

Beyond the Bars Fellowship - Fellow Bios

Lauren Bachman is a third year student in the dual MPH/MSW Masters program at Columbia University. She is studying Clinical Practice in Social Work and Sociomedical Sciences in Public Health. Since starting at Columbia, Lauren has gained clinical experience working with elementary students, Jewish adults with intellectual disabilities, adolescents involved in the court system, and is currently working with college women in the Barnard counseling center. Lauren also worked on a research team in Malawi, Africa conducting a needs assessment for building a secondary school, as well as on a family-based HIV prevention intervention for youth on probation in Poughkeepsie, NY. She is on the EBoard of the Association for Justice and Health, a student organization at Mailman that focuses on the intersections of issues around mass incarceration and public health, and is currently working on an article with her advisor, Dr. Pamela Valera, on the daily experiences of men while incarcerated as compared to once they integrate back into their communities. Lauren received her BA in English and a Business Administration minor from the University of Florida.

K. Bain has been the New York City Director of legislation and budget affairs for the 45th Councilmanic district in Brooklyn since 2010. His role includes duties such as; participating in the balancing New York City's 70 billion dollar annual budget, as well as direct oversight of a multi-million dollar member item budget. K has also been instrumental in the drafting, development and enactment of numerous pieces of legislation, most recently the Community Safety Act. This is landmark legislation originally consisting of five bills aimed at increasing police accountability, creating better community police relations and safer streets. Both intro 1079 referred to as the oversight bill (creating an inspector general position to monitor the NYPD) and intro 1080 (stop question and frisk bill), which addresses biased based policing have been signed into law as of November 20th 2013.

In addition to his years of budget and policy experience, K. Bain's passion for the arts, Human justice and community development remain at the forefront of his priorities. Whether working with at risk or incarcerated youth or students in universities K Bain is committed to serving the many who find themselves faced with the systemic obstacles obstructing the growth and development of our most underserved communities.

Brooklyn's own K. Bain is a Hip Hop Artist with exceptional lyrical flow and storytelling ability. His pre-album "Came a Long Way" was critically acclaimed and is a testament to the fact that he is both a lyricist and song writer whose talents are undeniable. An accomplished writer, singer, and MC, Bain's credits include features with 60 Minutes, Fox News, The Village Voice, The Source Magazine, and musical tours with Stephanie Mills, Be Be Winans and Malik Yoba. K has also had international appearances in Trinidad, Panama, Ghana and Germany and has held his own on stages alongside artists such as Jeezy, Nas, Usher, and The Roots to name a few. K. Bain, with his background in the streets of Brooklyn, has a B.A. in African Studies/Sociology and a Masters in Urban Policy & Public Administration from Brooklyn College. It is this dichotomy or diverse experience that makes K so interesting as an artist.

Ashanti Baptiste was born and raised in Brooklyn. He moved to Fort Greene in the early 80's to witness gentrification 20 years later. He is a Hip Hop artist and community advocate. He's been in situations with the Police throughout his teenage year, even a moment of being brutalized, and then somewhat set up by the Police once a case was opened on them with the C.C.R.B. He has worked with many Community Leaders and regularly speaks out against an abundance of issues plaguing our City Neighborhoods. It's in his blood to fight for those oppressed no matter the color of skin.

Popy Begum is a fellow of the Beyond the Bars Fellowship with the Center for Justice at Columbia University. Before the fellowship, she worked as a research assistant on numerous projects in the US and UK, which include but are not restricted to juvenile justice, gun violence, and mounted police. She was a Vera Fellow from 2011-2012 and taught General Educational Development (GED) courses and mentored formerly incarcerated men and women at the Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services (CASES), and later at The Osborne Association. She graduated from the City University of New York, John Jay College of Criminal Justice in 2013 with a B.A. in International Criminal Justice and a Certificate in Dispute Resolution, and she earned her MSc in Criminology and Criminal Justice (Research Methods) from the Centre for Criminology at the University of Oxford in 2014.

Geovanna Borden, who goes by Geo, was born and mostly raised in the Bronx. She was raised in a bilingual household by Honduran immigrant parents. She speaks English, Spanish, and bits of Turkish (thanks to a brief stint in Turkey). Geo is currently a senior at Purchase College in Purchase New, York where she will complete her undergraduate degree in Media, Society & the Arts with minors in Visual Arts and Environmental Studies this spring! While at Purchase College, Geovanna has interned at NYPIRG, the New York Research Public Interest Group, and worked closely on the higher education campaign as a project leader. Geo has farmed, seeded, weeded and watered vegetables and herbs at the Wassaic Community Farm in Wassaic, New York. The Wassaic Community Farm addresses food justice inequalities in Dutchess County and New York City. Geo has also worked as a community development intern at MoCADA (Museum of Contemporary African Diasporic Art) in Brooklyn, planning events to promote local diasporically-identified Brooklyn artists and black-owned businesses to the public. This past summer she researched and video-edited material for the Ghana Think Tank on their US-Mexican border initiative.

