Spring 2018 Newsletter

FAO Schwarz Family Foundation Fellowship
March 22, 2018

Greetings to our Alumni Fellows, Current Fellows and Trustees,

This spring marks the ten-year anniversary of our first cohort of five FAO Schwarz Family Foundation Fellows completing their fellowships at their host organizations: CJ Anderson ’08, BELL; Christyne DeMango Anderson ’08, Associated Early Care and Education; Jordy Owen ’08, Children’s Literacy Initiative; Joanna Steinberg ’08, Museum of the City of New York and Emily Kuross Vikre ’08, Boston Children’s Museum.

In reflecting on the past ten years, I’ve come to appreciate the enduring contributions that each year’s fellows have made to the program. While I remember the special occasion of our first-year fellows finishing their fellowship -- I still have copies of the note that I gave to each of them at the year’s close -- we did not have a formal graduation event. In the spring of 2010, Ariana Dugan ’11 and Mariah Peebles ’11, who were first-year fellows at Year Up, took the initiative to design a formal graduation ceremony for second-year fellows which has become a cherished annual tradition. At the event, which takes place during our spring retreat, Ariana and Mariah launched an event to celebrate the accomplishments and impact of our graduating fellows by creating an album that includes notes and photos from the fellows’ colleagues, supervisors and students at their host organizations, other fellows, trustees and me. During the ceremony, each of the first-year fellows introduces one of the second-year fellows, sharing stories, reflections, and other tributes to their work; the graduating fellows then share reflections on their two-year experience with the group. I am grateful to Ariana and Mariah for starting this meaningful tradition and feel so fortunate to work with such incredible fellows each year. The program has grown and flourished because of the care, energy, and enthusiasm that the fellows have dedicated to their roles. I am continually impressed by their initiative and excitement, and it is a joy to work with them each year.

I want to take this opportunity, too, to thank Eric Schwarz, who recently transitioned off the Foundation board, for his leadership in envisioning the FAO Schwarz Family Foundation Fellowship Program. In January 2006, Eric, along with the other trustees (Alex Millard, Caroline Schastny, Eliza Ladd Schwarz, Fritz Schwarz, Rae Paige Schwarz and Molly Wing-Berman) hired me to develop and lead the Fellowship Program. It’s exciting to now be partnering with Alex Millard, who is Chair of the Board, and the other trustees (Maureen Coffey, Molly Ladd, Peter Schastny, Eliza Ladd Schwarz, Pete Schastny, Will Schwarz and Molly Wing-Berman) as the program continues to grow. At the winter board
meeting, the trustees selected five organizations to host six 2018-2020 fellows: Breakthrough Greater Boston, The Food Trust, Reading Partners, Riverkeeper and uAspire. Please feel free to share these six open fellowship positions with your networks.

I’m also excited to share in this newsletter updates from our alumni fellows. Of these talented 47 individuals, 96% are working in the social impact sector. Over 60% have completed or are pursuing graduate degrees, and more than one in three accepted offers to continue to work at their host organizations. The reflections of our alumni fellows bring the impact of the fellowship program to life: as Amy McDermott ’15 wrote, “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 fellowship family.”

I look forward to seeing many of you at our next reunion dinner during our spring retreat in Philadelphia on Thursday, April 26.

Very Best,
Priscilla Cohen, Executive Director

P.S. Here are some photos of alumni from our 2017 Fall Retreat and Board Luncheon.
Molly Blake, Playworks New England

These past 7 months of my fellowship have flown by. I can confidently say that I have already gained skills that I know will help in my future positions as a nonprofit leader. I have been focusing on learning the ins and outs of event planning by putting on community engagement activities for our students and their families. I am eager to learn more about this skill, while focusing on building my confidence within Playworks. Along with event planning, I have been engaging college students to volunteer with Playworks to help further our mission of putting consistent caring adults in our schools. I look forward to the rest of the year and learning more!

