

AmeriCorps Members 2017 – 2019

Belle Lin, 2018 – 2019 Member

Position: Health Center Navigator

Health Center Site: Community Healthcare Network- Lower East Side/Harlem

Hometown: Basking Ridge, NJ

Share a favorite hobby/hobbies or interest of yours.

I love hiking - if you're ever in New Jersey, be sure to check out Mount Tammany or Hacklebarney State Park! I also love finding new places to eat, which NYC is filled with!

Why do you aspire to serve?

I chose AmeriCorps because I wanted to learn more about the NYC community and be able to give back. I think service is something you cannot learn in the classroom, and I wanted to get that first-hand experience.

Why did you choose to serve in NY?

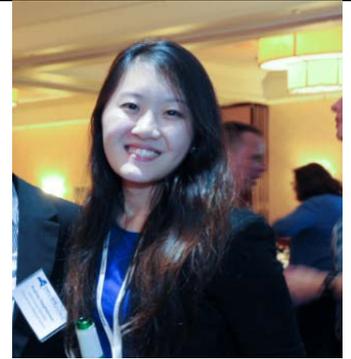
I had always wanted to get to know the city better, and this was the perfect time to do it!

What have you gained from your AmeriCorps experience thus far?

I learned a lot during my year of service, through professional trainings and working directly with the underserved population. A main part of my role consisted of enrolling patients in health insurance, which allowed me to work with patients one on one and really hear their stories. I also got to create a presentation and educate high school students on important topics such as Teen Dating Violence Awareness. Finally, I was able to teach community members about the opioid epidemic and train them to administer naloxone.

What are your plans after your year of service?

I am currently starting my first year of medical school at Cooper Medical School of Rowan University. I plan to continue serving within the Camden community and hope to use the skills I gained during AmeriCorps.



Matthew Leverich, 2018 – 2019 Member

Position: Harm Reduction Services Assistant

Health Center Site: Trillium Health

Hometown: Skaneateles, New York

Share a favorite hobby/hobbies or interest of yours.

Favorite hobbies of mine include water sports (especially swimming), reading political history and all branches of philosophy, and spending time with family and friends.

Why do you aspire to serve?

I aspired to serve to give back to my community. I went to college in Rochester. Over the four years that I was there, it became my home. In my opinion, Rochester is a microcosm of America. Within a ten-mile radius of the city's center, you have some of the wealthiest and poorest communities in the United States. I felt compelled to learn more about the socioeconomic disadvantages in the area - AmeriCorps provided me a great avenue to do just that.

Why did you choose to serve in NY?

Simply put, I just to serve in New York because it is my home. I was born and raised here. I am familiar with many of the issues contemplating every day New Yorkers. By serving in New York, I felt that I could not only learn more, but I could also give back using the knowledge that I have gained from my experiences here over the course of my life time.

What have you gained from your AmeriCorps experience thus far?

As it relates to my term with CHCANYS, I served a highly stigmatized community - IV drug users. I trained users, as well as, community members with regards to administering naloxone. I learned about the practice of harm reduction; there needs to be a greater discussion in the health care community about this practice. Overall, I gained knowledge and a greater sense of compassion



and understanding for people who use drugs. The knowledge I have gained and the experience that I have had will certainly help me be a more wholesome health care provider (in the future).

What are your plans after your year of service?

As it stands right now, I plan to apply to medical school next Spring. Between AmeriCorps and medical school, I plan to either work in the medical scribing community or with federally qualified health centers.

Alexandra Ullrich, 2017-2018 Member

Position: Hepatitis C/PrEP Coordinator

Health Center Site: Housing Works Community Health Center

Hometown: Rockaway, NJ

Why do you aspire to serve?

I have always been concerned with why certain populations' health fares worse than others, and believe that the solutions can be uncovered with community service and emphasis on population health.

Why did you choose to serve in NY?

Because I love NY and want to help make it healthier, and because of the significant Hep C/HIV prevalence.

What have you gained from your AmeriCorps experience thus far?

I have gotten to work directly with the individuals I hope to positively influence, and have gained some insight into the needs of specific populations.