Geo hopes to further her understanding of the racial and economic complexities of mass incarceration and how to organize around these issues.

Anibal Cortes joined the Fortune Society as a Family Services Specialist in July 2014. His primary responsibilities are empowering parents to establish a positive, healthy, supportive relationship with their children through use of collaborative treatment strategies and effective use of services. Anibal also enjoys a working relationship with the Bard College Prison Initiative(BPI) as a Continuing Education Counselor where he assists returning BPI students connect with other alumni, find services, and continue their academic pursuits. An alumnus of BPI, Anibal received his BA in Anthropology in 2008. Anibal proposed the addition of a college level public health

curriculum to BPI in 2009 which has gone on to become a part of their Reentry Initiative, offering soon to be released students courses that prepare them for entry-level work in professional fields. He recently graduated from Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health (May 2014) with an MPH in Epidemiology and a certificate in Comparative Effectiveness Outcomes Research. Anibal believes that a quality college education in prison is an overlooked population based approach to reentry that offers men and women returning from incarceration the critical capacity for successful social and systemic reintegration.

Lisa Drapkin has been a volunteer with NYC Books through Bars, a volunteer collective that sends free, donated books to incarcerated people around the country, since 2007. She now serves as a fundraising and communications organizer for the group. Lisa is a part-time membership assistant for both the National Police Accountability Project (a project of the National Lawyers Guild), which is a membership association of attorneys who take on cases of police abuse, as well as the National Lawyers Guild. She is involved in several of their committees focused on advocacy for people in prison, including the Prison Legal Project (which sends out Jailhouse Lawyer Handbooks to incarcerated people around the country who request them) and the Mass Incarceration Committee (which currently is focusing on its Parole Preparation Project). Lisa is a life-long New Yorker, and as a vegan has also committed her time to working on behalf of animal rights issues.

Toney Earl Jr. is the Founder and Executive Director of M.A.D.E. Transitional Services. His passion and previous life experiences are deeply rooted in the creation of this organization. In 2006, Toney was arrested for the possession of a controlled substance; this resulted in three and a half years of incarceration in a New York State prison. After satisfying his sentence as a non-violent drug offender in 31 months, he returned to his community in 2008.

Having witnessed firsthand the difficulties of the transition process, with limited agencies equipped to assist this population in which he lived, he identified an area of need. Mr. Earl started planning and collaborating with other sister agencies and formed M.A.D.E. Transitional Services. The core of Mr. Earl's message is about promoting change in the mindset and behavior of ex-offenders. He is aiming to increase individual accountability, self-respect, self-esteem, and intrinsic motivation to combat recidivism. His relatable approach and belief that those who are closest social problems may potentially provide solutions serves as reminder that past circumstances do not always have to impede future success. He is very passionate and is wholeheartedly committed to this journey of assisting the ex-offender population.

Mr. Earl has taken on various roles in his community. He serves as a board member for the Falling Angels Sickle Cell Foundation, a facilitator for the Ready, Set, Work! program for Tomorrow's Workplace, he serves on the Advisory Council for the National Correction Association of New York State and serves as member of the Spring Valley Branch of the NAACP. Toney Earl attended Lincoln University where he studied business administration and political science. He is also a certified professional coach.

Courtney S. Gilmore is a native of Gainesville, Florida in which she graduated from the University of Florida with a B.A. in Sociology and Criminology and Law. After beginning her educational blog in August 2013 entitled The MECCA, she continued to engage herself in the educational sector both at the national and local levels, in which she followed and reported on the

national superintendent search of the Alachua County School District. While interning with the Public Defender's office of the 8th Judicial Circuit in Gainesville, Florida, she noticed the connections between imprisonment and education. Thus, Courtney became interested in the inequities in both our communities and schools, and how we may find and create ways to alleviate the mass incarceration issue through creating more educational opportunities for our youth and their families. Courtney is currently pursuing her Master's in Education Policy at Teacher's College, Columbia University. Her topical interests include the following: educational policy, school to prison pipeline, educational equity, and mass incarceration.

Maggie Gorczyca is currently in her second year of her Master's in Social Work program at Columbia University, with a clinical focus in Contemporary Social Issues. She completed her Master's in Psychology from New York University and has a BA from Vassar College. Her interests include criminal justice and mental health. Maggie began working with Wediko as a Social Work Intern in 2014 and is now working as a school-based clinician with this non-profit school-based organization. She is also currently an intern for the Better Living Center, the outpatient mental health clinic at Fortune Society. Fortune Society is an organization committed to working with people with an incarceration history. She is one of the co-chairs of the Criminal Justice Caucus at Columbia University School of Social Work.

