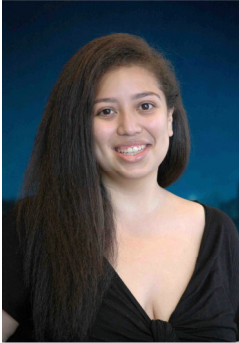




CORO NEW YORK LEADERSHIP CENTER

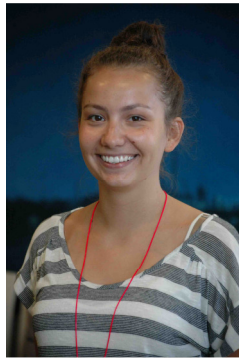
IMMIGRANT CIVIC LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES 2010



Alyssa Aguilera, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest

Alyssa is the Community Organizer for the Health Justice Program at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest - a non-profit civil rights law firm. Her work focuses on the intersection of health, civil rights, and low-income communities of color, with an emphasis on immigrant rights. Currently, she is working on campaigns to improve access to quality health care for the publicly insured and uninsured, developing grassroots responses to hospital closures in medically underserved neighborhoods, and improving linguistically and culturally competent health care for immigrant populations. Before joining NYLPI, Alyssa's organizing interests focused on student and youth work where she participated and directed various campaigns around issues such as workers' rights, prison reform, immigrant rights, and education. She holds a B.A. in Government from Harvard College.



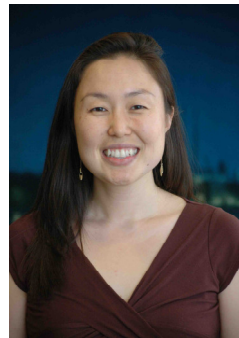
Molly Brennan, NYC Department of Education

Molly is a teacher. For the past three years I have worked at an all-immigrant high school in the Bronx. My work with immigrant students and their families has opened my eyes to the daily issues many immigrants deal with. My students worry about residency, citizenship, employment, and higher education, among other things. I am most familiar with, and most passionate about, rights for immigrant children and educational issues. I think there must be more services available to English Language Learners within the New York City Department of Education. I teach at a school where the students are fortunate enough to receive all the services they need, but I know of far too many schools and students where they are left behind because of their limited English abilities. I think this is an issue that is only marginally addressed within the system. I want to learn ways to make myself more accessible and to make sure these families are receiving the help they need. I hope to learn leadership skills that allow me to create a trustworthy and safe environment for people.



Martha Chavez, New Immigrant Community Empowerment

Martha is the Coordinator of Advocacy and Organizing. Having grown up in Juarez, MX- El Paso, TX border area is a great factor as to why I got involved in immigrant rights work. Growing up, I got to experience the gradual changes in enforcement along the border. I got to see how immigration law became really harsh, and how these new implemented laws would make the system very hard to navigate. When I graduated from college I decided that I wanted to work in a field that would allow me to be with the community I relate to, and focus on human and civil rights of people along the border. Since then I have been involved in immigrant issues, and moved to NYC to learn about immigration inside the US. I currently coordinate the advocacy and organizing portion of the organization and cover many different issues that happen in the immigrant community in Queens. I am currently coordinating the Immigrant Consumer Justice campaign, one of the main purposes of which is to denounce the fraudulent practices that immigrants mostly fall victims of.



Grace Cho, MinKwon Center for Community Action

Grace is a staff attorney. As an immigrant from South Korea, my interest in working with immigrant communities was a natural progression of my sense of belonging to the Korean immigrant community. In college, I was challenged to think about justice issues both locally and globally, which led me to law school (and consequently New York). In the summer of 2009, I began working at the MinKwon Center for Community Action as a staff attorney, mainly servicing the Korean and Chinese community members. I am very grateful that I am able to work with a community that is close to my heart, and to provide legal services to the community that often feels disempowered and without any recourse to address some of the injustices they face in their lives.





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Genevieve (Gigi) Gazón, Environmental Justice and Community Development Project
Genevieve (Gigi) became the Community Organizer for the Environmental Justice program in June 2008. As the Community Organizer she works directly with low-income communities of color that are affected by the unfair burden of environmental harm. Gigi is expecting a degree in 2010 from SUNY Empire State College in Urban Policy and Advocacy, which includes courses in Urban Planning; Race, Class and Gender; and Ecology, Environment and Sustainability, among others. Before entering the social justice and advocacy world, Gigi attended NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, where she pursued a Theatre Arts Degree. She is a published songwriter, a vocalist, and a band leader for a local acid jazz outfit that performs in and around New York City. In addition to her musical career, she worked for various record labels and her final stop in the corporate sector was as the Sr. Director for International Production at Atlantic Records.



