



President's Commission on White House Fellowships · Summer 2014 Newsletter

President Barack Obama meets with President's Commission on White House Fellowships & Fellows

PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION — This January, the President's Commission on White House Fellowships met with President Barack Obama during its mid-year meeting. It was the first mid-year meeting led by the new Chair, Mary Zients, and we welcomed four new Commissioners. Though the weather was snowy enough to elicit closing federal government offices, most of the Commissioners enthusiastically attended. It was a great opportunity for the Commissioners to hear, directly from the President, the great value the White House Fellowship holds in enriching this nation's leadership. The President engaged the Commissioners in a lively discussion about the future of the program, and one of our veteran Commissioners, whose service has spanned several administrations, noted that the meeting was notably unique and inspiring.

The mid-year meeting was very successful; it was a crucial moment for the Commissioners to reflect on the state of the program, note recent accomplishments, and discuss upcoming program components. The Commissioners persevered through the stormy weather, and met with a partner from Boston Consulting Group to discuss a pro-bono study to improve the program, and with our current Fellows. The meeting served as an important opportunity for White House Fellows to inform the Commissioners of the successes and challenges they have encountered throughout their placement year. The Commissioners also hosted a special guest for lunch, presidential historian Michael Beschloss. Mr. Beschloss's perspective on the various presidential administrations was extremely enlightening. The Commissioners ended the meeting with renewed energy, and look forward to Selection Weekend in June.

WHITE HOUSE FELLOWS — President Barack Obama met the 2013-2014 White House Fellows in the Roosevelt Room and later, invited them to visit the Oval Office. In advance of the meeting, the President received summaries of the policy proposals the Fellows had written in their White House Fellowship applications, as well as the issues they work on day to day. This year's class is working together on several projects areas involving cross-agency collaboration, such as Strengthening Communities, Technology and Entrepreneurship, Veterans Issue Areas, and the President's Management Agenda.

The President was briefed on their work to strengthen communities, which includes Choice Neighborhoods, Promise Zones, the Task Force on Expanding Community Service, and mostly recently, My Brother's Keeper Initiative. Within technology and entrepreneurship, Fellows collaborated on projects such as the National Nanotechnology Initiative and the Materials Genome Initiative, and other key initiatives, such as Joining Forces and Improving Health Outcomes. They have also engaged with the Administration's Cross Agency Priority (CAP) Goals to work on issues related to science commercialization and creating a culture of excellence in the federal workforce.

The conversation with the President was wide ranging and a truly special experience. The topics were balanced between leadership and policy and the President's personal experiences. Leadership questions ranged from how and when the President makes decisions to how he prioritizes his time across so many important issues; personal questions included his role as a working father and his progression from Illinois State Senate to the Presidency. The Fellows are grateful for this conversation that they'll always remember.



President Barack Obama and Commissioners in the Oval Office on a snowy January afternoon at the mid-year meeting.



President Barack Obama and the Class of 2013-2014 after their meeting in the Roosevelt Room.

A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Commissioners, Fellows, Alumni, and Friends,

The President's Commission on White House Fellowships will turn fifty years old on October 4, 2014. And for the last five years, I have had the honor and privilege to direct this unique and prestigious program. As the Fellowship embarks upon such an important milestone, it is with enormous pride and gratitude that I also make a transition.

I am forever grateful to President Obama for appointing me to direct the White House Fellows Program, which has enabled me to work with an incredibly impressive group of Commissioners and White House Fellows. Under the leadership of Ambassador John Phillips during the Obama Administration's first term, and now under the thoughtful direction of the newly appointed Chair, Mary Zients, as well as the ongoing guidance of Vice Chair Cheryl Dorsey, the President's Commission on White House Fellowships has and will continue to flourish.