Rumana Kasime is a sophomore at Barnard College and is originally from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia but has lived in Sioux Falls, South Dakota for the past nine years. She is pursuing a major in Urban Studies with a minor in Economics and is interested in entering the human rights profession as well as working to create economic development strategies for developing countries. She applied for this fellowship with hopes of gaining a better understanding of mass incarceration and putting that knowledge to action. She is really excited to be working with this team and learning from everyone's experiences so that she can grow both as a person and as a leader.

Andrea Kozak is a first year student at Columbia Law School. Originally from Oregon, Andrea received her Bachelor's Degree from Scripps College in Claremont, California. As a Gender and Women's Studies major, Andrea did extensive work with incarcerated women, focusing primarily on raising campus awareness of injustices in the criminal legal system and prison industrial complex. After graduating in 2012, Andrea worked as a paralegal for Disability Rights Advocates, a non-profit law firm in Berkeley, California. While there, she assisted in class action and impact litigation to enhance the civil rights of people with disabilities. Andrea intends to pursue a public interest legal career, focusing primarily on gender violence and incarceration justice issues.

Christopher McLaughlin serves as the Reentry Coordinator for the Bronx County Reentry Task Force. In this position, he works with individuals recently released from state prison who are under Community Supervision (Parole) and assists them in their transition back to the community. In this capacity, Chris also works closely with a number of government agencies, service providers, and community-based organizations to assist people in reentry and educate the community concerning issues facing the reentry community, with a goal of reducing recidivism and promoting public safety. Prior to his current position, Chris worked as a Research Assistant at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, completing research on the healthcare and social service needs of people with histories of criminal justice involvement in the Department of Epidemiology

and Population Health. Chris holds a Bachelor's of Science in Economics degree from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania

Kendra Thompson-Mitchell is a first-year Education Policy doctoral student in the Department of Education Policy and Social Analysis at Teachers College, concentrating on educational policies affecting youth who have come to be in the ward of state governments by virtue of their interaction with the juvenile and criminal justice systems. One of her more specific interests is whether a study of the philosophical and historical underpinnings of education in the United States might better inform policies affecting these institutionalized youth. Kendra received her B.A., summa cum laude, in Political Science from Hampton University, and her J.D. from Harvard Law School. Upon graduation from law school, she practiced as a business and litigation lawyer in the private sector, and also completed a fellowship with the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois, where she focused her efforts on the Institutionalized Persons Project. During her fellowship, Kendra assisted in leading an investigation into the quality and quantity of education afforded to children in Youth Centers throughout the state of Illinois. This fellowship provided the fertile ground from which Kendra's current research and professional interests sprang.

Salma Nakhlawi is studying Africana Studies and Education at Barnard College. She believes that being a Beyond the Bars Fellow will allow her to continue to think about the ongoing struggle for racial equality and decarceration. She is excited to participate in weekly seminars with her community members to develop her understanding of justice issues and how she can enact change.

Ashley Perkins was born and raised in Southern California. There she competed collegiately in Track and Field at the University of California, Riverside and graduated with a Bachelors of Art in Sociology in 2013. Before moving to New York City, Ashley was a Peer Counselor at UCR's Academic Intervention Center, and a Childcare worker at group homes for male child sex offenders. Ashley relocated to New York city during the summer of 2013 to attend Columbia School of Social Work for her MSW, where she is now a second year. Ashley currently interns with the Criminal Justice Initiative: Supporting Children, Families, and Communities within the Social Work building.

Nabeel Qureshi is a second-year Masters of Public Health student at the Mailman School of Public Health in the Department of Health Policy and Management. In the past, Nabeel has worked in varying capacities at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, examining health disparities in housing and access to primary care and medical technology. Having grown up in California, he followed the evolution of litigation and policy development in the criminal justice system within the state and was particularly interested in mass incarceration as a public health, civil rights, and human rights problem. This past summer, he worked at the Public Policy Institute of California and examined the impact of Public Safety Realignment of the state of health care in the county jail system. He hopes to stay involved with criminal justice reform and strengthening the health system within the corrections system to reduce the criminalization of mental health disorders and provide a humane and evidence-based approach to reducing recidivism within this community.

Skye Ross is a dual degree MSW/MPH candidate. She volunteered with the 2013 and 2014 Beyond the Bars conferences on mass incarceration and continues to work with the Criminal Justice Caucus at the School of Social Work and the Association for Justice and Health at the Mailman School of Public Health. Skye interned with the policy arm of the Justice Initiative at Columbia University during the 2013-2014 school year, assisting with the coordination and planning of the symposium on Reducing Incarceration: Endless Punishment, Long-Term Sentences, and Aging in Prison — or Release and Reentry. In her final year of graduate school, she is placed with the Department of Health and Mental Health Transitional Health Care Coordination at Rikers Island. She plans to continue to work on issues relating to those impacted by the criminal justice system after completing her studies in May, 2015.