Kayla Jones, Jumpstart

I was recently able to attend the National Association for the Education of Young Children’s (NAEYC) Public Policy Forum in Washington, D.C. It was a 3-day conference that taught early childhood educators about advocacy and how we can lobby elected officials to elevate the voices of children and families who we serve. This experience taught me how important our voices can be, especially when there are hundreds of passionate people unifying in support of a cause. I was happy to be a part of this conference and I am hopeful that our advocacy results in changed legislation and more funding that supports children, families, and early childhood educators.

Jaiwantie Manni, Museum of the City of New York

Since starting my Fellowship at the Museum of the City of New York in July, I have learned to lead different field trips, both in our galleries and for our classroom History Labs. I have also coordinated the free family programs we offer for the Winter Break from December 26 - 29 and our Mid-Winter Break programs from February 20 - 23. My special project for my Fellowship at MCNY involves incorporating STEM into our galleries, starting with our Future City Lab, which is part of the New York at Its Core exhibition. I have been working on integrating materials into the gallery for when schools visit the gallery on school trips. I was able to work with the curator of the Future City Lab, the educators of the Frederick A.O. Schwarz Education Center and an external fabricator to develop a mini exhibition that contained both text from the gallery along with objects that the students could touch to help hone in on some of the concepts that gallery tries to get across. It’s been a great learning experience planning our family programs and developing the mini exhibition and I am excited to see what the remaining of my fellowship holds.

Pamela Martinez, Playworks Philadelphia

My experience thus far as a FAO Fellow has taught me so much in such a short time. I am consistently learning about the program and development aspects of a national non-profit organization. Half of my role has been to directly support our school recess teams through the Team Up consultant program and the other half has been to strengthen the development of our organization through branding and marketing strategies using emails, social media and brand awareness. I am grateful for my experience as a FAO Fellow, as the fellowship has allowed me to expand my knowledge and grow professionally within Playworks Pennsylvania.

Samantha Perlman, Generation Citizen

As a first year fellow at Generation Citizen, I am busy working with our college student volunteers and our teachers. In the most recent months, I contributed to retaining the highest percent of our college volunteers to date, developing workshops around advocacy and policy goals as well as organized our teacher panel at training. In the fall, I co-taught our action civics program for two classes at a Malden middle school and I am helping recruit host sites for our summer internship program.
Allie Negron, uAspire
I’m still loving both parts of my role at uAspire! While there are still challenges in balancing both of these unique positions, I couldn’t imagine doing one without the other. So much of the way I approach my communications work is influenced by my work guiding students through the financial aid process. There is an added level of knowledge and proximity to the way I communicate about uAspire’s work because of my intimate understanding of the financial aid process and insight into the challenges students face when working through the financial aid process. I am still exploring options post-fellowship and am looking forward to what’s ahead!

Claudia von Nostitz, Reading Partners
In my second year as FAO Fellow with Reading Partners I have learned so much about the ins and outs of a sustainable and effective nonprofit program. In the last year, I’ve been building out volunteer pipelines to serve our elementary partner schools as well as collaborating on branding and expansion initiatives with local community based organizations. In my work I have coordinated the addition of a new partner school and worked with colleges and high schools to provide our schools with tutors. As I reflect on my time with Reading Partners and think towards the future, I am so grateful for my experience as FAO Fellow and am excited to see what opportunities are in store after I graduate!

Karen Wilber, uAspire
I feel very lucky to have had the opportunity to grow my skills immensely in my time at uAspire so far. I have taken on a greater leadership role on my team this year, supporting with training creation and delivery, as well as with building systems to better record the information we know about financial aid at different postsecondary institutions. Lately, I have also worked on grant writing and new research and evaluation efforts, which I am sure will be useful in future positions I seek out. As of now, I am not sure of my exact next steps, but am so glad the FAO Schwarz Family Foundation Fellowship has allowed me to explore many areas of non-profit work. I’m looking forward to what comes next, whatever that may be!

