



# Northwestern University Public Interest Program

On the web at [www.northwestern.edu/nupip](http://www.northwestern.edu/nupip)

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2007

## NUPIP Placements 2008-2009 (as of May)

**Barrak Alzaid**  
Urban Gateways

**Cecilia Boyd**  
Chicago Federation  
of Labor-Workers  
Assistance Commit-  
tee

**Dan Clark**  
Lawndale Christian  
Health Center

**Adele El-Khoury**  
The Community  
Builders

**Joe Giambrone**  
Chicago Public  
Schools-Office of  
New Schools

**Becca Hartman**  
Interfaith Youth  
Core

**Courtney O'Brien**  
Protestants for the  
Common Good

**Lauren Parnell**  
Interfaith Youth  
Core

**Megan Sieberg**  
North Lawndale  
Community News

**Courtney Spalding-  
Mayer**  
Philanthropy Aware-  
ness Initiative

**Mireya Vaca**  
YWCA Evanston  
North Shore

**Nicole White**  
Cabrini Connections

**Mona Yeh**  
Free Spirit Media

**Jerett Yan**  
Chicago Urban  
League

## NUPIP completes successful first year

By Sam Schiller NUPIP Coordinator

As the inaugural year of the Northwestern University Public Interest Program comes to a close, we would like to take an opportunity to introduce ourselves and share our vision and experiences with our Alumni partners and organizations in the Chicago-land area. NUPIP is a one-year fellowship designed to introduce young alumni to organizations whose missions are to create systemic social change, and in doing so enable these organizations to capitalize on the Fellows' experience, intelligence, and work ethic.

Professor Paul Arntson and Northwestern students Lauren Parnell, Kelly Kirkpatrick and Sam Schiller have invested considerable time and thought into making the program a success. As a new program, we had hoped for between six and eight job placements in local organizations. With the strength of Chicago's public interest sector, and the creativity of new partnerships, NUPIP secured fourteen placements for the 2006-2007 fellowship year.

### Northwestern University Public Interest Program



The energy generated by this strong start has translated into a true sense of ownership and dedication for all involved. This year's fellows, beyond their full time work responsibilities, have formed committees with the NUPIP coordinators to explore ways of improving and expanding the program. In addition, the Northwestern Alumni Association and the University Administration has provided invaluable assistance in connecting us to alumni and board members active in the Chicago area.

In their direct work with organizations, Northwestern fellows have pursued a wide range of impressive projects. Sheila McCorkle, working in Northwestern's backyard of Evanston, has been at the center of an exciting youth initiative. Featured in the local newspaper, Sheila's work in community organizing and engaging young adults and social organizations culminated in a proposal to the Evanston City Council. Her plan, calling for year-

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Students Learn Using Media

By Yaneth Bello 06-07 Fellow

I arrive at work at 7:15 in the morning. If I'm lucky, I already have picked up a cup of coffee before I climb cases of stairs and walk through the sparsely populated hallways of North Lawndale College Prep High School. I am greeted by a dozen or so students who linger outside my classroom, waiting for me to arrive.

"Hey Ms. Y! How's it goin' ? What's for breakfast?" We chat and I finally maneuver my way into my classroom. As my fellowship comes closer to an end, I realize that the most important thing I will miss are my kids, my students. I love to see the shy, quiet student who is too afraid to touch a camera, grow into the student who



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round youth employment opportunities, youth involvement in city government, and an outreach initiative designed to engage “hard to reach” youth, was unanimously approved by the City Council.

While being given considerable



**NUPIP Fellows  
Sheila McCorkle  
and Shaili Rajput  
and Princeton Public  
Interest Fellow  
Nadia Ben-Yousef**

responsibility in their placements, fellows still recognize that they are novices with much to learn about the public interest field. Mary Bowman, working at Evanston’s Center for Independent Futures, has coordinated various efforts to support individuals with disabilities as contributing members of their community. In addition to engaging in direct service and volunteer activities with residents, Mary recently began learning about non-profit development and grant writing. With her first completed grant proudly in hand, she headed downtown in full professional attire to present her proposal in per-

son. As she reached her destination, she found no one in the office and a simple cardboard box with a sign reading “Put proposals here”—a humbling note to a non-profit newbie.

