Spring 2017 Newsletter

FAO SCHWARZ FAMILY FOUNDATION FELLOWSHIP

Current Fellows at the Fall 2016 retreat in Philly

Current and Alumni Fellows at the Fall 2016 Reunion Dinner
To our Alumni Fellows, Current Fellows and Trustees,

One of the highlights of our Fall retreat in Philadelphia was the participation of many supreme fellows in our reunion dinner and in a professional development session around the power of networking. It was inspiring for our current fellows to hear reflections from alumni fellows about their two-year fellowship experience and about their professional journeys to date. It also brought to life some of the statistics about the accomplishments of our alumni fellows which include the fact that of our 43 alumni fellows, 95% are working in the broad field of education & youth development, 58% have completed or are pursuing graduate degrees, and 35% were hired by their fellowship host organization.

We would welcome seeing supreme fellows at our upcoming reunion dinner in New York City on Friday, April 21 at 7 p.m. If the dinner doesn’t work for your schedule and you’re interested in joining some other part of the retreat which runs from Wednesday night, April 19 through Saturday afternoon, April 22, please let me know. Most of all, we want alumni fellows to know how proud we are of you, how much we value our ongoing relationship and how we want to continue to support you in your career progression.

Over the last few years, current fellows and I have worked on initiatives to increase the visibility of the FAO Schwarz Family Foundation Fellowship program on college campuses, among our networks and on social media which we believe will be a positive step for alumni and current fellows as they talk about their fellowship experience. In that spirit, I’d encourage you to share the five open 2017-2019 fellowship positions with your networks which include: Playworks (one position in Philadelphia and another in Boston); Jumpstart (NYC): Museum of the City of New York (NYC) and Generation Citizen (Boston).

Very Best,
Priscilla Cohen, Executive Director

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Returning 2016-2018 Fellows
Open Positions for 2017-2019 Fellows
Allie Negron, uAspire

Six months of working at uAspire has flown by! I split my time between guiding high school seniors through the tedious financial aid process and developing communications and marketing efforts that best showcase uAspire’s mission. I love that every day is different, and that while I don’t use the same mindset to advise that I do in my communications efforts, the advising portion of my role directly impacts the messaging of my communications work. It’s a busy time of year at the high school -- on top of submitting college applications, working, and going to class, my students have been hard at work gathering the necessary information to complete financial aid forms. I’ve been there to ensure that my students feel supported and empowered in completing these forms. In my marketing and communications work, I’ve helped revamp our social media strategy, built out a marketing calendar, helped strategize communications efforts for events, among other things. I’m excited to continue to learn and grow in both portions of my role!

Claudia von Nostitz, Reading Partners

This first six months of my fellowship with Reading Partners New York has been a valuable learning experience. My role consists of dividing my time between tutoring students in literacy and recruiting new volunteers to our program. I work extensively in Brooklyn in two elementary schools and focus on building out sustainable volunteer pipelines for these schools. Most recently, I’ve been focusing on creating a strategic city-wide engagement plan with high school and college partners. I’ve also joined our local Community Partnerships Program as the Education Co-Chair, seeking to make meaningful partnerships with CBOs in Brooklyn. I truly love working with my students in my direct service work -- after only five months of this year’s programming, I can already see the effects of individualized instruction on the reading skills of our students!

Karen Wilber, uAspire

I’m really loving working at uAspire! There was a lot of time at the beginning of the year to adjust to the organization and go through many hours of training on college affordability. But after training finished, I was really able to hit the ground running. I advise college students via text and in-person on financial aid and other affordability matters, so it’s a busy time of the year since students are managing their classes and other commitments, while also working with me to renew their financial aid. My special projects have also been very compelling -- I’ve been able to research specific topics in college affordability and contribute to developing our postsecondary program; I’ve even had the opportunity as of late to take on a brand new effort to compare students’ financial aid between their first and second years of college. I’m looking forward to what the rest of the year holds, and especially the spring retreat!

Ciara Williams, Philadelphia Mural Arts Program

I am six months into my fellowship with Mural Art’s Restored Spaces Initiative and have grown so much in my time here. In addition to learning more skills around project management and community outreach, I am happy to have opportunities to continue to explore my interests in environmental justice and youth civic identity and participation. My main responsibilities include the management of an afterschool program that grew out of student-led research in South Philadelphia. The group identified
trash as a leading concern among residents and are now involved, alongside many others, to collectively address the issue of trash as Trash Academy. I feel so lucky to work with such an amazing group and I love to support them in shaping the work we do so that it exposes them to new people and ideas while also leaving ample space for them to explore and grow in their own interests, skills, and talents.