Peter Gee, Asian Americans for Equality (AAFE).

Peter is the Associate Director for Resource Development and Programs at AAFE; it is a nonprofit comprehensive community development organization with a mission to advance the rights of Asian Americans and all those in need through advocacy and access in civil rights, immigrant assistance, social services, affordable housing, and economic development. At AAFE, Peter manages day-to-day operations for AAFE's resource development department and oversees the Youth Development and Education department and the agency's green and healthy communities initiative. He is also on the board of directors of Community Healthcare Network and received his undergraduate degree from UC Berkeley and his Master in Public Policy from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Govt.



Maryum Khwaja, Social Worker

The Islamic tradition places a strong emphasis on community, and the obligation of each of us to service, and hence, service to the community has been ingrained in me since I was a child. My parents immigrated to the United States almost forty years ago. After I graduated from college, I was left with a professional emptiness, lacking any idea of what I wanted to do. After some time, I noticed that the first generation parents still had the tendency to utilize parenting skills needed for society back home and in my experience, were having difficulty adjusting their parenting techniques to meet the needs of their children today. I saw myself and my peers looking avidly for people to turn to in an attempt to fill this void, and how much of an impact their choice of mentors made on their lives. It became my mission to provide such youth with positive resources that they could turn to. In 2007, I became involved with the Islamic Center at NYU, and made an active effort to reach out to the college bound youth through many different means, including conducting workshops and lectures, providing counseling, and also through one-on-one daily connections.



Moo Young Kim, YWCA of Queens

Moo Young is the Adult and Community Program Coordinator for the YWCA of Queens, a nonprofit organization that works to empower women and eliminate racism. She is dedicated to the Women to Work Program helping immigrant women gain employable skills to obtain career advancement and become self-sufficient. She also helps with the organization's development and runs the English for Speakers of Other Languages Program helping adults gain practical English language skills. Before YWCA of Queens, she worked in the area of immigration administration and childhood obesity research. She completed her undergraduate coursework from the University of California, Los Angeles where she graduated with a B.A. in Sociology and is a 2009 graduate of New York University's Summer Institute in Global Affairs.





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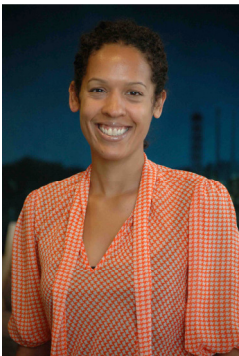
Kaja Kühl, youarethecity

Kaja is the Founder of youarethecity, a research, planning and design practice in Brooklyn, dedicated to helping communities identify urban planning and design solutions to improve urban environments. Her primary research focuses on increasing global migration and its impact on local communities, effects on urban planning, public policy and urban design decisions in receiving communities. Prior to founding youarethecity, Kaja was an Urban Designer and Team Leader at the New York City Department of City Planning, where she worked on several large-scale projects and rezoning initiatives including Sherman Creek in Inwood and Manhattanville in Harlem. She holds a Master of Science in Urban Planning from Columbia University and a Diploma in Architecture from the University of Karlsruhe in Germany. She teaches Urban Planning and Urban Design at Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture.



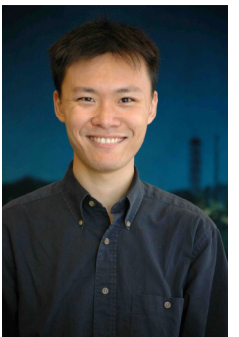
Elizabeth Lee, Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CAAF)

Elizabeth is a Program Coordinator at CAAF since December 2006. She oversees Project ExCEL (Expanding Capacity for Effectiveness and Leadership), the program aiming to increase the capacity of Asian-led and serving community based organizations in New York City by providing trainings, technical assistance, and mini-grants to enhance their knowledge of public policy and to advocate for Asian Pacific American children and families. Elizabeth received her bachelor degree from Hunter College of CUNY in Psychology and a Masters of Education in psychological counseling from Columbia University's Teacher's College. Elizabeth was placed at a local junior high school in Brooklyn, providing individual and group counseling to at-risk and mandated students. She worked with students and school in the "I Love ME" Campaign; she helped to organize youth-inspired fundraisers and activities to benefit the school and various charities. Elizabeth also led participatory research project with middle school students exploring the gentrification of Harlem.



