Spring 2016 Newsletter

FAO SCHWARZ FAMILY FOUNDATION FELLOWSHIP

Current Fellows at the fall 2015 retreat in New York

Dawn Lavallee (‘16, Playworks) poses with junior coaches
Greetings!

It is hard to believe that ten years ago the FAO Schwarz Family Foundation Trustees and I were finalizing plans to launch the Fellowship Program. The cohort of five FAO Schwarz Family Foundation Fellows who began their fellowship in the summer of 2006 included: CJ Anderson ’08, BELL (host organization); Christyne DeMango Anderson ’08, Associated Early Care and Education; Emily Kuross Vikre ’08, Boston Children’s Museum; Jordy Owen ’08, Children’s Literacy Initiative; and Joanna Steinberg ’08, Museum of the City of New York. Each of these graduates from our first class have gone on to earn advanced degrees, two continue to work for their host organizations and two married each other and have three children while juggling meaningful professional careers!

Over the years, we have heard both through formal written reports as well as through informal conversations about how transformative the experience of the two year fellowship is, about how much the Fellows grow over this timeframe, and the value of having a role that includes both direct service work as well as capacity building work for the organization. The Fellows have also reflected on how important the connection is with other current and alumni Fellows. Biannual retreats and mentorship assignments with trustees and alumni fellows enable these connections to form.

It’s so impressive to review some statistics from our group of 38 alumni fellows. 63% of the alumni Fellows have completed or are pursuing graduate degrees, 37% were hired by their host organizations upon the completion of their fellowship and 97% are working in the broad field of education and youth development.

I hope that you enjoy reading the updates below from our current and alumni Fellows. Please feel free to share with your network the four open Fellowship positions for 2016-2018 at Philadelphia Mural Arts, Reading Partners and uAspire (which will be hiring two Fellows). I look forward to seeing many of you at the reunion dinner in Boston on Friday, April 29th.

Priscilla Cohen, Executive Director

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Jen Benson, Riverkeeper
Since beginning my fellowship at Riverkeeper in August, I've been developing opportunities for increasing youth environmental awareness of Hudson River issues through class lessons and direct service. So far this year I've directly engaged over 200 students through educational outreach, programming, school visits, and days of service. I've also been working to assist in coordinating the 2016 Riverkeeper Sweep, a 100+ location day of service uniting over 2,000 volunteers throughout the Hudson Valley and New York City.

Julia Fillman, Row New York
I cannot believe I am already over six months into the fellowship and my job as Academic Program Coordinator at Row New York! I am learning so much about what it takes to work at a non-profit and enjoying it everyday. Right now, I am currently working on developing the academic program's college prep curriculum as we enter into our "college pride" themed month and am really excited to expose our middle school and high school students to some insights on the college experience. I'm very much looking forward to the spring retreat as well and can't wait to see all the other fellows in Boston!

Khari Graves, The Food Trust
My time at The Food Trust so far has been an incredible and informative experience. I currently work on two teams at the Food Trust dealing with in-school programming and farm to school work. As a member of our HYPE (Healthy You Positive Energy) team, I oversee over 15 student run councils that focus on increasing health, wellness, and physical activity in their classes, schools, homes, and communities while putting an emphasis on collaboration and leadership. As a member of The Food Trust’s Farm to School team I am lucky to work under incredibly knowledgeable and respected members of the farm to school community. With their help and wealth of knowledge, we promote and help enact farm to school philosophy, events, and policy throughout the city, state, and Mid-Atlantic region -- fighting to make school food healthier, tastier, and more local for children across the country.

Elizabeth Sanchez, Generation Citizen
My first quarter of the fellowship was both incredibly challenging and rewarding as there are very high expectations for me at GC. Now, in the second half of my first year, I feel so prepared to tackle any challenge that comes my way, and also have a better understanding of my role as a fellow and as 1/3 of the Generation Citizen team in Boston. Currently I am working to support all of the six college chapters we work with in their advocacy work for our public schools by doing classroom visits, conducting workshops, and helping create strong school partnerships. I'm also demand-building for GC by working to develop a new chapter in one of our gateway cities, Lowell. Looking forward to hosting our retreat in Boston this Spring, and giving all the fellows a glimpse of the amazing civic-engagement work GC does!
Class of 2016

Gabriella Gomez, Breakthrough New York
I will be starting my new position as the Academic Coordinator at Harlem RBI’s South Bronx Site this February. My responsibilities are within the academic portion of our after-school and summer programming for our middle school students.