Ciara Williams, Philadelphia Mural Arts Program
Since starting my fellowship in August 2016, I’ve helped to lead Trash Academy—a collective of residents, artists, youth, and activists that work to understand and address the issue of trash in Philadelphia through creative and collaborative solutions. Through a partnership with the City of Philadelphia’s Streets Department, Trash Academy has been expanded to two new sites and I will be organizing that expansion as well as the leadership training for new members of Trash Academy. I’m incredibly excited because I have learned so much from the retreats, my fellow fellows, and from my work at Mural Arts Restored Spaces. I especially like the fellowship’s split between special project and direct service work. This division allows us to be intentional about how we spend our time while also fostering an awareness about the specific skills we are acquiring or developing. I’ve grown as a community organizer and communicator and I’ve definitely improved in my administrative skills.

ALUMNI UPDATES

Jen Benson, Riverkeeper
After my fellowship concluded in August of 2017, I have remained at Riverkeeper as the Outreach Coordinator and have begun expanding my work on our campaigns and have begun managing our Junior Board, the Young Advocates Council. I’m looking forward to welcoming another FAO Schwarz Family Foundation Fellow this summer and collaborating with them on Sweep and other projects over the next two years.

Julia Fillman, Row New York
After finishing my FAO Fellowship at Row New York this past summer, I moved to Philadelphia, and I began working at a non-profit organization called Achieve Now, a literacy program that provides phonics-based instruction to K-2 students in an effort to help those students read at grade-level. This new position has been great and it really reminds me of the fellowship - I’m able to both participate in programming as well as work on development and
communications projects for the organization. I’ve really enjoyed living in a new city and getting to explore the more administrative side of a non-profit, and I look forward to what the rest of the year holds!

**Khari Graves, The Food Trust**

*Since leaving the Food Trust, I’m now the Manager of Culinary Literacy at Food Moxie in Philadelphia, helping to create programming that reconnects people with the land and their food, in a way that centers community knowledge, history, and needs as a way to not only inform and engage, but empower.*

**Elizabeth Sanchez, Generation Citizen**

*I was promoted from Program Associate to Program Manager last year, and am now in charge of all school partnerships in the Greater Boston area for Generation Citizen Massachusetts.*

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

**Gabriella Gomez, Breakthrough New York**

*I am about to reach my second year at DREAM/Harlem RBI as the Academic Manager for our middle school sites. When I am not at work I am at our newly leased apartment with Joe and our recently adopted cat Kobe.*

**Sarah Kacevich, Strong Women, Strong Girls**

*I’m continuing to live in Boston and started a new job in January 2018 as the Program Director with Farrington Nature Linc, a nonprofit based in Lincoln, Mass., that aims to enhance the health and well-being of youth from urban, low-income neighborhoods of Greater Boston through a relationship with the natural world.*

**Margaret Kearney, Philadelphia Mural Arts Program**

*This year I’ve continued my work as a teaching artist in Philadelphia. In the past year I’ve taught for several different arts based non profits including Philadelphia Mural Arts, Spiral Q Puppet Theater, Artwell, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. I work with students ranging from two years old to 92 years old on community based creative projects such as parades, poetry slams, collaborative quilts, and sculptural installations. I’m also currently an artist in residence at the 40th Street AIR program in West Philadelphia and recently completed my yoga teacher certification. In the fall I will be moving to Chicago to pursue a Masters in Art Education from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.*

**Dawn Lavallee, Playworks Massachusetts**

*I’m getting ready to graduate with my MBA from Boston University with a focus on Public and Nonprofit Management and looking forward to diving back into the world of youth development nonprofits this summer. My husband and I are currently living in Dorchester, but hoping to head to northern Massachusetts or southern New Hampshire to have a bit more nature in our lives.*

**Joseph Rosales, Breakthrough New York**

*I am in the midst of my second year working as a Program Manager at iMentor, and it has been a hoot! I am working with a cohort of 11th graders at a school in the South Bronx, and it has been a true joy to see my students’ relationships with their new mentors continue to grow as we finish up their first year in the program. Outside of work, fellow Fellow Gaby Gomez and I have moved into our own apartment in Harlem, and we have also recently adopted an adorable cat named Kobe!*  