President Lyndon Johnson saw the potential of America's future generations and understood the importance of engaging young leaders in public service. It is a profound legacy that President Obama has continued to invest in and embrace – because it works. It introduces talented and diverse leaders to the public sector and provides them the opportunity to be more effective change agents for the rest of their lives. Since its inception, the Fellowship has always supported a relatively small cohort of fewer than 20 Fellows per year. Yet, it has always had a much larger impact. The Fellows have multiplied their impact by working together across agency lines. It has been remarkable to witness the creativity, innovation, and impact of each Class of Fellows.

Each year, we hear from hundreds of leaders who share their leadership lessons. Many Washington veterans like David Brooks and John Podesta comment on how energizing it is to meet with our Fellows. Additionally, over 100 civic leaders across the country volunteer their time and expertise to interview Regional Candidates, helping to identify the most promising National Finalists who may eventually become Fellows. Each year, our Fellows work with hundreds upon hundreds of civil service and military leaders as well as political appointees who are working tirelessly to challenge our system and make it better. The almost 700 alumni remain actively involved and are consciously giving back. Many have returned to public service, appointed to critical positions in the Obama Administration. Consistent with the mission of the program, most have returned to their communities to become more effective leaders. No matter how important they become, alumni like General Colin Powell support the development of current White House Fellows because the experience meant so much to them.

During my tenure, I am proud of my staff and the work we have been able to do together. We increased outreach to groups that had been historically underrepresented. Our applications tripled in the first year of the Obama administration and the numbers have stayed consistently higher than in the ten years prior. Last year was only the second year in the history of the program that we had gender balance in the White House Fellows Class.

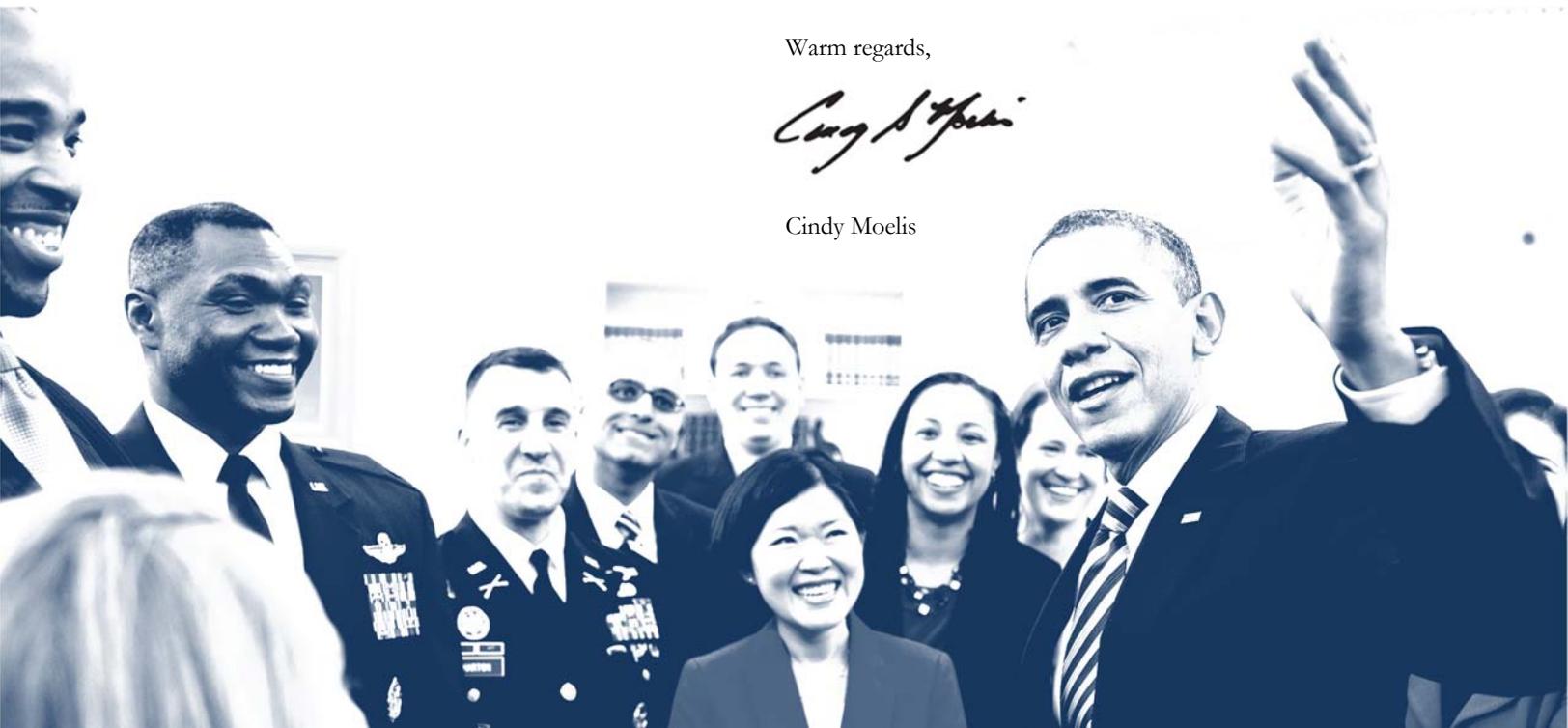
In the spring of 2009, I began my journey with the White House Fellowship with a note of thanks. Today, as I near the end of my tenure as Director, I must again express my sincerest gratitude. It has been inspiring to watch each class of Fellows grow and develop as stronger leaders. Members of the Classes of 2009 through 2014 have already started to make an impact. Whether it's running for Governor, rising in the ranks of the military, or advising our country's leaders like the Vice President or Secretary of State, White House Fellows continue to embody public service leadership.

