

Reflections from  
Summer 2011

*Goldman  
Fellows  
Program*



Washington University in St. Louis

GEPHARDT INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE



*Goldman Fellowships are awarded annually by the Gephardt Institute for Public Service to Washington University undergraduate students who undertake unpaid internships related to community service, social justice, or political action in the St. Louis metropolitan region.*

*The Goldman Fellows Program is made possible by a generous grant from the Joyce and Irving Goldman Family Foundation.*

## 2011 GOLDMAN FELLOWS

**Rachel Binstock**, a sophomore majoring in anthropology, completed an internship with Patrick Henry Charter Green School.

**Daniella Gafen**, a junior majoring in architecture, with minors in Jewish studies and writing, completed an internship with Landmarks Association.

**Shweta Joshi**, a junior double majoring in international and area studies and economics, completed an internship with South Side Day Nursery.

**Kristin Maurer**, a junior double majoring in anthropology and Chinese, with a minor in public health, completed an internship with St. Louis Effort for AIDS.

**Lexy Millett**, a sophomore double majoring in anthropology and economics, with a minor in public health, completed an internship with Nurses for Newborns Foundation.

**Julian Nicks**, a sophomore double majoring in mathematics and finance, with a minor in psychology, completed an internship with Shearwater Education Foundation.

**Trae Robison**, a junior double majoring in Spanish and Latin American studies, with a minor in biology, completed an internship with the International Institute of St. Louis.

**Bram Sable-Smith**, a junior majoring in international and area studies, with minors in writing and anthropology, completed an internship with The Acts Partnership.

**Blair Sackett**, a junior double majoring in urban studies and African studies, completed an internship with the Center for Survivors of Torture and War Trauma.

**Olivia Young**, a sophomore double majoring in educational studies and finance, completed an internship with South City Preparatory Academy.

**RACHEL BINSTOCK**

***Patrick Henry Charter Green School***

During my Goldman Fellowship, I learned there are a lot of green efforts in St. Louis City and County. It seems as though the exodus of residents has left room and space for creativity. There are all kinds of green initiatives, artist cooperatives, and programs trying to educate people about the environment and various ways to make a community sustainable. I only hope this movement continues to unite and strengthen by joining forces and sharing resources.

Working for a school, I learned that a lot of things happen when one member of the staff runs with an idea and takes an initiative. There is often bureaucracy and red tape keeping change from happening. To do things that are outside of the box often seem too risky or threatening. But if administrators or teachers are passionate about an idea or a program, and they take it upon themselves to implement change or reorient the institutions' values, there is a high chance that change will come. I also learned that even if an initiative is well thought out there is a chance of failure at every step. This may seem obvious but I experienced that a lot this summer. This is why charter schools are so valuable. The administrators are given a lot more leeway to be creative and try new things. They have the luxury of taking those risks and trying nonconventional programs. If they are successful, they can provide a specialized and fresh education to their students.

I heard an African proverb this summer that goes like this, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." This idea permeated my summer in the various communities I was a part of. I really came to appreciate the help and support of a team. I did not have a lot of help working on my curriculum and that made the process really hard, emotionally and creatively. When I did come in contact with people who could or would help me, the process took on a more dynamic and holistic form. A lot of my friends were not around this summer and the community that formed was so different than the community I am a part of during the year. The change in community was beneficial and it was cool to be in a new group of friends learning things from different people. It only makes me stronger when I surround myself with diversity. I have been thinking a lot about the issue of climate change this summer and I think that the answer lies in serious teamwork. No one person or country will be able to fix it, there has got to be a serious cooperative movement with solutions respective to places but with the same goals and involving respect for each other and the earth that sustains us.

I can not say exactly how this summer will alter my career goals but I know it will. I have been afforded the opportunity to teach the curriculum that I have prepared and so this summer was only the beginning of my journey.



