by pursuing a Master's degree in both management and women's studies.

EDUCATION AND CULTURAL ARTS

Lisa Peck Hernandez

Delaware Class of 1996 & 1998

Education in the arts is absolutely vital for both children and adults—not just to promote cultural literacy, but to bolster self-esteem, confidence, teamwork, and a healthy outlet for creative expression.



A special education teacher at St. Paul's School, Lisa Peck Hernandez instills knowledge, self esteem and a sense of pride in her students' heritage and community. Lisa has a natural talent for recognizing the potential in her students and has taught, mentored, and coached more than a thousand young people. She organizes cultural arts programs, tutors troubled students, instructs young adults in G.E.D. certification, and coaches a competitive dance team. Her entrepreneurial spirit led her to the launch a Mexican Pride Day at her school, and she recently co-founded the Chichesto Studio of the Arts: Dance, Theatre and Art Education for kids and adults. She credits Public Allies with her teaching and management skills, and the willingness to take on challenges.

continued >>

DEVELOPING YOUNG PEOPLE

Jen Jarman

Cincinnati/Dayton Class of 2002

Public Allies taught me to act on my compassion and to motivate those around me to do the same.



Jen Jarman is frequently described as generous and caring. As a result of serving as the Mentoring Specialist at Big Brothers Big Sisters while an Ally, Jen has made a commitment to mentoring and being a role model for teens. In her current position as the Program Leader for Community and Therapeutic Services at Beech Acres, she has secured federal funding for a new program for children with incarcerated parents, developed a new volunteer training initiative, and coordinated a new school-based mentoring program. In addition she is an active volunteer leader in her church.

ORGANIZING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Jairus Ramos

Los Angeles Class of 2002

My most rewarding times have been when I have felt a sense of community. Youth organizers feel isolated, so bringing them together is rewarding.

Jairus Ramos has been organizing young Los Angeles residents for nearly a decade. As co-founder of Youth for Environmental Justice, he led a campaign which resulted in the Air Quality Management District lowering the amount of toxic materials which could be released close to schools. Building on his commitment to help people focus on assets, he has gone on to organize the annual Youth In Action Conference, the city's only youth-led conference for organizers. He also works to create community for youth organizers throughout Los Angeles so that they can have more resources and support each other's campaigns.

ORGANIZING YOUNG PEOPLE

Hiram Rivera, Connecticut Class of 2005

We have young people who never wanted to go to school, now going to college. We even have them applying to Public Allies.



Sustaining his work as an Ally at Youth Rights Media, Hiram Rivera continues to figure out ways for young people to use media production in telling their stories, and raising their voices for social justice. As an Ally, Hiram trained hundreds of young people in media production and community leadership skills, and supported them in applying their learning in community organizing campaigns. In conjunction with a statewide juvenile justice coalition, his organizing work and coordination of media screenings, led to the closing down of a state-operated juvenile detention facility.

RAISING COMMUNITY VOICES

Alicia Ross

Silicon Valley Class of 2003

My Public Allies experience convinced me that everyone can be a leader and that we can use power in a way that doesn't dominate, but actually brings people together.



Organizing people and resources is a deep passion of Alicia Ross. From her days as a volunteer in college to her professional career choice, Alicia uses her keen ability for identifying a need and leveraging resources in the community towards the end of giving people access to resources regardless of their economic means. As a young activist at Santa Clara University, Alicia formed a partnership between the Downtown College Prep Charter School and Kaplan to provide low-income, Latino students with access to free SAT preparation courses. Today, Alicia organizes high-profile and visible dialogues among civic leaders and everyday citizens in San Jose. As a result, community members have found a voice advocating for much needed resources and services and city leaders are responding to real community needs.

SUPPORTING TEENS IN FOSTER CARE

Alexandria Sumpter-Delves

New York Class of 2003

I want to ensure that the success rate for youth in the foster care system is much higher.



Alexandria changed her life through Public Allies. After working in communications in the private sector, she now oversees programming for three drop-in centers for homeless, runaway and foster care youth. Alexandria's work touches and inspires the lives of some of society's most marginalized young people. Her work in Manhattan, Jamaica and Far Rockaway has directly supported and nurtured over 50 youth- primarily teenagers- in moving through New York's foster care system and building better lives. Several of the young people she's developed are now employed by her, and many of them have become Public Allies as well.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

Michael Watts, Washington DC Class of 1994

Public Allies allowed me to take my community activism and practice it in a deeper way.



As a Washington DC native, Michael Watts continues to be an ardent advocate, supporter and leader in youth development and educational reform by creating systems and opportunities to harness the talent of DC's youth. Michael Watts attributes much of success today to the multitude of professional and personal leadership experiences, from being a part of the inaugural class of Public Allies to serving as the youngest Executive Director in Public Allies shortly after graduation, and now the Executive Director of the Children, Youth and Family Investment. Regardless of the role, Michael believes that the Public Allies values' of diversity and building community have enabled him to create solutions across systems to benefit DC youth of all ages – from birth through high school.



Public Allies National Office
633 W. Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 610
Milwaukee, WI 53203
www.publicallies.org