Sarah Kacevich, Strong Women, Strong Girls
I am wrapping up my fellowship with Strong Women, Strong Girls in June and will be taking a 3-week trip to Colombia before returning to SWSG for a long-term position. I am excited to continue my work with SWSG, managing partnerships with campus chapters, elementary schools, & community centers, plus overseeing our pilot Junior Mentor Program.

Margaret Kearney, Philadelphia Mural Arts Program
This year was very busy and very exciting! Each day of my fellowship has been full of learning moments that challenge and nourish me. This year I worked with an innovative group of urban thinkers on a project in South Philly about bringing together diverse communities to envision their neighborhood’s future and helped plan a convening of international artists and planners to envision the future of our practice. I worked alongside teenagers to investigate environmental issues and alongside formerly incarcerated guild members to paint and install murals. I’ve learned how to plan major cultural festivals, create engaging curriculum for urban youth, and even operate construction equipment! This spring I’ll be leading a group of adult learners to research issues and test solutions related to litter in their neighborhood, collaborating with a class of teenagers to design and paint a mural, and helping launch a community engagement process for an upcoming park re-design. As my fellowship wraps up at the end of the summer, I’m considering options of staying on at Mural Arts in different capacities as well as exploring other opportunities in Philadelphia and beyond. I’m looking forward to spending more of my time focusing on my creative practice as an artist and hopefully finding some time to travel!

Dawn Lavallee, Playworks Massachusetts
As I’m nearing the end of my Fellowship, I’m feeling great about all I’ve been able to accomplish and excited about where I’ll be headed next! I’ve been accepted into the Public and Nonprofit MBA program at Boston University’s Questrom School of Business and will be starting there in the fall of 2016. While transitioning back to being a full-time student makes me a bit nervous, I’m excited to learn more skills to continue my personal and professional growth.

Joseph Rosales, Breakthrough New York
Although it is incredibly hard to believe, I have reached the last quarter of my fellowship. There are so many emotions I feel, and they are only matched by the number of assignments I have to complete. Throughout this school year, I have been hard at work developing our new high school program; this has included developing curriculum for our 9th and 10th grade Saturday lessons and seminars, alongside selecting and training a cohort of college-aged Mentors for our high school students. As for what’s next post-Fellowship, I am unsure yet; I know I want to stay in NYC and continue to serve students in a college-access setting, but who knows what lies at the end of the road?
ALUMNI UPDATES

---------- Class of 2015 ----------

Amy McDermott, Jumpstart
Since July, I’ve been enjoying a very busy and exciting first year in a dual MBA/MPA at NYU! I’ve joined the board of two really interesting clubs here at Stern. For the Social Enterprise Association, I’ve served as the Vice President for the Social Innovation Symposium, an annual conference hosted by NYU’s Stern School of Business, Wagner School of Public Service, and the Law School. I’ve also joined the board of the Government and Business Association, and have enjoyed exploring various career opportunities in policy and social impact. I have found business school very interesting and rewarding so far and I look forward to the next two years.

Juliana Noone, Please Touch Museum
Since completing my fellowship, I have been working with the Free Library of Philadelphia as a Maker Mentor for the Maker Jawn initiative. Maker Jawn is a program that provides maker spaces in North Philadelphia libraries for children and adults. Maker spaces are spaces of tool sharing and knowledge sharing that provide a safe space to “learn by doing.” I am also completing a programming internship for FringeArts, a performance art organization in Philadelphia.

Deshaun Parris, The Food Trust
This year has been hectic and exciting! I have taken on a full-time position in the Youth Leadership department at The Food Trust. This has been an amazing continuation to the fellowship, and I have continued to learn so much. I also began my second semester of graduate school at the University of Pennsylvania in pursuit of my Masters of Public Health.

Charlotte Rendon, Row New York
I am currently at Row New York as the Queens Novice Coordinator. We have a team of 25 freshman and sophomore women student athletes that have spent the year learning how to row, getting fit, and building their community at Row New York. We are excited to return to the water in early-mid March and to return to racing in May!

Shaina Spann, Jumpstart
I’ve begun a year-long fellowship in Chorkor, Ghana (outside of Accra) working as a Program Manager at an NGO called BASICS International. I work closely with the ED to oversee the day to day activities/functions of the organization and am helping her build out a plan for developing a more sustainable foundation. BASICS is a social intervention program that works to provide children in Chorkor with education access (school sponsorship and homework assistance), food access (feeding program), and providing a safe haven for women and girls boarding home program. I could never describe how real this experience has already been.