## DANIELLA GAFEN

### *Landmarks Association*

By working for Landmarks Association this summer, I think I learned more about St. Louis and saw more of the city than I would have ever been able to otherwise. Landmarks does so much work in the community: consulting with people wishing to preserve buildings they own, working on efforts to save endangered buildings, organizing tours of buildings and neighborhoods, and working on National Register nominations. They are really, truly immersed in the city and its surroundings. Landmarks Association took interns on a drive around the city telling stories about almost every house or building in a neighborhood – and I think it is fair to say that we retained more from that one car ride than we could have from a semester of sitting in a lecture hall.



I learned this summer that St. Louis is a unique place to work on preservation. St. Louis' historic architecture – and there is a lot of it – tends to be a lot of brick, including some of the greatest examples of brickwork in the country. However, St. Louisans have yet to rally around their historic architecture as a point of pride and, in fact, some citizens are not aware of the beauty of their city. Still, St. Louis has been making strides in realizing its potential and wealth of architecture.

The office at Landmarks Association was the kind of place and atmosphere I'd like my workplace to be: relaxed, friendly, and comfortable. The organization was so grateful to the interns for their help and staff were dedicated to making our internship experience as fulfilling as possible. Landmarks is also a non-profit, and does a wide array of things, from National Register nominations to planning study tours and fundraisers. I was able to see just how diverse a non-profit can be, which is the type of work I like to do, a little bit of everything.

Though I'm still trying to figure out exactly what I want to do after I graduate (a scary thought, as that date is quickly approaching) there are a few things that I learned about myself this summer. I have learned that I want to really get to know the city in which I live and appreciate it for what is unique to it; its architecture, of course, and other things, too – food, culture, events, entertainment, etc. I want to play a part in preserving what we have now for future generations. Whether that be working in historic preservation, participating on the board of an organization similar to Landmarks, or following current events related to such buildings as the Del Taco building controversy that ensued this summer. And now when I feel passionate about something, I'll make my voice known.

## SHWETA JOSHI

### *South Side Day Nursery*

This past summer I had the pleasure of working at South Side Day Nursery. My knowledge of South City and St. Louis definitely grew over the summer. I never knew how diverse and multicultural South City could be. South Side Day Nursery was founded in 1886 and has a rich history of its own. While doing research for the nursery, I learned about the general history of St. Louis and its wide variety of immigrants over the years. It was very interesting and enlightening to learn so much about a city I have been living in for the past three years!



The nursery provided an interesting work environment for me. Half the time, it was like any other work environment, professional and efficient. The other half of the time, I was drawing with markers and playing hide-and-go-seek on the playground. Something that impressed me so much at the nursery was the effort all of the staff members made towards helping the children and their families. It was amazing to me when they addressed hundreds and hundreds of envelopes asking for donations in efforts to get a new building, something that they did multiple times a year! Everyone cared about his or her work; it was more than doing menial tasks for a paycheck, it had a purpose.

One thing I did learn about the St. Louis community this summer is that it is definitely a work-in-progress. People are making efforts all over St. Louis to make this city a better place for themselves and their children. The spirit in St. Louis makes me even more motivated to join in on this change! Furthermore, I love how the Goldman Fellows Program has allowed a few lucky undergraduates to have the chance to get involved with the St. Louis community. I only wish Washington University in St. Louis had more opportunities like this! I feel extremely lucky to have had this opportunity.

Finally, I honestly believe this summer has had a huge impact on my future. I am still extremely interested in the education field, both as an educator and in the general field of education. Furthermore, I think this summer helped me with a personal goal more than a career goal. It's amazing how much you can learn from a 5-year-old. They are inquisitive, bright, and find laughter in almost everything. At times, they can definitely be a handful, but they taught me how to be extremely patient once again and to enjoy the little things in life. The patience I learned from a classroom of children will help me in any career path I choose in the future.