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

**Amy McDermott, Jumpstart**

*I’m in my final semester of graduate school! I am very excited to be completing my MBA/MPA at NYU and have had an amazing three years. This year I’ve been working on a yearlong capstone project at the Wagner School working with the Food Bank for New York City. My team has been diving into research to determine the public health impacts of the proposed SNAP funding cuts. After graduation, I will be working for Uncommon Schools in Brooklyn as an Operations Fellow. I’m thrilled to be heading back into education and to be in a school environment. The fellowship is a year-long preparation to become a Director of Operations for one of the network’s schools. I look forward to staying in New York and for the next chapter!*
Juliana Noone, Please Touch Museum
I’ve been working at the University of the Arts as a Program Assistant for the Professional Institute for Educators and MED programs. I’m coming up on working two years with the university and have just begun a Social Media Marketing certificate program. When I’m not busy with work or class I’m active in the Improv and comedy scene in Philly, performing with an independent Improv comedy group and taking performance classes.

Deshaun Parris, The Food Trust
Deshaun continues to serve as a Youth Leadership Associate at The Food Trust.

Char Rendon, Row New York
I continue to work at Row New York as the Queens Novice Coordinator and have a group of 25 young women student athletes ready to hit the water for some Spring rowing.

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 am currently on my second year in my master’s program at Lehman College. I am going for my counseling education degree. As for work, I am still a Career Counselor at KIPP NYC College Prep. This is my third year in this role.

Katherine Evering-Rowe, The Food Project
I’ve had a busy past year! After working for over a year and a half at Gould Farm, a residential mental health treatment community in Western Mass, I enjoyed a summer of special opportunities - intensive art-making at the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts and helping to lead a Community Organizing workshop as part of the FoodCorps National Servicemember Training in Portland, Oregon. I moved to Philadelphia in August and started a Master of Social Work program at the University of Pennsylvania. Alongside my coursework, I’ve been working as a school social work intern in the School District of Philadelphia, and next year I’ll work at the Counseling Services at Bryn Mawr College. I’m looking forward to continuing to set myself up for a career that includes therapeutic, educational, and program management work.

Michael McNeill-Martinez, Zumix
I now teach MS/HS English at the Rome International School in Rome, Italy.

Kayla (Peck) Hopgood, Strong Women, Strong Girls
In June 2017, I married my partner, Miles Hopgood, in Princeton, NJ. I’m currently finishing my M.Div degree from Princeton Theological Seminary and looking to take my theological education and nonprofit experience to faith-based organizations.

Caroline Smith, Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia
I am still living in Boston and teaching at Charlestown High School. I work with recently arrived English Language Learners in the 9th and 10th grade. I am also in the midst of the two-year Stanford GSE Hollyhock Fellowship, working with a team from my school and early-career educators from across the country to improve our practice.

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

Louis Berman, Jumpstart New York
I am currently in my second year as a lead Pre-K classroom teacher at a private school in Washington, DC. I graduated with my Masters in Early Childhood Education two years ago from Lesley University and moved to DC in August of 2016. I am loving making connections in a new vibrant city and honing my craft as an educator.

Sara Wilson, Year Up
I moved to Rhode Island to work at Brown University Medical school and my dog and I are currently loving the transition. New state, new job - next chapter!
Greg Wright, The Food Trust
Last year I joined the board of Norris Square Neighborhood Project, a youth serving organization with a focus on gardening, arts and culture. I was first connected to this organization years ago as an FAO Schwarz Fellow and I’m happy to serve as a board member today. Last year I was highlighted during the Food Trust’s “25 Years- 25 stories” campaign, in celebration of the organizations 25th year of operation. My story was featured on the website and recognized during the organization’s end of year celebration.

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

Lauren Brincat, Museum of the City of New York
Last spring I was hired as the Curator of Preservation Long Island, and in August I married Stephen Minakyan at Old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts.