---------- Class of 2014 ----------

Jonathan Baez, Breakthrough New York
I am currently a Career Counselor at KIPP NYC College Prep. I help students plan for their careers starting in 9th grade and will follow them until they graduate high school. A step that we take to
ensure all students are college and career ready is securing summer opportunities for all students. I help students get into jobs, internships, college programs, volunteer opportunities, sports and/or community service.

**Katherine Evering-Rowe, The Food Project**
After nearly four years at my FAO Schwarz Family Foundation Fellowship placement, The Food Project, I have just moved on to a new job at Gould Farm, a psychiatric rehabilitation community for adults with mental illness in the Berkshires. I work as a member of the residential team, assisting guests with activities of daily living and creating a warm, healing environment in guest residences. I am hopeful that this experience will provide a foundation that is aligned with my values as I pursue a career that bridges my interests in education, justice, and therapeutic work. I am excited about this new adventure and am enjoying going for daily hikes, and playing with cows and goats.

**Michael McNeill-Martinez, Zumix**
I am currently a Middle School and High School English Teacher at the Marian Baker School just outside of San Jose, Costa Rica.

**Kayla Peck, Strong Women, Strong Girls**
In 2015, I left my job at Teach For America and I started my Masters of Divinity at Boston University. It’s been exciting to apply my experience in the social sector to a faith-based setting.

**Caroline Smith, Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia**
I am teaching English Language Learners at Charlestown High School; 11th grade English and 12th grade ESL. I am thoroughly enjoying my work, as well as living in Boston, a city I first really got to know through the FAO retreats!

---------- Class of 2013 ----------

**Louis Berman, Jumpstart New York**
I am a teaching apprentice through the Shady Hill School in Cambridge. In the fall, I taught in a preschool classroom at Shady Hill and am currently teaching first grade. Simultaneously, I am pursuing a Master's degree in Early Childhood Education from Lesley University, which I will complete in May. I’m beginning my job search for teaching positions for the fall, and hope to procure a position as a preschool, kindergarten or 1st grade teacher in a Massachusetts public school. However, I’m definitely keeping my options open! I still live in Jamaica Plain, and recently adopted a kitten named Tito. I’m excited to travel to Hong Kong in April, to visit my brother who is working as a chef in an Italian restaurant there.

**Sara Wilson, Year Up**
I am working at Columbia University in the school of Physicians and Surgeons in the Foundations of Clinical Medicine as the Tutorials Course Coordinator. I recently celebrated my two year anniversary since starting my journey at CU. I recently purchased a chocolate multi-poo puppy named Korben. He was named the Tutorials Course mascot in Physicians and Surgeons and was featured in the textbook as our team mascot! I am very fortunate to have found a job that brings me closer to my passion for public health and keeps me surrounded by amazingly talented individuals. My next goal is to attend grad school for public health policy (fingers crossed)!
Gregory Wright, The Food Trust
I am currently the Youth Leadership Coordinator at The Food Trust, working on the HYPE team along with former FAO Schwarz Fellow Deshaun Parris and current Fellow Khari Graves. Working as the Youth Leadership Coordinator, I encourage youth to address the health concerns within their school community as well as aid them in the implementation of their ideas for healthy change. One of the most rewarding aspects of the position is the fact that I still interact with some of the same youth I worked with as the FAO Schwarz Fellow 4 years ago. It's amazing to see the development of these students! This year at our annual youth conference one of these such students encouraged youth from various high schools to address the health challenges they perceive in their community. Maybe she'll have my job one day!

------------- Class of 2012 -------------

Lauren Brincat, Museum of the City of New York
Since completing my graduate degree in 2014, I've been working in the curatorial department at the New-York Historical Society, first starting out as an intern. This past October, I was promoted to Assistant Curator of Decorative Arts. I am deeply involved in the reinterpretation of the museum's permanent gallery spaces, where we harness technology and creative display to immerse our visitors in the history and culture of New York.

Lakeisha Gerald, The Food Project
I am a Student Support Counselor for the 8th Grade at TechBoston Academy and have been hired back for next year.

Bridgit Paula Ganson, Wheelock College
The past year has been filled with exciting changes for me. I was married this year to my wonderful husband, Kyle, who I met through some of my work in the Fellowship! We bought our first home out in Western MA and are also proud puppy parents to our Goldendoodle, Sunny. Additionally, I began a graduate program in Mental Health Counseling at the University of Massachusetts Boston. My career focus has shifted a bit and I am now working with older adults with dementia, Alzheimer's and other forms of memory loss. I hope to continue working in the geriatric field upon graduation next spring.