*“People are making efforts all over St. Louis to make this city a better place for themselves and their children.” — Shweta Joshi*

## KRISTIN MAURER

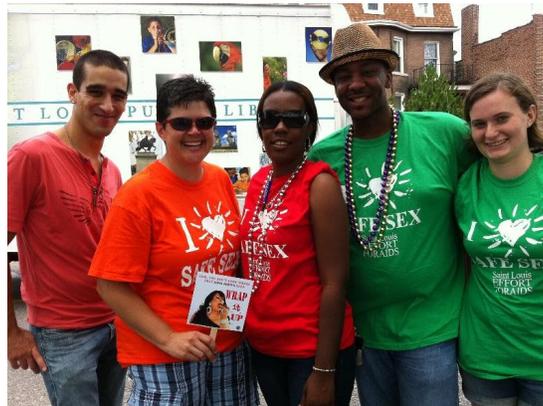
### *St. Louis Effort for Aids (EFA)*

This summer I spent 11 weeks interning at St. Louis Effort for AIDS (EFA). EFA is an AIDS service organization that offers free HIV/STD testing, prevention education, case management resources for people living with HIV/AIDS, and community outreach. I worked in the Prevention Services Department managing HIV/STD testing databases and reports as well as participating in community outreach activities. As part of community outreach, I had the opportunity to do HIV/STD testing in areas all around St. Louis.

Through these efforts, I gained a greater understanding of the vast socioeconomic diversity in St. Louis. North St. Louis, in particular, is an area of extreme contrast to the rest of the city and greater metropolitan area. The area is riddled with dilapidated buildings, gang violence, drug abuse and the absence of economic opportunities. By talking with my colleagues at EFA, I gained some understanding of the historical roots of poverty in North St. Louis. Yet, even in these poverty-stricken neighborhoods, the strength of the community is evident in the people's desire to come together and improve their neighborhood.

Before my internship, I wanted to pursue a career in public health with a focus on sexual and reproductive health. After spending time at EFA, my interest in this type of career has been further solidified. I also have developed a greater interest in working for a government agency like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and/or in a career that involves health policy. Even though EFA is a non-profit organization, I learned during the summer that the CDC and government policies greatly affect the funding and stipulations of the organization. EFA, for example, receives some funding from government grants to offer free HIV/STD testing and is obligated to report information about tests to the Missouri State Health Department. The health department in turn reports information to the CDC. The CDC is also responsible for the design of preventative educational programs that EFA offers to clients.

Before this summer I only had a rudimentary grasp of how non-profit organizations interact with the government and after gaining an understanding of this relationship, I believe that working for a government agency or in the area of public health has the potential to make a positive impact on the health and well-being of communities throughout the United States.



## LEXY MILLETT

### *Nurses for Newborns Foundation*

This summer was an incredible experience. Through the Goldman Fellows program, I had the opportunity to be immersed in a non-profit work setting, and just as importantly, I had the opportunity to explore the city of St. Louis. My experience has greatly influenced the direction of my career path, as well as my understanding and appreciation for St. Louis.

Over the years, I have logged countless hours volunteering at many different types of organizations and non-profits. However, interning at the Nurses for Newborns Foundation this summer was the first time I have had the opportunity to see the behind-the-scenes of how a non-profit organization operates. One of the biggest lessons I took away is the importance of constant communication. For every project, from as big as collaborating with Washington University's George Warren Brown School of Social Work to run a study about the effectiveness of depression toolkits on new moms, to as small as sending a packet to the copy center to be printed, multiple departments were involved. I learned that effective, timely, and broad-spanning communication is key to keeping a non-profit not only functioning, but also progressing.



Beyond the work setting, my internship also opened my eyes to the large disconnect between the ideals of how welfare programs in St. Louis should function and their actual use. Many government programs simply hand out money, which in turn provides no incentive for people to find their own housing or income sources. People do need the support, but the manner in which many programs are designed is ineffective and leads people to take advantage of the program. I learned that programs need to be more all-inclusive, rather than addressing a single issue such as food or housing, in order to improve a community.