What are your plans after your year of service?

I'd like to continue to work in community health and earn my Masters in Public Health.



Eve Huttner, 2017-2018 Member

Position: Community Health Worker

Health Center Site: Neighborhood Health Center, Buffalo NY

Hometown: Clarence, NY

Share a favorite hobby/hobbies or interest of yours.

I love being outdoors in the sun or hiking. My favorite thing is to take my hammock to a park or a nature reserve and hang it up between two trees and spend time reading, drawing, or writing in my journal.

Why do you aspire to serve?

I'm passionate about social justice and empowering communities in underserved areas to have access to quality healthcare in order to help them succeed in their own lives. I believe quality healthcare is a right and an active process by which success can only come when a patient is equipped with the tools needed to navigate the system, and I am proud to play a part in that.

Why did you choose to serve in NY?

Buffalo is my home and its population ranks it as one of the most impoverished cities in the country. We have a very large population of immigrants and refugees, with whom I hope to work with in my career as a Nurse Practitioner after I finish my year of service and graduate school.

What have you gained from your AmeriCorps experience thus far?

Every little bit counts for a patient. Even if it's as simple as a warm smile and saying hello in the health center. There are so many working parts that go into the care of a single patient and everyone has their own role in the system to help a patient get the care they need. Sometimes it's easy to feel as though what your particular role doesn't count, but every step truly makes a difference for that patient.

What are your plans after your year of service?

From May of 2018 to May of 2019 I will be attending the University at Buffalo for their Accelerated Bachelors of Science Nursing program. After working in the field for a couple of years, I plan to head back to school to get my Doctorate in Nursing Practice (DNP) and Masters



of Public Health (MPH) degree! I hope to specialize in indigenous and holistic medicine to work with immigrant and refugee populations coming to the U.S.

Latisha Pollard, 2017-2018 Member

Position: Health and Literacy Educator

Health Center Site: Community Healthcare Network

Hometown: Brooklyn, NY

Share a favorite hobby/hobbies or interest of yours.

My favorite hobbies are dancing and singing.

Why do you aspire to serve?

Serving others have always been a rewarding and fulfilling experience for me. I enjoy serving because it gives me the opportunity to give back and make a difference in communities and individual lives. I think it is absolutely essential to provide service wherever it is needed, especially in underserved areas. I have already noticed the impact made by my service and I hope to continue making even greater impacts in the future.

Why did you choose to serve in NY?

I choose to serve in NY because I wanted to make a difference around the very place that I live.

What have you gained from your AmeriCorps experience thus far?

AmeriCorps has exposed me to many beneficial trainings and careers in the medical field. I have had the great opportunity to be trained in opioid response, substance use counseling (SBIRT), Harm reduction, crisis intervention, SAFE (Suicidal Alertness for everyone) Talk, mental health first aid, and LGBTQ Sensitivity.

What are your plans after your year of service?

I plan on attending medical school after my year of service.



Lawrence Garcia, 2017-2018 Member

Position: Patient Navigator / Health Educator

Health Center Site: Project Renewal Fort Washington Men's Shelter

Hometown: Los Angeles, CA

Share a favorite hobby/hobbies or interest of yours.

Playing pickup soccer or in one of the many leagues in NYC and watching soccer (go Liverpool) at one of my favorite bars.

Why do you aspire to serve?

I serve the people who have been pushed to the margins to address the many disparities existent in the United States, healthcare included.

Why did you choose to serve in NY?

The opportunity to work with people from different cultures, a subway that gets you anywhere, countless museums, parks, and eateries, and the challenge of living in the biggest city in the US all motivated me to serve in NY.

What have you gained from your AmeriCorps experience thus far?

I have gained experience problem solving how to increase utilization of the medical clinic, resiliency serving in a new, demanding environment, communication skills in presenting health workshops to large groups, and a commitment to patient advocacy in trying to ensure our patients have access to quality healthcare.

What are your plans after your year of service?

I plan to work as an EMT while I apply and interview for medical school.