Maley Mullin, Jumpstart
In September, my partner Dave and I moved to Chicago from Boston so I could begin pursuing my graduate degree in Social Work at the University of Chicago. Being a full time student again has been fun, interesting, and challenging, and I am really enjoying my school work. As part of my degree requirements, I am also interning with Chicago Public Schools in the Office of Leadership and Learning. My internship has been a great learning experience, and helped me decide on a clinical concentration in School Social Work. Next year I will be interning at New Trier High School—a large school in a suburb of Chicago. So far we miss Boston but LOVE Chicago—we are having fun and eating a lot of pizza!

Kerry Sorensen, Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia
Kerry is the Internship Coordinator at Mastery Charter School in Pennsylvania.
---------- Class of 2011 ----------

Ariana Dugan, Year Up
I’m happy to have been at GA (General Assembly) for over a year now, designing courses for our enterprise partners. Supreme Fellow Mariah and I are still living together in Brooklyn - let us know if you ever need a place to stay when you’re visiting NYC!

Shameka Edmond, Groundwork
Shameka is a 4th grade teacher at SPARK Academy in Newark, New Jersey. She is responsible for developing and implementing daily and unit lesson plans for 4th grade students in math and reading.

Emily Goodridge, Jumpstart
I am currently working at the Cleveland Playhouse, America’s oldest regional theater in Cleveland, Ohio, as their Education Associate. I will be leaving this summer and beginning to pursue my MFA in Arts Administration at Florida State University, a fully funded program where I will be studying and working in their theatre department simultaneously.

Mariah Peebles, Year Up
Mariah is the Chief Operating Officer at Sunny Bates Consulting in New York City.

---------- Class of 2010 ----------

Danielle Calnan, Tenacity
Ted and I have purchased our second home and we are excited to start some minor renovations! I left the Hockomock YMCA as Director of Education and Association Curriculum and am now Director of Education for Knowledge Universe, a west coast based for profit that has programs all over the country. I am housed at TJX Corporate in Framingham, MA. I love the new challenges and ability to be closer to my family. In my free time I have continued to volunteer with the Y and actively fundraise for their annual campaign. I have started training for my next marathon, and Ted and I enjoy spending time with our furchild Maximo and our family, and traveling to visit friends!

Stephanie Dueño, Museum of the City of New York
Stephanie is the History Day Coordinator at the Museum of the City of New York, where she completed her FAO Schwarz Family Foundation fellowship.

Sarah Goetz Abood, Please Touch Museum
My husband, son, and I moved to Pittsburgh, PA in June of 2015. I am currently a stay-at-home parent.

Julia MacMahon, Wheelock
2016 is shaping up to be an exciting year for me! I am currently in my last semester at Boston College School of Social Work, where I am graduating with an MSW in Social Innovation and Leadership this spring. I am currently interning in the Government Relations Office at Boston Children’s Hospital through the HRSA Fellowship, which supports an emerging workforce with knowledge around integrated behavioral health. I hope to bring this expertise back to work for youth involved in the juvenile justice system upon graduation. This spring, I am also taking part in the New Leaders Council
Institute, which is a national training program for the next generation of progressive leaders. Finally, I am excited to be getting married this June!

Alexis McConnell, Boston Children’s Museum
Alexis is the Nutrition Educator Supervisor for the WIC program at the Broward County Health Department in Pompano Beach in Florida.

Liana Mitman, Jumpstart
I am enjoying my new job as the National Director of Elementary Education and the Boston Regional Manager for ShalomLearning. We provide innovative curriculum using technology to supplement Jewish educational programs and also offer online classes for kids around the world who may not have access to a Jewish education. I like being in a startup environment! This past year I traveled to 5 different countries both for pleasure and work, and will continue to travel for fun in 2016. I moved into a beautiful home in Brighton with my boyfriend and we live with our sweet dog, Oliver.

Brianne Studer, Boston Children’s Museum
As of March 2016, I'm now working full time as the Program Director at Farrington Nature Linc. We have been expanding our programming, and are piloting nature-based OST programs at schools and community centers in Cambridge and Boston this year, in addition to our field trips, overnights, and the like. It's been exciting to lay the foundation for this program, and I look forward to seeing how it grows in the next few years. Personally, I'm very excited to be hiking a portion of the Camino de Santiago in Spain this May!

---------- Class of 2009 ----------

Tory Kline Dunkle, Please Touch Museum
Tory is the Director of Children’s Ministries at the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. Tory got married about a year ago to David Dunkle.