I look forward to hearing about these leaders with great personal interest and a sense of pride. Thank you for the support that each of you have demonstrated for me, for the program, and for our nation.

Warm regards,



Cindy Moelis



WHF Class of 2013-2014

PLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS: This year, we were able to place two White House Fellows at the Pentagon. While these Fellows work in close proximity to one another, their day-to-day experiences are quite different. Read their placement reports below to find out more.



MOLLY SULLIVAN — My placement is at the Department of Navy, working for the Secretary of the Navy and the Deputy Chief Management Officer. I begin most work days by attending the Secretary's morning briefing and spend my days working on energy, information technology, and organizational strategy.

In November, I had the opportunity to accompany The Secretary on a trip to Spain, Greece, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Qatar, Burundi, and Portugal. I met foreign leaders, ambassadors, and sailors and marines. The trip was a sine curve of per capita income and I came away thinking a lot about the interplay between national security and economic development and with a new perspective on the Middle East and Africa.

In January, I went back to my home in the Silicon Valley, with Secretary Mabus, as his advisor on energy and technology. Since then, I have had the opportunity to work with venture capitalists and energy and technology entrepreneurs from the government side of the table.

My reason for becoming a White House Fellow was to better understand and help bridge the gaps between business, government, and technology, and my placement at the Department of Navy has been well suited for achieving that goal.

DAN FEEHAN —

Throughout my year at the Department of Defense, I have had some incredible opportunities to participate in policymaking and witness the decision-making of both the Secretary of Defense and Deputy Secretary of Defense. Two experiences in particular have stood out as my high-lights. Following the mass shooting at the Washington Navy Yard, Secretary Hagel gave me the opportunity to be part of an Independent Review Team to look at the policy implications of that incident and how policy might mitigate workplace violence in the future. I participated in the full development of policy from idea formulation to implementation and witnessed how a large organization like DoD can respond to challenges.

Secondly, Deputy Secretary Work entrusted me with writing his speech to honor the nation's most recent Medal of Honor winner, Army Sergeant Kyle White. This process taught me the importance of communications, both inside the government and to the country-at-large, and the amplification that words from senior leaders can have. As an Army veteran myself, it was an incredible opportunity to pay tribute to this young former soldier and ensure that the honor we paid him in ceremony tried to measure up to the immense courage he displayed in Afghanistan on our behalf.