Majay Donzo, 2017-2018 Member

Position: Behavioral Health Advocate

Health Center Site: Syracuse Community Health Center

Hometown: Syracuse, NY

Share a favorite hobby/hobbies or interest of yours.

Arts and crafts, eating and of course sleeping.

Why do you aspire to serve?

I was once a refugee. I saw people who dedicated their lives to helping me and my family rekindle our broken lights. Not only does it make me feel good, I believe it's my turn to rekindle the broken lights of others.

Why did you choose to serve in NY?

I can serve and still be close to my family. Also, Syracuse NY has been my home since I came to the US. Therefore, I believe it's most deserving of my service.

What have you gained from your AmeriCorps experience thus far?

No condition is permanent and never judge the book by its cover.

What are your plans after your year of service?

Prepare for medical school.

**Morgan Davis, 2017-2018 Member**

Position: Opioid Response Coordinator

Health Center Site: Bronx Lebanon Hospital

Hometown: San Francisco/Bay Area, CA

Share a favorite hobby/hobbies or interest of yours.

In my spare time I like to dance and sew.

Why do you aspire to serve?

To give back and learn more about the challenges this country faces.

What are your plans after your year of service?

Apply to medical school.

**Onycha Banton, 2017-2018 Member**

Position: Health and Literacy Educator

Health Center Site: Community Healthcare Network

Hometown: Brooklyn, NY

Share a favorite hobby/hobbies or interest of yours.

My favorite hobbies are reading, traveling and trying different cultural dishes.

Why do you aspire to serve?

I always had a passion in serving underrepresented communities. I believe that working towards addressing the needs of underserved communities improves the health outcomes of those populations.

Why did you choose to serve in NY?

I chose to serve in New York because I wanted to learn how to tackle public health issues that New York's diverse populations face.

What have you gained from your AmeriCorps experience thus far?

From my AmeriCorps experience, I learned to not focus primarily on developing solutions. It is essential to meet patients where they are and help them work towards accomplishing goals that are important to them.

What are your plans after your year of service?

I plan to attend the University at Albany School of Public Health. My concentration will be in Health Policy and Management.



Sally Wen, 2017-2018 Member

Position: Opioid Crisis Coordinator

Health Center Site: ACACIA Network

Hometown: Brooklyn, NY

Share a favorite hobby/hobbies or interest of yours.

My favorite hobby is arts and crafts! Pinterest is my go to whenever I am in search of a new arts and crafts project to do with my siblings. Another favorite hobby of mine is cooking. I enjoy cooking for my family and friends, and it makes me happy when they enjoy the food that I make! Additionally, cooking in the kitchen always feels like I am back in the lab performing many experiments for my principal investigator, instead this time, the final result is edible!

Why do you aspire to serve?

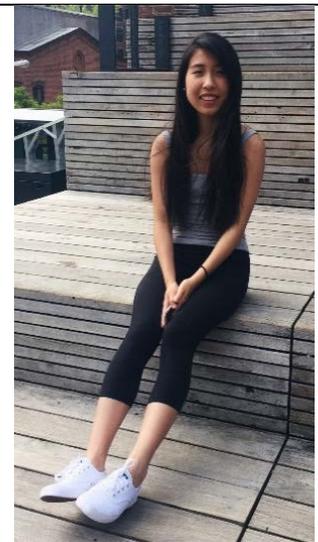
Over the years, I found my most enjoyable experiences composed of a variety of people sharing their unique life stories. The blending of many cultures made my work environment a melting pot that helped me diversify my beliefs. Through Americorps, I look forward to continuing the sharing of traditions and stories between my colleagues and I while broadening my views of the world around me.

Why did you choose to serve in NY?

I was raised by immigrants who left everything in China to search for a better life in America. And being raised as a New Yorker, I had become accustomed to surrounding myself with a diverse set of cultures whenever I step outside my home. I learned that any dream could be made into a reality in this concrete jungle, and I would like to give back to the city that helped raised me and offer a second chance to my family.

What are your plans after your year of service?

I plan on attending medical school after my year of service.

**Tori Amorosi, 2017-2018 Member**

Position: Outreach Coordinator

Health Center Site: HHHN (Hudson Headwaters Health Network)

Hometown: Buffalo, NY

Share a favorite hobby/hobbies or interest of yours.