Debra Means-West, Upwardly, Global.

Debra works as the Program Director at Upwardly Global, a non-profit organization located in NYC. She has over 5 years of experience in consulting, developing and delivering programs designed to raise awareness and promote the benefits of diversity in the workplace. Debra's focus has been on the development of innovative models and strategies that make companies stronger and more competitive through diversity and inclusion. Debra is an American citizen but has spent 6 years of her life living and working abroad in South Korea, Japan and Australia. Her experiences as an expatriate, as well as diversity practitioner have provided her a firm understanding of the benefits to business of a diverse workforce. Debra currently holds a BA in Liberal Arts and is an Accredited Mental Health First Aid Instructor from Orygen at Melbourne University.



Jacob Pang, New York County District Attorney's Office

Jacob is the Coordinator for the Immigrant Affairs Program which specializes in investigating frauds committed against immigrants. He's held this post since 2009, and his responsibilities include assisting in investigations undertaken by Assistant District Attorneys and detectives, maintenance of a hotline that is open to the public to file complaints, interviewing witnesses in cases, and making presentations in community outreach events. As a speaker of Cantonese and Mandarin, he specializes in (but not limited to) cases that involve the Chinese-American communities. Jacob received a B.A. in East Asian Studies from SUNY at Albany and a M.A. in Chinese History from Columbia University.





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Shan Rehman, Chhaya Community Development Corporation

Shan is a Communications and Development Associate and has been with Chhaya since 2007, when he began his work with the organization as a Community Organizer. He has also worked as an analyst with a public sector oriented management consulting firm, where he conducted management and communications research for some of New York City's largest civic organizations. Before joining Chhaya, he graduated with a Bachelor's degree focusing on issues of international development, globalization, and social change from Hampshire College. He has also previously worked with the National Rural Support Program and the National Commission for Human Development in Islamabad, Pakistan; and has had his academic work published. Originally from Pakistan; he is fluent in English, Urdu, Punjabi and is proficient in Nepali. In his free time, Shan enjoys playing guitar and exploring the wares of NYC street vendors.



Joseph Sanches, Brandworkers International

Joseph is a Campaigner for Brandworkers International, a New York-based not-for-profit organization that empowers retail and food employees with social change tools to win justice on the job and in the community. Brandworkers International has recently joined the Food Chain Workers Alliance and Joseph is involved with the policy committee. Additionally Joseph also works closely with the Industrial Workers of the World labor union. He received a Bachelor's Degree in mathematics from Salisbury University. Joseph also plays bass guitar in Rainy Day Cacophony and has run as a Green Party candidate for Maryland state house.



Rui Wang, Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

Rui is the certified business advisor of SBDC at LaGuardia Community College. She provides professional one on one counseling to existing and start-up businesses in English and Chinese. Rui has been working very closely with new immigrant business owners and provides professional assistance. Rui came to SBDC with varied experiences of international trades. She worked in a NY based manufacturing company as a key account manager and production coordinator, She was in charge of approximately 2.5 million in business of direct imports such as Home depot, Lowe's, Wal-mart, and 1.5 million of finished goods imports to US and Germany. Ms. Wang also had four years accounting experiences. She was focused on cost accounting and customer profitability analysis. Ms. Wang received her B.S degree in Public Policy Administration from University of Wisconsin Whitewater and B.A degree in Int. Business Management from Han University in the Netherlands.



Laura Zaltsman, Marks Jewish Community House of Bensonhurst

Laura is a vocational counselor and graduated from NYU with a degree in liberal arts. She is a Russian immigrant who came to the United States with her family from Kishinev, Moldova in 1990 when she was four years old. Laura is proud to be involved with a non-profit community organization that services so many different people, of various ages and cultural backgrounds. As a vocational counselor, she work primarily with Russian-speaking immigrants who need support with job readiness for a program called Connect to Care, which offers a range of services to individuals who are unemployed or underemployed as a result of the financial crisis. Laura helps them compose and revise resumes and cover letters, conduct mock interviews, shows them how to use the Internet as a tool, and helps them with job placement. She finds that empowering people to find jobs by giving them the right tools is extremely gratifying.