April was a truly international month for the 2013 – 2014 White House Fellow class. Immediately following our return from an incredible trip to Rome, Italy, we had the opportunity to interact with the Embassy of Canada and the Action Canada fellowship program.

On Monday April 14th, our class was invited to dine for lunch at the Canadian embassy with Canadian government officials and representatives from the Action Canada program. Ms. Katherine Baird, the Canadian embassy's Minister of Congressional, Public, and Intergovernmental Affairs, hosted us for lunch in the lovely Niagara Room, overlooking a scenic vista of the U.S. Capitol and National Mall. Senior members of the Canadian embassy staff briefed us on their roles and responsibilities and on key points about the Canadian-American relationship, especially concerning the importance of commerce and trade between our nations. Ms. Cathy Beehan, the founding CEO of Action Canada, was in attendance along with five Action Canada fellows from previous classes. Similar to White House Fellows, Action Canada fellows are young leaders chosen from all sectors of society, including business, science, government, and academia. They participate in an 11-month long leader development and cross-country program which they undertake in addition to their regular work, graduate or professional studies. This group of Action Canada fellows was in Washington for an alumni conference and international policy trip.

We also had the good fortune to host the Action Canada fellows and their staff at the White House Fellows office for breakfast the following morning. After we had all done our standard introductions, Cindy Moelis, Director of our Fellowship, invited the Action Canada fellows to ask us questions. What ensued was a lively discussion that illuminated both similarities and differences between our countries and between our fellowship programs. In the space of an hour, we covered American federal-state versus Canadian federal-province government relationships, differences in American and Canadian federal science policy development, the value of domestic and international travel within both fellowships to the educational value of each program, international investment and cross border trade between the United States and Canada, among many other interesting topics. Overall, it was a great experience for both the White House Fellows and the Action Canada fellows and we formed a set of cross-border relationships that will last long into the future.

By Cara LaPointe

“When in Rome . . .” became an oft-quoted phrase for our recent policy trip to Rome, Italy. Hosted by Ambassador John Phillips and Embassy Rome, we had an incredible policy trip to Rome and did our best to “do as the Romans do” for a week. Our goal for the policy trip was to take a deep dive into Italy to gain a high level understanding of the politics, policies, and people leading Italy and to see the U.S. through the eyes of the Italians. We sought to better understand public service and leadership from an international context, hoping to sprinkle a dash of Italiano into our own continued growth and development as leaders.

Our trip focused on exploring Italy and its domestic challenges, Italy on the international stage and the U.S. Italian relationship, and the view of the U.S. from an international perspective. Domestically in Italy, we had robust meetings with former Italian Prime Ministers, locally elected officials, judges and prosecutors from the criminal justice system, and influential Italian CEOs and private sector leaders. From an international perspective, we received an overview of the U.N. agencies based in Rome and other key international agencies serving developing countries. We also dis-

cussed at length Italy and its role in the E.U. and Italy’s presence on the international stage especially as it related to being a U.S. ally. Lastly, open discussions with Embassy Rome, the U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See, the Ambassador to the U.S. Mission to the U.N. Agencies in Rome, and the American Academy of Rome allowed us to gain a perspective on U.S. Diplomacy and strategic relationships abroad.

Overall, the trip helped us to gain insights as leaders as we deliberately considered the grand challenges of another country’s domestic and international agenda against the backdrop of the underlying cultural and social attitudes. In the end, becoming “Romans” for a week politically and culturally (as we certainly did our best to embrace the pasta, gelato, and wine of Italy) strengthened our understanding of the fabric and character of America. We hope to take lessons learned and integrate them in our continued development. Undoubtedly, our fellowship year and our friendships with each other are much stronger now that we can look to each other and say, “When in Rome . . .”

By Victor Wu



2013-2014 White House Fellows pose with former Chair and current Ambassador to Italy, the Honorable John Phillips at his home in Villa Taverna in Rome, Italy.