----------- Class of 2017 -----------

Jen Benson, Riverkeeper  
Over the past seven months, I have taken on managing our volunteer and Ambassador programs in addition to continuing my work on youth and community education. Planning for the annual Riverkeeper Sweep, our day of service for the Hudson River is well underway. We are on track to exceed 2,200 volunteers, 109 project locations, and hope to remove 50 tons of trash from the Hudson River Estuary from the Capital Region to Brooklyn. As of now, I plan to continue at Riverkeeper after the conclusion of my Fellowship as the Education & Outreach Coordinator.

Julia Fillman, Row New York  
This past year has continued to be one of growth for myself and my organization as a whole. Within my role, I was able to take on much more responsibility as I adopted a new Academic Program team and contributed to developing the vision and direction of our team and the program curriculum for the year. I have thoroughly enjoyed my fellowship time at Row New York but am looking forward to this Fall and exploring a new position in a new city - Philadelphia!

Khari Graves, The Food Trust  
I am currently working on an Equity and Empowerment Lens for statewide farm to early childhood education work. The FAO Schwarz Family Foundation Fellowship has allowed me the incredible opportunity of following my dream of empowering people and their communities through food.

Elizabeth Sanchez, Generation Citizen  
I will be staying on with Generation Citizen after my two years with the fellowship are over. The fellowship has allowed me to think about my role through a variety of perspectives, which I feel has made me an even better leader throughout all of my work. My confidence, and understanding of this field has grown immensely, and I'm looking forward to growing more as I continue to pursue a career in the social sector.

ALUMNI UPDATES

----------- Class of 2016 -----------

Gabriella Gomez, Breakthrough New York  
I am about to complete my first year at Harlem RBI as the Academic Coordinator for the South Bronx middle school site. Within my first year I have worked to revamp our academics portion of our after-school programming. When I am not working, you can find me playing with my nephew Diego, writing on my bullet journal or cooking with fellow Joseph Rosales.

Sarah Kacevich, Strong Women, Strong Girls  
I finished my fellowship with Strong Women, Strong Girls in June 2016 and have stayed on with the organization as a Program Manager. I am applying to graduate schools for Education and hoping to begin this Fall.
Margaret Kearney, Philadelphia Mural Arts Program
This year I got to spend a month at an artist residency in Washington focusing on my textile artwork, continued in my role as lead artist on a community based public art project in South Philly about trash, and through my job as a lead teaching artist at Mural Arts Philadelphia, got to work with some phenomenal young people.

Dawn Lavallee, Playworks Massachusetts
I'm currently nearing the end of the first year of my two year MBA program at Boston University. It was certainly a major adjustment to go back to full-time student life, but I'm thoroughly enjoying learning more about all things business and thinking about how to apply them to my future work in the nonprofit field. I'm hoping to find a position at a local foundation for my summer internship, where I can learn more about foundation work and if it might be the right career path for me.

Joseph Rosales, Breakthrough New York
I finished my FAO Fellowship at Breakthrough New York in early June and spent the summer working for Eskolta Research and Design as their Writing and Research Intern. There, I wrote curriculum and helped train over 90 NYCDOE college counselors in preparation for the new school year. Then in August, I started working as a Program Manager for iMentor, a national non-profit organization that pairs public school students with volunteer mentors over a 3-4 year period. As a PM, I teach a cohort of juniors college knowledge and prep curriculum while also hosting monthly events for the mentor pairs and serving as a liaison between the students and their mentors. When not working, I have been busy cooking many new recipes with supreme fellow Gaby. Working in my first post-Fellowship role has been exciting, tiring, frustrating, and enlightening, but I'm glad to have had the experience and support of my fellow fellows around!