Looking forward, we are eager to partner with more Northwestern Alumni and provide meaningful placements nation-wide. We already have been contacted by alumni throughout the country who hope to share in this vision, wishing to host fellows and act as mentors in the future.

*“Being so new to the world of nonprofits, I have appreciated talking to someone with an outside perspective who is willing to help me think about what I’m doing in new ways.”*

**-Adam Arents 06-07  
Fellow on the value  
of Mentorship**

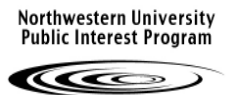
## Mentor A Fellow!

Mentorship is one of the most important parts of the NU Public Interest Program, matching fellows with an alumnus who can act as an additional level of support as they transition to life after college. Fellows greatly benefit from having a mentor as a part of their network, and may look to them for professional advice or just a listening ear.

Mentorship with NUPIP is flexible as expectations and time commitment are set between each fellow and mentor pair.

Make a difference in the life of a new alum!

For more information about mentorship, or to become a mentor, please contact [nupip@northwestern.edu](mailto:nupip@northwestern.edu).



## Reflections on Non-Profit Life

**By Veronica Percia 06-07 Fellow**

Loud noises don't make me jump and homeless men yelling don't make me nervous. Spending my days in a courthouse with the criminally charged, the clinically insane and the indigent, and then waiting out long nights into wee morning hours behind a downtown Chicago bar (a job I picked up to supplement low daytime wages), I have become a bit desensitized to those things that, once upon a time, made me hesitate or shudder or even cry. So when I jumped at the opportunity to write this reflection and my

heart skipped a beat in anticipation, I found myself taken aback by my own excitement. I thought to myself, *wow*, this request has strangely aroused my senses. I had to ask why. Well, my answer to that is, because after a years' time away from the deep reflection academia seems to endlessly demand of you, one realizes that it is not, in fact endless...That as you leave that space and step out to do your work in the world, it becomes very easy to cease to reflect. No one asks you to write down your feelings in an essay any-

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more about how you felt when, say, a woman two days out of chemo treatment came to you at court for help because a collection agency had frozen her Social Security funds and put a lien on her home. No one asks you anymore to analyze the socio-economic implications of a courtroom environment wherein nearly all of the lawyers and all of the judges are middle aged white men and nearly all of the defendants are minority men and single women. No one asks you to do *these* things anymore because they are too busy asking you to finish printing out the new Court Order forms, and to make copies of the intake sheets for tomorrow and then to follow up with this many clients and give them these referral numbers. I work in the courts at a debt collection legal aid help desk and I serve clients who need answers to questions about the law, because credit card companies are suing them for thousands of dollars they don't have. They don't

want me to write an essay, they want me to fill out a Motion Slip. Here, abstractions are meaningless.

But without abstraction and reflection and contextualization, we lose sight of why we took a public interest fellowship in the first place. And no, it's not because we're the world's finest people of the highest moral order. It's because we saw or felt or learned about a social injustice that we felt compelled to address or convinced we could combat in the larger struggle to thrive as a human society. And it is that macro-sense that gives this sometimes menial work direction and infuses it with meaning. So I thank that person who requested I do this reflection, because now, those Motion Slips can be understood as a materialization of *my* motion to push for progress towards social justice. Yes, I sincerely thank that person for the chance to write this reflection because without it, my year could, to some, just look like filed paper.



*"I love to see the shy, quiet student who is too afraid to touch a camera, grow into the student who hogs the equipment and directs the show."*

## The Value of Mentorship

By Adam Arents 06-07 Fellow

As I sat down to write my first grant proposal, I thought back to all the hours I had spent writing papers during my four years at Northwestern. Surely after all the research, revision and citation I had done during those long hours in the computer lab, pounding out this proposal would be a snap. While all that helped, it turns out that writing a paper on Ulysses wasn't going to get me very far in funding a project for the nonprofit where I work, no matter how well-annotated. If I was going to put together a quality proposal, I was going to need help from someone who had done this sort of thing before.