Barbyose Noisette Sanders, Big Brothers Big Sisters
My son, Osirus Ivander is now four years old and is in Pre-K3. I am now a Director running Before and After Care for one of the YMCA Elementary School sites. I manage staff, help run Summer Camp, and take a role in the Annual Campaign, as well as other events throughout the year. Currently, I’m taking pre-requisites for Nursing School. My goal is to become a Pediatric Nurse and eventually a Physician Assistant or Nurse Practitioner.

Massomeh (Muhammad) Spahr, Year Up
The 2015-2016 school year has been exciting and quite busy. I am still Director of Operations at Growing Up Green Elementary School and Middle School (two separate campuses) and my team doubled from 10 to 20 people that I directly manage. In addition, we are opening a third school and I am working closely with our Executive Director, School Leader and Director of Finance on enrollment, compliance, hiring etc. I got married last year and will be having a baby girl! Her name is Quinn Marie Spahr and she is due by the end of May.

Bianca Van Heydoorn, Vera Institute of Justice
I am still working at the Prisoner Reentry Institute at John Jay College as the Director of Educational Initiatives. I now oversee two programs: The Prison-to-College Pipeline (CUNY’s only college in prison program) and College Initiative, a college access program that is dedicated to creating pathways from criminal justice involvement to college and beyond. This year, I am looking forward to growing the
programs in my portfolio and working at the local, state and national levels to increase access to higher education for people impacted by the criminal justice system.

---------- Class of 2008 ----------

CJ Anderson, BELL
I am currently in my 4th year teaching at the Hajjar Elementary School. I received my professional teaching license over the summer. Our son Declan will turn 5 in May. Our daughter Aubree turned 3 in December and Melanie is 9 months.

Christyne (DeMango) Anderson, Associated Early Care and Education
I’m still working at Harvard Medical School as a grants manager in Systems Biology. CJ and I welcomed a little girl, Melanie, back in June. All three of the children are doing well!

Emily Kuross Vikre, Boston Children’s Museum
I continue to work as the president of the business that I started with my husband three years ago. Vikre Distillery has expanded to employ 18 people and distributes their artisan spirits in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois. I have become a mentor for Carleton College students interested in entrepreneurship as well as working to support a number of community organizations in Duluth, including the St. Louis River Alliance, The Duluth Art Institute, The Food Bank, The local food co-op, the Duluth Bike Coalition, and I serve on the board of the Lyric Opera of the North. My son Espen is now 2 1/2 and enjoying learning in a Montessori school in town.

Jordy Owen, Children’s Literacy Initiative
Jordy is the Associate Director of Program Design & Professional Development at Children’s Literacy Initiative where she completed her fellowship.

Joanna Steinberg, Museum of the City of New York
I continue to manage student programs at the Museum of the City of New York. I’ve hired and trained new educators and continue to write curriculum for school programs connected to the Museum’s exhibitions. This year I wrote the school program for the Jacob A. Riis: Revealing New York’s Other Half exhibition and many of the lesson plans for teachers in the Activist New York Educator Resource Guide. I am also launching the third year of the Museum’s Surpass! The U.S. History Regents Preparation program that helps at-risk high school students prepare for the Regents examination in U.S. History and Government. I’m also happy to share that I am engaged to Matthew McConnell. Matt is a Gastroenterology Fellow at Yale New Haven Hospital. We’ve been together for four years and are excited for the wedding this year!
"FAO opened the doors to my passion of working with young people and their growth!" - Lakeisha Gerald, ‘12

"I can’t say enough about how instrumental the Fellowship has been to my career, and how thankful I am to have had the opportunity to be a Fellow." - Louis Berman, ‘13

"It was only through the fellowship that I truly realized my future career in youth-serving nonprofits. It opened up a whole world of career possibilities for me and helped me maneuver my way in this field. The support, reflection, and learning I had with other Fellows was invaluable. The fellowship definitely sparked my career and helped guide the path I have created for myself that I continue to explore today." - Liana Mitman, ‘10

"[The Fellowship] helped me build confidence to drive forward and achieve goals thought to be difficult or impossible. The work I did with the Fellowship was the most challenging, yet rewarding work, I’ve experienced in my career thus far." - Christyne (Demango) Anderson, ‘08

"The fellowship has been one of the most incredible experiences in my life. It taught me how to be an effective leader, how to problem solve the most difficult of situations, and build leadership qualities in others." - Massomeh (Muhammad) Spahr, ‘09