Despite the faults that I discovered in the St. Louis welfare system, I also discovered many gems the city has to offer. I went to festivals downtown, concerts at the Arch, Shakespeare in the Park, the Missouri Botanical Gardens, the St. Louis Zoo, Tower Grove Park, The Muny, documentary screenings, farmer's markets, and more! The biggest thing I learned about St. Louis this summer is that it has so much to offer.

I was probably most influenced by nurses I had the chance to talk with this summer. Going into this internship, I already knew that I was interested in public health and was vaguely considering adding nursing. After this summer, I am fairly certain that I plan to do a post-bachelor's program in nursing and become a registered nurse. Two major factors influenced my decision. First, I learned that in order to have a successful career in the field of public health, it is very important to have some type of medical background. Secondly, I came to realize that nursing is a profession that really aligns, with my personality, beliefs and goals in life.

Lastly, I want to say thank you to the Gephardt Institute, the Nurses for Newborns Foundation and the Goldman family. I can honestly say that my experience this summer has been life-changing and I feel blessed to have had this opportunity. Thank you.

## JULIAN NICKS

### *Shearwater Education Foundation*

This summer I learned a lot about the rich history within St. Louis that has led to some of the issues and division that we see in the city today. In particular, I learned a lot more about the Ville area of St. Louis city, a once strong, internally sustained black community that became economically depressed after the closing of Homer G. Phillips Hospital, which was one of the largest African American Hospitals, due to political forces. The closing of the hospital resulted in the loss of hundreds of jobs of people in the local community.



In the non-profit sector, the major issue facing most organizations is that they are under resourced, both in finances and human capital. Finances continue to limit both expansion and the ability to undertake new initiatives which vastly prevents progress and innovation. Finances are often the cause of limitations in human capital. Also, being a professional in the non-profit setting requires a great degree of flexibility in terms of your daily work. Job descriptions are not and cannot be clearly defined. As new projects emerge, typically non-profits don't have the resources to hire someone to head the project, so people have to be willing to undertake new job tasks that may not typically fall in their domain. This flexibility is key because the work must be done by someone even if it means giving these duties to current employees or relying more heavily on interns and volunteers.

Community is key to progress. One thing that makes the non-profit sector unique and beautiful is that in a way it is a smaller community than one might imagine. All of the leaders know and support one another. They are all united with some greater purpose of helping the greater St. Louis community and help each other in any way possible. I witnessed how these networks help to foster and create new significant relationships, and the positive impact that this has on the overall functionality of non-profit institutions.

This experience has inspired me to do more in the community, especially in the education and non-profit fields. It has informed me of the complex issues that exist in our communities and in our schools, and given me a higher sense of urgency to do something about it. I have been further propelled to pursue a career within the education or non-profit arena where I can truly make a difference.

*“One thing that makes the non-profit sector unique and beautiful is that in a way it is a smaller community than one might imagine.”- Julian Nicks*

## **TRAE ROBISON**

### ***International Institute of St. Louis***

Through my internship at the International Institute located in south St. Louis city, I was made aware of one of greatest aspects of the St. Louis metro area: its diversity. Like a miniature melting pot, the St. Louis community is composed of people of all races, religions, and any other social-political minority of which one could dream. From the vibrant gay scene in the Grove to the growing

Bhutanese and Muslim neighborhoods along South Grand, the St. Louis area is a quilt of different ethnic groups, customs, and traditions. I have learned that the vast majority of the city's residents are kind, charitable, and understanding; they would much rather learn from each others' differences and rejoice in them than stratify and tear one another down. The International Institute's Festival of Nations is a prime example of the community's desire to interact and grow from its innate diversity, as well as an example of the hard work and dedication of workers in non-profit organizations show to their respective programs.



Dedication and genuine concern are the two things that I have learned from my time at the Institute. Every employee actually cared for the well-being of his or her client and would do anything to make sure that the client's needs were being met. Sometimes their dedication led them to work tremendous amounts of hours and make countless home visits, yet never at the cost of diminished care to another client. Despite low wages and intense deadlines, you must love your job and the cause it supports in order to work successfully in non-profits.