Enter John Pfeiffer, an NU alumnus with many years of experience in getting funding for nonprofit organizations, and my NUPIP mentor. When he and I first met, he talked about his experience with organizations that address social change and he asked me to name a few areas with which I could use some help. Grant writing was at the top of the list, and drawing on his extensive experience with development for several nonprofits, he offered suggestions and pointed me to helpful resources that I wouldn't have known about otherwise.

Being so new to the world of nonprofits, I have appreciated talking to someone with an outside perspective who is willing to help me think about what I'm doing in new ways. It helps to be able to bounce ideas off of someone and think creatively about how I can address challenges I encounter.

NUPIP has enriched my first year out of Northwestern because of the connections I have made, not only to John but to the other NUPIP fellows. As I make the transition from college to working life, it helps to know this community is there to support me.

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hogs the equipment and directs the show. The small environment of my video production classroom has been proof that when young people are given the skills and tools to do *something*, they become more confident in *everything*.

Students learn these skills and tools outside of the classroom too. While working for Free Spirit Media, I had the

opportunity to build a week-long program for students to develop their professional etiquette, shadow industry professionals, and learn more about studying film and broadcasting in college. Because of their preparation and enthusiasm, some of them received summer internship offers.

After a year of NUPIP, I *still*

do not know what I want to do professionally. But I *do* know that I enjoy working with youth and helping them grow into productive citizens. I look forward to the future, whatever it may bring.



**Yaneth Bello on the television set of Judge Mathis with her students of the**

## Northwestern University Public Interest Program



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*As we reflect on the successes of the year we want to acknowledge the help from those that have guided us to where we are now. Specifically, thank you to all of our mentors and supervisors; John Fish and Nora Samuelson and everyone at Princeton Project 55; Aspaia Apostolakis and Katie Blank of The Northwestern Alumni Association; special thanks to Jody Kretzmann, Susan Olson, Mark Hoffman, Bruce Nelson, and Natalie Furlett, to Lucile Krasnow, Nancy Abshire, Christopher Hager, Provost Lawrence Dumas, and President Henry Bienen; your support made this year possible.*

Northwestern University  
Public Interest Program



## Program Update By Kelly Kirkpatrick NUPIP Coordinator

The Northwestern University Public Interest Program has made some exciting advancements over the course of the 2007-2008 year. In addition to keeping up with our fellows and matching new fellows with placements, we have been building up the program's infrastructure to make it strong and sustainable. In January, current fellow Mary Bowmann joined the NUPIP staff, facilitating the student application and applicant/site matching process. She has been an invaluable addition to our team of three student coordinators and advising Professor Paul Arnston in allowing us to address other facets of the program.

We want to welcome Maddie Orenstein to the NUPIP team, who will be taking place of Lauren Parnell as co-student coordinator when Lauren graduates. However, Lauren will

stick around as a fellow for 2007-2008 year, so I'm sure you'll be hearing more from her in the coming months.

As you can see, we have released our first ever NUPIP Newsletter to maintain the community of people who are interested in the activities and future of NUPIP. In addition, we



**Fellows Mary Bowmann and Marta Flory at a NUPIP get together**

are launching a website, which can be found at [www.northwestern.edu/nupip](http://www.northwestern.edu/nupip). Please check it out to see how to get more involved and get updates on all the goings-on.

In addition, we are looking to expand NUPIP to other cities Nationwide. Currently, we are focusing our efforts on select cities, which may include San Francisco, Boston and New York. If you are interested in learning about the national expansion, have recommendations for potential placements, or would be interested in mentoring, please send us an email at [nupip@northwestern.edu](mailto:nupip@northwestern.edu).

Thanks to everyone who has helped us this year, and we are looking forward to lots of new developments in the coming year and a bright future for NUPIP.