Italy Policy Trip

Education Report

SPEAKER SEMINARS

- ◆ Susan Eisenhower, The Eisenhower Group
- ◆ David Plouffe
- ◆ Senator Olympia Snowe and Secretary Dan Glickman, Bipartisan Policy Center
- ◆ Attorney General Eric Holder, U.S. Department of Justice
- ◆ Gwen Ifill, PBS NewsHour and Washington Week
- ◆ General Colin Powell
- ◆ Administrator Charles Bolden, NASA
- ◆ Jason Furman, Council of Economic Advisors
- ◆ Cecilia Munoz, Domestic Policy Council
- ◆ Gene Sperling, National Economic Council
- ◆ John Holdren, Office of Science and Technology Policy
- ◆ Secretary Donald Rumsfeld
- ◆ Chairman Ben Bernanke, Federal Reserve Board
- ◆ John McKay, former U.S. Attorney
- ◆ Dr. Jim Kim, World Bank
- ◆ General Martin Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
- ◆ Administrator Rajiv Shah, USAID
- ◆ First Lady Michelle Obama
- ◆ Secretary Arne Duncan
- ◆ Chris Lu
- ◆ Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- ◆ Secretary Anthony Foxx, U.S. Department of Transportation
- ◆ Judge M. Margaret McKeown, Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals
- ◆ Senator Tim Wirth, UN Foundation
- ◆ Senator Tom Daschle
- ◆ Administrator Gina McCarthy, Environmental Protection Agency
- ◆ Secretary Chuck Hagel, U.S. Department of Defense
- ◆ Sylvia Mathews Burwell, Office of Management and Budget
- ◆ Secretary Tom Vilsack, U.S. Department of Agriculture
- ◆ James Comey, Director of the FBI
- ◆ Jay Carney, White House Press Secretary
- ◆ Scott Gould, CareFirst, & Michelle Flournoy, Boston Consulting Group
- ◆ Alice Rivlin, Brookings Institution

- ◆ Melody Barnes, Melody Barnes Solutions
- ◆ Theodore Olson, Gibson Dunn
- ◆ Patty Stonesifer, Martha's Table
- ◆ Ambassador David Thorne, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of State and Former US Ambassador to the Italian Republic
- ◆ Denis McDonough, White House Chief of Staff
- ◆ Paoli Mastrolilli, La Stampa
- ◆ Helene Gayle, CARE USA
- ◆ His Excellency Claudio Bisogniero, Italian Ambassador to the United States
- ◆ Valerie Jarrett, Senior Advisor and Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs and Public Engagement
- ◆ Jeff Eggers, Senior Advisor to the President and Senior Director for Afghanistan and Pakistan
- ◆ VADM Phil Cullom, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Fleet Readiness and Logistics

EDUCATION EVENTS

- ◆ White House Fellows Orientation and Retreat at Gettysburg, PA
- ◆ Monthly Business Meetings
- ◆ World Bank Tour
- ◆ First Quarter Retreat
- ◆ Situation Room Tour
- ◆ Secret Service Training Facility Tour
- ◆ Mid-Year Retreat
- ◆ Mid-Year Check-ins at White House Mess with Principals and Supervisors
- ◆ Career Transitions Meeting with White House Counsel and Presidential Personnel
- ◆ National Archives and Records Administration Tour and meeting with the Archivist of the United States

COMMUNITY & SERVICE EVENTS

- ◆ WAEC 2nd Annual Run/Walk
- ◆ Family Picnic
- ◆ DC Central Kitchen
- ◆ Fisher House Food Preparation for Families of Wounded Warriors, DC VA Medical Center
- ◆ Bowling at Lucky Strike
- ◆ Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service
- ◆ Chinese New Year Celebration with WHF Family and Friends

- ◆ KIPP School: Spring Cleaning
 - ◆ Martha's Table: Taste of Spring
- ## **SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES**