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

Amy McDermott, Jumpstart
This has been my second of three years in grad school, studying for a dual MBA/MPA. This past summer I interned on the Finance and Strategy team at charity: water. This work gave me unique insight into the financial management and planning of a large grant-making organization, and I was very excited to have more exposure to international development! I also learned a lot about their unique and impactful approach to marketing and technology as tools to create more change. This January, I have been involved in two international programs at Stern. I was able to take an international course in Hong Kong and learn about the complex business environment in China. I also am involved in a Stern Signature Project Global Practicum on a team of 4 other students with the opportunity to travel to Nepal. For our project, we will be working with fashion designer Prabal Gurung, to create a business model and product with a give-back model. While in Nepal we will be visiting with Prabal's factory, NGOs, and other local agencies to support our work. I am really excited about these opportunities and look forward to another summer internship in social impact.

Juliana Noone, Please Touch Museum
I am coming up on the completion of my first year as the Program Assistant for the Professional Institute for Educators and MEd Programs at the University of the Arts. I am hoping to take advantage of the educational resources that UArts offers now that I have settled into my role. I plan to pursue either a certificate program or a full graduate program, and I plan to decide and begin one of those programs within one year. Additionally, I have been performing regularly with an improv comedy team, and my art troupe called ROMPUS has been taking on bigger and more elaborate visual and performing arts projects, which has been exciting.
Deshaun Parris, The Food Trust
Deshaun continues to serve as a Youth Leadership Associate at The Food Trust and will be completing his Masters of Public Health at the University of Pennsylvania this year.

Char Rendon, Row New York
Row New York, where I work as the Novice Coordinator, is having a great year. With the beginning of our Brooklyn team and transition to a new office space to accommodate our growing staff, new and exciting things are happening! On the participant side, the amazing group of student athletes that we are recruiting this Fall have been working hard all year waiting for the spring. As the cold weather winds down, we can't wait to get back in boats and ready to race!

Shaina Spann, Jumpstart
Shaina is the Senior Site Manager at Jumpstart’s Montclair State University in New Jersey.

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

Jonathan Baez, Breakthrough New York
I have completed two semesters of graduate studies at LEHMAN College School Counseling Program.

Katherine Evering-Rowe, The Food Project
I've enjoyed my year of service at Gould Farm, and I've just found out that I've been accepted to the MSW program at UPenn's School of Social Policy and Practice. I’m looking forward to moving to Philadelphia and connecting with the fellows on their Philly retreats!

Michael McNeill-Martinez, Zumix
I'm still in Costa Rica teaching Middle School and High School English at the Marian Baker School just outside of San Jose. I am undecided on where I'll be in the Fall. I might work at a charter school in the San Francisco area, or I might be heading to Thailand for a year to work at another international school.

Kayla Peck, Strong Women, Strong Girls
Divinity School continues to be a rigorous and exciting program, and life in Princeton is super full and energizing. Not only am I a full time student, but I’ve also been asked to serve as a community board member at a local non-profit, intern at a local Episcopal Church, and on top of all that, I am planning my upcoming June 2017 wedding!

Caroline Smith, Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia
I am finishing my second full year as a Boston Public School teacher, teaching English Language Learners in Charlestown High School's SEI unit. This summer, I'm excited to take up the title of "Fellow" once more, this time as part of the Stanford Graduate School of Education’s Hollyhock Fellowship Program, in which teams of urban school teachers from around the country engage in coaching and discussions for two years, both remotely and for two weeks each summer on Stanford's campus.

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

Louis Berman, Jumpstart New York
Louis is co-teaching Kindergarten at Beauvoir, an early childhood school run through the National Cathedral. Louis writes that “It's an incredible opportunity for me to learn from an experienced co-teacher, and work at a school with immense resources that they dedicate fully to serving the needs of young children. I'm overwhelmed, but excited to take on this challenge and learn all I can to become an accomplished teacher. My longer-term goal is to transition in the future into a public school setting.”
Sara Wilson, Year Up
*Sara is in her third year working at Columbia University in the school of Physicians and Surgeons in the Foundations of Clinical Medicine as the Tutorials Course Coordinator. Her adorable dog Korben is doing well and is beloved by her colleagues. Sara writes that “I hope to enroll in graduate school sometime this year.”*

Greg Wright, The Food Trust
*Recently I’ve had the opportunity to take a role within the Mayor’s Office of Education, serving on his Community School Initiative as a Community School Coordinator for a North Philadelphia school. Recently I was featured in a news article in the NoteBook, a local paper that covers school issues.*