I really enjoy swimming for exercise, reading, and being outdoors.

Why do you aspire to serve?

I aspire to serve because if I don't, who will? I have to hold myself accountable for the injustices I see in the world and take action to change them.

Why did you choose to serve in NY?

New York is my home state; It is where I received my education. I believe New York has so much potential to grow and offer its residents a high quality life. I definitely want to be part of that growth.

What have you gained from your AmeriCorps experience thus far?

I have gained a deeper understanding of how all factors of poverty intersect, and how all aspect of living intersect. Specifically, I have learned to look for the connections between what I see in front of me and what has lead up to the moment. You learn in public health that people are not unhealthy because they don't care about their health. There are many factors that play into this such as access to transportation, the inability to take time off of work, cost of health insurance, prior experiences with doctors, etc.

What are your plans after your year of service?

I will be going to serve in the Peace Corps in Morocco this fall as a Youth Development Specialist.



Eve Cleghorn, 2017-2018 Member

Position: Hep C/PrEP Coordinator

Health Center Site: Housing Works Community Health Center

Hometown: Williamstown, Massachusetts

Share a favorite hobby/hobbies or interest of yours.

I like biking, swimming, playing guitar, and spending time with my family.

Why do you aspire to serve?

I aspire to serve because no matter what your job or passion is, there is always time to help communities out in one way or another. I love making human connections with people I may otherwise never meet, and knowing that everyone benefits from lending a hand.

Why did you choose to serve in NY?

I choose to serve in NY because NY is filled with people from all over the world. This presents unique challenges to healthcare issues, but NY is also very resource rich when it comes to community resources when compared to other parts of the state and country.

What have you gained from your AmeriCorps experience thus far?

My term serving as an AmeriCorps member has been one of the most insightful times of my life. I've gained useful knowledge about how US healthcare works from a community health standpoint; I've learned healthcare is stronger when it addresses the social determinants of health; I've seen how health disparities can impact marginalized communities more than others, but I've also observed firsthand the resilience of these communities to continue striving in spite of the many obstacles.

What are your plans after your year of service?

I plan to attend Columbia University to pursue my MPH in Sociomedical Sciences, and potentially work towards a clinical degree further in the future.



Shantal Patricia Salandy, 2017-2018 Member

Position: Community Health Educator

Health Center Site: Brightpoint Health

Hometown: Westbury, NY

Share a favorite hobby/hobbies or interest of yours.

Reading, writing and jogging.

Why do you aspire to serve?

To help others overcome barriers to healthcare.

Why did you choose to serve in NY?

I love my state and city.

What have you gained from your AmeriCorps experience thus far?

Knowledge, experience and insight.

What are your plans after your year of service?

Travel.

Chrissie Deutsch, 2017-2018 Member

Position: Tobacco and Hypertension Coordinator

Health Center Site: Housing Works Community Health Center

Hometown: NY, NY

Share a favorite hobby/hobbies or interest of yours.

I love to walk, which may seem like it isn't a hobby... But in NYC I feel like it is. You can walk for hours and see so many different things. You can see performances, listen to music, experience art and fashion, see amazing buildings and architecture, peak into stores, and just take in all the different things going on around you. All while taking in some sun and getting some solid exercise.

Why do you aspire to serve?

I want to contribute to a community in a long-term, beneficial way. And working at Housing Works you can see how much the organization works to listen to its community and build solutions and create change.

Why did you choose to serve in NY?

New York is an amazing city but it, like any other city, needs to find ways to bridge the inequality gaps that exist. And I want to be part of changing its landscape. And to be part of the work being done to better support people in my community.

What have you gained from your AmeriCorps experience thus far?

I have gained more knowledge and skills than I could have hoped for. I have learned to work with patients and community partners, and have gained confidence in my understanding of how the health system works and how to best help patients from the position of a health educator and support staff role.

What are your plans after your year of service?

I'm not quite sure yet. I know I want to continue working in the field I am in, and feel well prepared to be able to do so.