Kayu Shibata is currently a graduate student at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Originally from Southern California, graduated with a B.A. in political science and sociology at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). After graduating, Kayu worked as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), responding to medical emergencies and provide immediate and life-saving interventions. Passionate for traveling, Kayu decided to take some time and visit countries including Japan, Thailand, Cambodia, Singapore, Shanghai, Greece, Rome, Italy, Germany, London, Switzerland, and Holland. Kayu also spent a year in Japan working as an English teacher at an elementary school, grades 1 -5. When the earthquake/tsunami struck Japan in 2011, immediately volunteered for the relief effort to assist those who lost their homes and to bring food and clothes to those in need. After returning back home, Kayu was compelled to focus on his true desire to working in the field of criminal justice. Soon after attending his first semester in graduate school, obtained an internship with the New York City Department of Correction in the Strategic Planning and Programs Division, where he works with incarcerated individuals at Rikers Island to obtaining employment after their release. It wasn't long until Kayu realized that he can make a real difference in the lives of inmates. Currently, Kayu is striving to do something where he can make a positive difference towards the lives of incarcerated individuals both in jail and after their release.

Amanda Valladares: I am originally from Los Angeles, California and moved to NYC in August of 2013. I graduated from California State University Northridge with a B.A in Sociology. I am currently attending Columbia School of Social Work (CSSW), and will be graduating in May 2015. I am currently focusing my studies on a clinical track and look forward to obtaining my clinical license. Aside from being a student at CSSW, I am also a co-chair for the Criminal Justice Caucus. I have been involved in the caucus for two years. I deeply enjoy spreading awareness and education around the issues of mass incarceration and all the factors that can play a great role in influencing the justice system. During my first year at CSSW, I worked with the Legal Aid Society, a non-profit organization that assists low-income families in preventing them from being evicted from their homes. From this internship I learned the great value of housing in NYC and now look to incorporate fighting for housing rights for individuals who have a record or been previously incarcerated into my future career. Currently, I am interning at the Brownsville Community Justice Center under Brownsville Justice Community and Brownsville Leadership Program. I am working with at risk youth who have had previous contact with the criminal system. I will be helping the youth in the program complete a 6 month community programming course that provides positive encouragement and incentive to be engaged in community involvement,

continue in higher educational attainment, and increase employment skills. One of my other tasks at this agency will be working with youth who are in the Crossroads detention center located in Brooklyn. After I graduate, I aspire to continue working within the juvenile criminal system. I want to continue working with at risk youth and work on implementing more mental health services within juvenile detention facilities. So far, I have deeply enjoyed my experience in NYC and look forward to continuing in the fight for criminal justice reform.

Cynthia Williams is a business professional with more than thirty (30) years of experience working in both the private and public sectors. She obtained her undergraduate degree (BA) from the University of the West Indies. She began a post graduate program in Business Administration at St John's University but deferred her studies. Frustrated by the brokenness of the criminal justice system, she took the initiative to make a difference. In four months she acquired a Certificate in Paralegal Studies, while behind bars, through Ashworth College, Norcross GA, maintaining a 4:0 GPA. Concerned by the plight of other women as well her own personal experience with the criminal justice system, she has applied the knowledge gained in studying legal research methods to engage in researching legal issues to help herself and others. Ms. Williams is a member of the New York City Paralegal Association and has made the transition to Independent Paralegal and Advocate for social justice. She uses every opportunity she gets to educate the community and lawmakers on the impact of incarceration on families, especially women and children.

Joseph Williams is a 2nd year Student at Columbia University School of Social focusing on Advanced General Practice and Programming. He is currently a social work intern at the The Boy's Club of New York and works at Brooklyn Defender Services. He is a native of Brooklyn, NY, a father of an 11 year old and a Born-Again Christian.

Lorna Woodham recently began working with Dignity in Schools Campaign. She believes that the path to healing our communities begins with ensuring equal access to education. Lorna has participated in leadership positions at Osborne Association, Healing Communities, and Education from the Inside Out Coalition. As a dedicated social justice activist with much personal experience concerning the effect of incarceration on families, Lorna has spoken on panels at The Silberman School of Social Work, Osborne, Riverside Church, and Camp Promise, a camp for children with parents who are incarcerated. Lorna holds a BA cum laude in Anthropology from Columbia University and is currently pursuing M.Div./MSSW at Union Theological Seminary and Columbia School of Social Work.