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

Lauren Brincat, Museum of the City of New York
*I am currently the assistant curator of decorative arts at the New-York Historical Society. Since joining the museum in 2014, I’ve devoted most of my time to the reinterpretation of the Historical Society’s Luce Center for the Study of American Culture. Opening this April, the re-imagined permanent collection exhibition will use innovative technologies, dramatic storytelling, and engaging art and artifacts to teach visitors about the history of New York and the nation. Following the Luce Center’s opening, I will be leaving N-YHS to join the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities as its new curator.*

Bridgit Paula Ganson, Wheelock College
*I’m currently working on my final semester of graduate school at University of Massachusetts Boston studying Mental Health Counseling. As part of the program, I am completing a clinical internship at the Key Program, working with adolescent males and their families. I’m looking forward to graduation in May and launching the next step in my career as a Mental Health Counselor. 2016 also brought forth a 'bucket-list' trip to Europe, where my husband and I backpacked for two weeks.*

Lakeisha Gerald, The Food Project
*Lakeisha is working at TechBoston Academy as a Student Support Counselor for the 8th Grade.*

Maley Mullin, Jumpstart
*I am currently in my second (and final!) year of my Master’s in Social Work program at the University of Chicago. I am loving my classes and learning a lot through my internship at a high school in the Northwest suburbs of Chicago. I love living in Chicago and I am anticipating an active job search coming up (either here or back in Boston!) as my program comes to a close. My partner and I became engaged in May and we are excited to be getting married this September 2017!*

Kerry Sorensen, Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia
*Kerry is the Internship Coordinator at Mastery Charter School in Philadelphia.*

--------------- Class of 2011 --------------

Ariana Dugan, Year Up
*I’m a week into a three month stay in London for General Assembly, and loving it! No roommate can ever replace Mariah (even temporarily), but I’m having lots of fun both working and living in a temporary new city.*
Emily Goodridge, Jumpstart
Emily is pursuing a MFA in Arts Administration at Florida State University where she is studying and working in the theatre department simultaneously.

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

Shameka Edmond Smith, Groundwork
I got married this past summer to my husband Parrish Smith. We welcomed our baby girl, Alanee, December 21, 2016. After working at my TFA placement school for the past 5 years, teaching 4th grade, I am transitioning to middle school. I will be a founding 6th grade math teacher at a charter school in the Bronx, NY.

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

Sarah Goetz Abood, Please Touch Museum
Sarah is living in Pittsburgh with her husband and son William, and is a stay-at-home parent.

Danielle Calnan, Tenacity
Dani is the Director of Education Management at KinderCare Education.

Stephanie Dueno, Museum of the City of New York
Stephanie is the Manager of New York City History Day at the Museum of the City of New York.

Julia MacMahon, Wheelock
I received my MSW in Social Innovation and Leadership from Boston College this May, and am now working as the Youth Leadership Program Manager at YW Boston. Our program serves a diverse group of student leaders from across Greater Boston, helping them grow into effective social justice leaders. I have great colleagues and work with amazing young people! I also got married this June and we took our honeymoon to Dominica this month, successfully avoiding two snowstorms.

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

Liana Mitman, Jumpstart
I have just accepted a new position at the Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel Foundation, starting in April as the Assistant Director of the Mandel Institute for Nonprofit Leadership. I will be working to launch a brand new executive leadership program for CEOs and top level management of JCCs and Jewish federations across the country. The program’s aim is to strengthen future leadership by enabling midcareer JCC and federation professionals to sharpen their visions of Jewish communal life and develop their leadership and management skills. I am thrilled to be working for a foundation and this will be my first role that isn’t associated with youth. I think this is a great next step for me in my career!

Brianne Studer, Boston Children’s Museum
Brianne is the Program Director at Farrington Memorial: Nature Linc.
Tory Kline Dunkle, Please Touch Museum
I continue to work as Director of Children’s Ministries at Church of the Redeemer in Bryn Mawr. It is an exciting time at the Redeemer as we are beginning a capital campaign to renovate our current formation building. Personally, my husband and I have recently begun the process to become foster parents and also hope to adopt in the next year or two.

Barbyose Noisette Sanders, Big Brothers Big Sisters
Barbyose is the Site Director at the YMCA of the USA in the Greater Philadelphia area.

Massomeh (Muhammad) Spahr, Year Up
I am the Director of Operations at Growing Up Green Charter School in Long Island City, NY and the start up Director of Operations at our Jamaica Campus in South Queens. I am also a new mama to our baby girl, Quinn who is 9 months, 20 pounds and has four teeth. As all working mothers, I am learning to balance work life and home life.