- ◆ Spouses and Significant Others' Lunch at the White House Mess
- ◆ Kennedy Center Performances
- ◆ White House Holiday Reception
- ◆ Truman Bowling Alley WHF Holiday Party
- ◆ White House East Wing Tour for Fellows and Family
- ◆ White House Press Briefings
- ◆ Easter Egg Roll for Fellows with Children
- ◆ Spring Garden Tour
- ◆ "Salon Dinner" hosted by Jeff and Mary Zients

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

- ◆ America's Wine: The Legacy of Prohibition Event at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History (John DeLuca)
 - ◆ White House Fellows Alumni Association Annual Meeting
 - ◆ Rumsfeld Foundation Central Asia Fellows Reception
 - ◆ Echoing Green Community Night Reception (Cheryl Dorsey)
 - ◆ Korn Ferry Leadership Assessment (during Business Meeting)
 - ◆ Panel Discussion: ABA Division for Public Education, 4th Annual National Civics and Law Academy (Shirlethia Franklin, Brent Cohen, Victor Wu)
 - ◆ Panel Discussion: Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress (Victor Wu, Debbie McCoy, Brent Cohen, Robert McFarlin)
 - ◆ Eisenhower Institute: Women in Leadership Breakfast (Shirlethia Franklin, Charina Choi, Cara LaPointe, Maura Sullivan)
 - ◆ Action Canada: Visit to the Canadian Embassy, Briefing with Senior Embassy Officials, and Breakfast with Action Canada Fellows
 - ◆ Breaking the Mold: How Creativity, Design and Imagination can Transform the Future (Optional Event at the Pentagon)
 - ◆ "An Evening of Fellowships" Hosted by Dr. Harvey V. Fineberg, President of the Institute of Medicine
 - ◆ March of Dimes Gourmet Gala
- ## **POLICY TRIPS**
- ◆ Foreign Policy Trip to Rome, Italy
 - ◆ Domestic Policy Trip to NYC

The Selection Process

White House Fellows alumni, regional judges, and staff worked hard this year to ensure that the nonpartisan selection process continues to select candidates with the most promise to progress to the National Finals. In February, our alumni hosted several reading groups across the country — every submitted application went through a rigorous reading process to ensure that each one was read with care. Without engaged alumni, this process would not be possible. We remain very grateful for their efforts.

In April, civic leaders throughout the country came together in nine cities to interview the top 108 candidates. The U.S. Attorney joined us in Florida, the President of American Airlines participated in Dallas, and other impressive leaders from diverse backgrounds and professions donated their time and expertise to our process. We are especially grateful to the alumni and friends of the program that chair each panel (listed below). The regional dinners in each city were extremely welcoming and conducive to introducing the candidates to the judges. The interviews were held in various locations: law firms, not-for-profit offices, and governmental and educational institutions. The integrity and professionalism of the judges in each city truly captures the exceptional nature of our community.



Regional Panelists pose for a photo after the San Francisco Regional Panel.



Dinner tables await the Regional Panelists and candidates in Dallas, Texas .

We would like to thank the following individuals who have played a leadership role and have been exceptionally helpful to our selection process this year, as Regional Panel hosts and Reading Group hosts. Our sincerest thank you goes out to all of them!

Dear Hosts, Thank You!

REGIONAL PANEL HOSTS

Boston, MA	Roger S. Berkowitz Hubie Jones
Chicago, IL	Sonny Garg Jesse H. Ruiz
Dallas, TX	Jeremy Strick Myron E. (Mike) Ullman
Los Angeles, CA	Susan Faith Friedman The Honorable M. Marga- McKeown Jane Olson
Miami, FL	Eduardo J. Padrón
New York, NY	Dr. Lisa Belzberg Deborah Bial
San Francisco, CA	John A. De Luca Clara J. Shin
Washington, DC	Deborah Ratner Salzberg Richard D. Stamberger Katherine Brittain Bradley