In addition to internal support and enthusiasm, a non-profit must have the support of the community in which it is located and provides services. In this area of community, I believe that Washington University could greatly improve its presence and performance. Most students have never ventured further east than the Central West End and may have attended a Cardinals game or two, but have never made the St. Louis area home. Even though they spend the better part of four years directly in the center of the greater metro area and vote for local propositions, many remain in the mindset of a perpetual tourist and frequent places with which any visitor who spent a week in St. Louis would be familiar. If Washington University would encourage its students to explore the city outside of the confines of Skinker, Delmar, Big Bend, and Clayton; everybody would end up better for it.

In moving forward with my career goal of becoming a physician, I would like to think that my experience during this summer has led me to be more understanding and sensitive to the cultural needs of my patients. Also, I hope than I am now better able to understand the conditions in which a large portion of the population live and better relate to living conditions of patients in low income and at-risk communities. Finally, I believe that I will be more willing and able to see the "big picture" when it comes to the relationship between healthcare and its place in the life of the individual.

## BRAM SABLE-SMITH

### *The Acts Partnership*

Reverend Gary Willis refers to his gatherings as a “Neighborhood Prayer Meeting.” It fits the bill. When the service opens with personal prayers, it is common to hear participants praying loudly for their family as well as their community. It is an intimate experience. Members bear their souls while the other congregants listen intently and encourage the prayer with exclamations of, “yes Lord,” and, “listen to her, Lord.”



I am different than most people who come to the Prayer Meetings. For one thing, I am Jewish. I am also from a different background than the men and women who sit in the pews of the church. The most salient difference, however, is that I am white. None of that mattered to Gary or the rest of the congregation. They welcomed me all the same.

This summer I was an intern with The Acts Partnership, a non-profit that works on various aspects of community development in St. Louis’s 21<sup>st</sup> Ward. My main responsibility during the summer was looking after the Partnership’s new acquisition, The Sanctuary, a former church that we were turning into a community center along with the ward’s alderman. The Sanctuary is across the street from the store that Gary runs with his family. Gary rents the space for his service every Thursday.

Through accepting me into his community, Gary shaped the way that I define my own community. This summer I became a citizen of St. Louis. Not just in the neighborhood near Washington University in St. Louis where I rent an apartment, but of the city as a whole. That was an important lesson to learn because not everyone in this town defines community the same way; especially many of the policy makers.

It could be frustrating working so close with an alderman when city politics got in the way of the programs we were trying to undertake. It could also be frustrating working with an alderman even, whose vision of progress in our ward was more grandiose than our non-profit was able to provide. The connections that Gary allowed me to see in our city, however, made all that frustration fruitful.

What I am taking away most from this summer is a sense of the interconnectedness of the different parts of St. Louis, and between St. Louis and the world. My work this summer has directly channeled into the topic of my senior honors thesis: Chinese economic influence’s impact on urban development in St. Louis. In short, it was a summer that was invaluable for me.

## **BLAIR SACKETT**

### ***Center for Survivors of Torture and War Trauma***

I learned a tremendous amount about myself and St. Louis during my summer as a Goldman Fellow through exploring and becoming an active participant in the city and with the residents, engaging with my co-workers at the Center for Survivors of Torture and War Trauma, as well as simply just living here.

I had just returned to the United States after having spent the past year studying abroad in Kenya and South Africa. Upon arrival in St. Louis, I was disappointed to be leaving behind my adventurous lifestyle, exploring new cities and engaging with diverse groups of people. However, after the first Goldman dinner in Soulard my perspective completely shifted. At the end of the dinner, the Fellows took a walking tour around the Soulard area led by a member of the Soulard Historic Association. The walking tour provided me with new insights into the character of the area from the history to the architecture to the residents. The excitement and interest that I had felt while experiencing new cities abroad was reignited. I spent the rest of the summer exploring different neighborhoods around the city and engaged with as many diverse groups of people as possible. I learned about the diversity St. Louis has, both geographically and demographically, as well as how to personally engage with the places around me.