Bianca Van Heydoorn, Vera Institute of Justice
My work at the Prisoner Reentry Institute continues to grow in exciting ways. I am currently managing several initiatives aimed at increasing access to higher education for people with criminal justice histories. The Prison-to-College Pipeline project was chosen to be one of 67 programs to participate in the Obama Administration’s initiative to restore pell grant eligibility to a select group of incarcerated students. The College Initiative program is currently serving over 300 students across 20 CUNY campuses. I recently launched a two-year study, funded by the Ford Foundation to map the landscape and profiles of prison programs in New York State. Finally, I recently became a founding board member of two national organizations: The Alliance of Families for Justice and The Alliance for Higher Education in Prison.

CJ Anderson, BELL
I am still teaching 5th grade at the Hajjar School in Billerica. Our son Declan is in Kindergarten. He will be six in May. Aubree turned four in December and Melanie will be two in June.

Christyne (DeMango) Anderson, Associated Early Care and Education
I received a promotion and am now the Compliance Specialist at Harvard’s FAS Research Administration Services Department.

Jordy Owen, Children’s Literacy Initiative
Jordy is the Associate Director of Program Design and Professional Development at Children’s Literacy Initiative, where she completed her FAO Schwarz Family Foundation 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. This has been an especially exciting year at the Museum as we opened a three-gallery groundbreaking exhibition, New York at Its Core, which explores the history of the city and looks ahead to its future. It has over 400 objects that tell incredible stories about the city, and an entire interactive room for examining five central challenges that New Yorkers will face in the coming generations. In the Fall, the education department launched our new field trips, and I played a key role in planning an extensive training for our educators that included lectures and meetings with prominent historians. I am especially excited about the
platform our new Future City Lab gallery gives students to share their ideas and debate current issues. I am using this as a springboard to develop new teen initiatives in conjunction with this exhibition. On a personal note, I’m happy to share the news that I married Matthew McConnell on August 13, 2016! We have been together for five years, and celebrated our honeymoon in Japan last Fall!

Emily Kuross Vikre, Boston Children’s Museum
Our business, Vikre Distillery, continues to grow and to constantly challenge our creativity and leadership skills in all the best ways. I am most proud of our work on our "triple bottom line." We’ve expanded the benefits we offer to our employees, we have reduced our water use by 70%, switched to all local and organic grain sourcing and will become a zero-waste facility this year. I’ve also joined the board of our local opera company, which performs world class opera across the north including the region's elementary schools!
I think the FAO Schwarz Family Foundation Fellowship was the first time I was in a situation where I was told that I had the potential in me to be a leader and that potential could be developed and cultivated. – Emily Vikre ’08

No matter what, I want to - and know I have the ability to - help people see and reach their potential, which is something that the FAO Schwarz Family Foundation Fellowship taught me. – Ariana Dugan ’11

The FAO Schwarz Family Foundation Fellowship started my career in education. Because of their partnership with Breakthrough, I was able to gain so many professional skills that were transferable to my other jobs. – Jonathan Baez ’14

The support, guidance and opportunities provided for me through FAO were the jumpstart to my career and helped me find my way to Social Work (which I'm pretty sure is where I am supposed to be!) – Maley Mullen ’12

I feel fully prepared to think through the challenges that arise in nonprofits, and it feels natural for me to take on leadership roles within the organizations for which I work. – Katherine Evering-Rowe ’14

The Fellowship has given me the experience necessary to succeed in my job and the confidence necessary to feel successful in whatever I do. – Joe Rosales ’16

The fellowship has provided me with opportunities and connections that have enabled me to pursue my goals of a career in social impact. I speak to my experience in the fellowship constantly and am grateful for the continued guidance of Priscilla and the Foundation family. – Amy McDermott ’15

The fellowship helped me realize that I want to be a teacher to help ensure that scholars get a quality education. – Shameka Edmond Smith ’11

In my current role I draw upon those experiences every day to make a greater impact. The networking I did through my fellowship was invaluable, there are many people I met years ago who I can still call upon to aide the community I now serve. – Gregory Wright ’13

The Fellowship really helped me to think through the difference between direct service and special project/behind-the-scenes work and the balance that works best for me in this work. – Julia MacMahon ’10

The fellowship has made me a better leader, motivator and life long learner! – Mossomeh (Muhammad) Spahr ’09