READING GROUP HOSTS

Ann Arbor, MI	Martha Darling Gil Omenn
Boston, MA	Kristine Langdon
Denver, CO	Gail Klapper Steve McConahey
Los Angeles, CA	Douglas Kmiec
New York, NY	Al Cho Dave Chokshi
Sarasota, FL	Jim Padilla
Seattle, WA	Steve Hill Nelson Dong
Washington, DC	Debra Kurshan Teresa Schwartz Ziad Haider

Announcements

On May 20, 2014, President Barack Obama announced Jennifer Yeager Kaplan as the next Director of the President's Commission on White House Fellowships.

President Obama said, "Jenny's leadership and experience make her uniquely qualified for this position. I'm proud to announce Jenny as the next Director of the President's Commission on White House Fellowships and look forward to welcoming her back to the Administration and working with her in the months and years to come."

Jennifer Yeager Kaplan, Director, President's Commission on White House Fellowships

Jennifer Yeager Kaplan is Vice President for Corporate Engagement and the Program Officer for the 10,000 Small Businesses Initiative at Goldman Sachs, a position she has held since 2011. From 2009 to 2011, she served in the White House as Deputy Director of the White House Council on Women and Girls and as Special Assistant to the Director in the Office of Public Engagement. She also worked in the Personnel Department of the Obama-Biden Transition Project. Previously, Ms. Kaplan was the Tri-State Finance Director for Obama for America from 2007 to 2008, and Co-National Finance Director of Hopefund from 2005 to 2007. In 2004, she was Co-National Finance Director of Obama for Illinois. Ms. Kaplan received a B.S. in Business Administration from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

We are also delighted to welcome two additional staff members to our WHF team: **Jennifer Paolino** and **Rashida Kamal**. Jennifer joined our team as the new Associate Director for Education this February. Rashida has been serving as the Special Assistant to the Director since January. We are very excited to have them on board.

Sophie Kim Goldmacher was promoted to the position of Deputy Director. Congratulations to her!

Two of our Fellows, **Daniel Feehan** and **Brent Cohen**, recently became fathers. Daniel's son, Declan, was born in January, and Brent's son, Benjamin, was born in April.

This spring, we have been very fortunate to have the help of our White House Interns, **Jeschamma Augustin** and **Ryan Greenburg**. They have been an essential part of our team, and are pictured below.



We would also like to welcome **Marla Trinidad** and **Kevin Zeithaml**, our summer interns.

Outreach

DO YOU KNOW A FUTURE WHITE HOUSE FELLOW?

It's not too soon to be thinking about the next selection cycle! Alumni are our best ambassadors and there are many ways to support our recruitment and selection efforts.

HOST AN OUTREACH EVENT –

If you'd like to host an outreach event, please let us know how we can best support you. We also welcome any suggestions on outreach and recruitment opportunities through your professional and social networks.

HOST A READING GROUP –

Reading groups can be a nice opportunity for regional alumni to reconnect, or for classes to host a mini reunion. We are always looking for regional diversity among our reading groups, so we hope you'll consider serving as a host!

SERVE AS A READER – Reading is the critical first stage in the selection process. We hope you'll volunteer to read applications during the series of reading groups we will coordinate throughout the country and at the White House Fellows office in Washington, DC.

Finally, if your professional bios do not already note your affiliation with the White House Fellows Program, we hope you will consider highlighting your connection. We have found that references like these are extremely helpful in expanding our reach to broader audiences.

If you have any suggestions and/or are interested in participating in any of the above, please feel free to contact Sophie Kim Goldmacher at sgoldmacher@whf.eop.gov.

About the WHF Program

The White House Fellows Program is a non-partisan program that offers exceptional young leaders firsthand experience working at the highest levels of the Federal government.

For more information, please visit:

www.whitehouse.gov/fellows

Please send any comments, submissions or other newsletter related communication to:

WhiteHouseFellows@who.eop.gov