Bridgit Paula Ganson, Wheelock College
I’ve recently transitioned to a Mental Health Clinician position, working in Early Intervention at South Bay Community Services in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

Lakeisha Gerald, The Food Project
I am still a Guidance Counselor (7th Grade) at TechBoston Academy

Maley Mullin, Jumpstart
I graduated in June, 2017 from the University of Chicago with a Master’s Degree in Social Work, School Social Work Concentration. In August, my partner and I moved back from Chicago to the Boston area and got married on September 2nd! I started my new job as a Clinician at the COMPASS School on September 5th. COMPASS is a therapeutic day school in Dorchester for students with severe emotional disabilities and behavioral challenges. It has been a very busy and crazy year, but I love my job and my husband and I are happy to be back in the Boston area.

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 the product manager for all of General Assembly’s analytics and data science courses and loving it.

Emily Goodridge, Jumpstart
I am currently working for the Education Department of the local PBS station in Tallahassee, Florida and loving it.

Mariah Peebles, Year Up
Last spring, I joined the leadership team at the AI Now Institute at NYU, a new research center focused on the social implications of Artificial Intelligence.

Shameka Edmond Smith, Groundwork
I am the proud mother of an amazing 1 year old girl. I am currently a 6th grade math teacher but will be returning to KIPP in the summer. I will be a founding 1st Grade teacher at KIPP Freedom in the Bronx. My husband and I just relocated back to NY from Jersey.

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

Sarah Goetz Abood, Please Touch Museum
Sarah is living in Pittsburgh with her husband and son, William.
Danielle Calnan, Tenacity
In July 2017, Ted and I got married on our 8 year anniversary, and in November I began a new work journey with the JCC Greater Boston as a Senior Operations Manager in the Education Department.

Stephanie Dueno, Museum of the City of New York
My new role within the Division of Youth and Family Justice at ACS is incredibly challenging, rewarding, emotional, and reaffirming. The agency is working pretty much around the clock on rolling out necessary programming and infrastructure to support the Raise the Age policy put in place this year by Governor Cuomo. While my colleagues here will never live up to my MCNY family, I am very grateful to have a supervisor who’s both brilliant and has the heart of an advocate and colleagues who are really dedicated to equity and youth development.

Julia MacMahon, Wheelock
I am still working at YW Boston as the Youth Leadership Program Manager where I run an awesome year-round social justice leadership program for 50 high school students. I am also working to support our current strategic planning process and am serving as Co-Director of our Racial Justice Steering Committee, which have been great leadership opportunities. On a personal note, my husband Casey and I just bought a condo in Jamaica Plain (one mile from where he grew up!) and are expecting our first baby on June 2nd. Life is busy and good!

Alexis McConnell, Boston Children’s Museum
Alexis is the Nutrition Educator Supervisor with the Broward County Health Department in Florida.

Liana Mitman, Jumpstart
I am currently working at the Mandel Foundation as the Assistant Director of the Mandel Institute for Nonprofit Leadership. It is a combination of everything I have loved the most in my career so far: program management, leadership development, and seminar planning. The Institute was created last year, and our first program is an Executive Leadership Program for rising executives of Jewish federations and community centers across North America. We plan to offer more leadership development programs in the future. In my personal time, I am serving my fourth year on the board of Yad Chessed, a local organization that provides emergency financial assistance for Jewish families in poverty. Many are surprised that this population is growing in Massachusetts. I also continue to volunteer with Jewish Big Brothers Big Sisters and with Combined Jewish Philanthropies. Since I got married this past May, I spend my time cooking healthy meals constantly (using all my fun new kitchen gadgets), doing strength training/Pilates/yoga, and spending time with my husband and our dog Oliver! We are excited to be traveling to Peru in March to visit my family, and to Thailand and Cambodia for our one year anniversary this spring. Unfortunately Oliver won’t be coming on those trips.

Brianne Studer, Boston Children’s Museum
The big news this year is after ten years in Boston, I moved down to Washington, DC. My husband got a wonderful position at Georgetown, and I’m now the Education Manager at Washington Youth Garden, on the grounds of the National Arboretum. In other news, we got a dog, Noodles.

