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I first became interested in Coro because I wanted to contribute more effectively to social change. At the community center where I worked I had reached a leadership position; I loved the organization, but it was primarily social service work and I wanted to contribute to a broader change. Graduate school in a public interest field was a consideration for me, but I wasn't sure which field to focus on. Coro offered the opportunity to explore a variety of community issues and to connect with peers from different sectors, which felt like a good way to explore my interests.

The three community issues that our Community Fellows cohort selected to study were fascinating, and I loved being able to talk with people who were working directly with those issues. As exciting as this was, it actually provided the backdrop for the most interesting part of the experience, which was the teamwork and group process with the other Fellows. I learned a lot about leadership from watching and interacting with my peers, working through challenges together, making decisions together, giving each other feedback, and supporting each other on our individual projects.

In my current role as Executive Director of Community United Against Violence (CUAV) I continue to draw on those insights about teamwork and leadership. I have the honor of leading an amazing group of people who work to create safety and healing from violence for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) communities. We are replacing prejudice with connection through public education, establishing safe environments for LGBTQ youth and supporting them in forming healthy relationships. Our organization offers crisis intervention, support and advocacy for survivors of hate violence and domestic violence; our 24-hour crisis-line gets over 600 calls a year.

My experience with Coro led me directly to CUAV when Andy Wong, one of my peers from the Coro fellowship, recruited me to join the organization as the Executive Director. I hadn't seen myself in this kind of "out front" leadership role, but I fell in love with the organization and I have been drawing on all of my "Coro Tools" to rise to this challenge. It turns out that this was just what I was looking for. The work CUAV does draws on public policy, public-interest law, community-building, education, and definitely works for a broader change.

Through the relationships with my peers from the Community Fellows program I've stayed connected with the Coro network. I developed personal friendships, changed my career path, and have drawn on those Coro friends as resources on more than one occasion. Any time I learn that someone has been connected with Coro, it tells me that they are an engaged leader who is willing to grapple with the challenges of society. It's amazing to see all of the ways that my fellow "Corons" are working for a better world.