



Libby Schaaf, 2003 San Francisco Community Leadership Program Graduate

I first heard about Coro as a teenager when my Mom applied to the Coro Women's Program for women re-entering the workforce. My interest was piqued from that moment on. In 1999 I was asked to be a Field Faculty for the Fellows Program in Public Affairs. I enjoyed the Field Faculty experience so much that I hosted a Fellow for three consecutive years. After that, I decided to apply to the Community Fellows Program in 2003.

As a participant in the Community Fellows Program I learned powerful organizational tools and how cities other than Oakland (where I work) were grappling with the same urban challenges. The greatest benefits of the program were that I was able to interact with the other amazing professionals in my program and I gained a greater understanding of myself and how I could interact better with others.

Since Coro, I have been hired for three new jobs, starting with serving as Special Assistant to Oakland Mayor Jerry Brown. Coro prepared me for these positions by helping me get out of my comfort zone and be confident in taking on greater responsibilities. The organizational and interpersonal skills I gained through my Coro training helped me produce results and allowed me to be a more effective manager.

Currently, I serve as the Director of Public Affairs for the Port of Oakland. My responsibilities include overseeing strategic communications and stakeholder relations for the Port and supervising the Port's Government Affairs, Media and PR, and Community and Customer Relations Departments. Prior to this appointment, I worked as Press Secretary and Operations Manager for the Ignacio De La Fuente for Mayor Campaign and I served as a Legislative Aide to De La Fuente when he was President of the Oakland City Council. In addition, I currently serve on the boards of the Lighthouse Community Charter School and the Museum of Children's Art (MOCHA).

I value staying connected to Coro. When I know of a job opening, I always start with Coro. My former City Council position is now filled with the Coro Fellow I supervised during her individual project. I still keep in touch with my Coro classmates and I've never turned down a request for an informational interview. I also enjoy hosting as many Public Affairs Fellows and Exploring Leadership Youth Fellows at the Port as I can; it's rewarding and they always contribute so much. Mostly I enjoy knowing and meeting all the dedicated, smart people Coro attracts.

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