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

Tory Kline Dunkle, Please Touch Museum
Tory is the Director of Children’s Ministries at Episcopal Church of the Redeemer

Barbyose Noisette Sanders, Big Brothers Big Sisters
My husband and I recently had a daughter. This is now our second child and our last. I am also just finishing up one year as a Therapist who works with children and families struggling with diagnoses of ADD/ADHD, Autism, Aspergers, Trauma, and other familial challenges.

Massomeh (Muhammad) Spahr, Year Up
I am currently the Director of Operations at Growing Up Green Charter for three schools in Queens, New York. My husband and I are lucky parents to our daughter Quinn who will turning two in May.
Bianca Van Heydoorn, Vera Institute of Justice
Bianca is the Director of Educational Initiatives with the Prisoner Reentry Institute at John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

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

CJ Anderson, BELL & Christyne (DeMango) Anderson, Associated Early Care and Education
CJ is still a 5th grade teacher at Billerica Public Schools and Christyne is still a Compliance Specialist for the FAS at Harvard University. Our son Declan will be seven in May, our daughter Aubree is five and our youngest daughter Melanie will be three in June.

Jordy Owen, Children’s Literacy Initiative
Jordy is the Manager of Family and Community Engagement at Children’s Literacy Initiative

Joanna Steinberg, Museum of the City of New York
This past year, I worked on developing a field trip in conjunction with the Museum’s exhibition Beyond Suffrage: A Century on New York Women in Politics to highlight women such as Pauli Murray, Mabel Lee, Shirley Chisholm, and Bella Abzug, who have shaped politics in New York through elected office, working behind-the-scenes, and agitating for change from the bottom-up. I worked with a team of educators to develop five accompanying lesson plans for teachers to access these incredible resources in their classrooms on topics such as: women running for office, intersectionality in the struggle for women’s rights, the Equal Rights Amendment, and on coalitions and factions within the woman’s suffrage movement. This year I also re-wrote the Activist New York educator guide to help teachers prepare to lead tours, organized trainings, and drew from an evaluation on our New York at Its Core field trips to update the activities in the programs. This year we are very excited to waive field trip fees for public and charter schools in East Harlem and the Bronx! It's been so amazing to work with Jai at the Museum!

Emily Kuross Vikre, Boston Children’s Museum
Business is going well. We had our second child, another boy, in October. He was born with a small heart defect and developed unexpected severe cardiac problems after birth, so we spent months in the cardiac ICU in Minneapolis with him. But we have now been home for a month and he’s doing awesome.
FAO SCHWARZ FAMILY FOUNDATION FELLOWSHIP

The FAO Schwarz Family Foundation launched my career and helped me form the foundational principles of how I approach work. I experienced the value of ongoing professional development and the importance of periodically reflecting and strategizing with the support of thoughtful partners with multiple perspectives. - Caroline Smith ‘14

The FAO Schwarz Family Foundation Fellowship not only gave me the opportunity to deepen my nonprofit experience, but it welcomed me into a close-knit family of aspiring young leaders and successful nonprofit leaders. - Kayla (Peck) Hopgood ‘14

I’ve gained skills, mentors, and an incredible group of friends in my cohort, and those above and below me. I hope to give back to the foundation a fraction of what it has and continues to give to me. - Jen Benson ‘17

I am so thankful to have been part of such a supportive Fellowship, and feel empowered to advocate professionally for the things I want to take on in my career. - Ellie Sanchez ‘17

The fellowship opened my eyes to all of the ways I could have a systemic impact on the youth development sector and inspired me to go back to school to learn the skills that could help me in that endeavor. - Dawn Lavallee ‘16

I was given the great dual opportunity to learn deeply about the world of education-focused nonprofits and to foster deep connections with future colleagues and friends. - Louis Berman ‘13

As a Supreme Fellow nearly eight years out of my own FAO experience, I have appreciated staying a part of this network over the years. In fact, I recently met with a current FAO Fellow and fellow Supreme Fellow to discuss our work and how we might collaborate. It was really cool to have this shared experience even though we were several years apart! - Julia MacMahon ‘10

The FAO Schwarz Foundation helped me to get a perspective of non-profit organizations from a high level, one I would probably not have seen so early in my career. I am forever grateful. - Barbyose Sanders ‘09