Such exploration helped me gain a sense of connection and place within the St. Louis community that had been missing in my previous years at Washington University. In the past, I had felt distant from the larger St. Louis community, almost as if I had inherently picked Washington University as my sole community. However, I learned that I do have a place in the St. Louis community – albeit a bit of a unique place as a student and temporary resident to the extent that I am willing to seek it out. I am excited to continue to engage with the St. Louis community throughout my senior year at Washington University.

I also had the opportunity to work at the Center for Survivors of Torture and War Trauma, helping with fundraising and event planning. Working at a small non-profit provided me with a first-hand view of the realities of government budget cuts for non-profits and community members, as well as the amazing passion and resilience of the people working in this sector to come together as a community and creatively overcome such challenges. I was inspired by the ability for the strong passion behind the work of my co-workers at the Center, as well as the community members and leaders that I met with, to be transformed into motivation and dedication. I really came to understand the power and necessity of feeling an importance and passion for my work.

Through my experience working at the Center, I also learned more about different aspects of the work environment that I consider to be important when looking into my future career options. Not only did my internship this summer assure me that I want to work in a non-profit, but also that I want to work at a small non-profit. I will then be able to engage with a diverse set of responsibilities and opportunities, from grant research to program development to design. I think that having this experience will help me seek out a future through which I will better be able to find fulfillment both professionally and as a strong community member.

## OLIVIA YOUNG

### *South City Preparatory Academy*

Besides learning my way around the city through many modes of transportation (walking, metro, biking, and driving), I have learned that St. Louis is broken up into very segregated sections all with their own distinct characteristics. Although these sections are divided, there are many people who still care about St. Louis and have devoted a great deal of time and effort to rebuild this city for its residents. The Old North City community is slowly rebuilding their town along with the very culturally diverse South City that has used its diversity to build a plethora of authentic restaurants that serve the St. Louis community as a whole.



The biggest lesson I have learned by working with a start-up non-profit is that things do not always go as planned; thus, an organization must be flexible with their given resources while continuing to be faithful to the original mission. I loved that each day was filled with different tasks, but saw how not being able to establish consistency sometimes causes very stressful situations. To complement the ever changing tasks of a non-profit, organization is a skill that cannot go overlooked. This summer I was able to improve my mindset in terms of flexibility and organization to complete tasks successfully.

This summer I learned that although a community is a group, very small decisions made by individuals cause many of the results that the community sees. With the many components that make up a community, it takes many selfless acts for a community to prosper. Simple things as going to town meetings, supporting the local business, cleaning up after yourself in public areas, and speaking out about issues that one sees in their community makes a huge impact and can encourage others to do the same. I never knew that my small actions can greatly affect the community as a whole; but many small acts add up quickly.

There are two major ways that working for a non-profit this summer have affected my career path and future goals. Short term, I have decided to change my major from Educational Studies to a double minor in African American Studies and Economics. Working with people who are so passionate about their work in the non-profit world gave me the courage to pursue what I am truly interested in and the other parts of my life will eventually fall into place. Long term, I have made a pledge to continue to do community service and non-profit work even once I graduate. Many students are involved in community service opportunities as a way of supporting their résumés, but I plan to always work within the community I live in, no matter what type of career I choose. I have learned that volunteers are crucial to the non-profit world, as the people who support those who may not be able to support themselves.

*“With the many components that make up a community,  
it takes many selfless acts for a community to prosper.”- Olivia Young*



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Gephardt Institute for Public Service  
Washington University in St. Louis  
One Brookings Drive, Campus Box 1019  
St. Louis, MO 63130  
Telephone: 314-935-9104  
Email: [gephardtinsttute@wustl.edu](mailto:gephardtinsttute@wustl.edu)  
Website: [www.gephardtinsttute.wustl.edu](http://www.gephardtinsttute.wustl.edu)