

FALL 2010

WHITE HOUSE FELLOWS

Leadership & Public Service



“And in my own life, in my own small way, I've tried to give back to this country that has given me so much. Because I believe that each of us—no matter what our age or background or walk of life—each of us has something to contribute to the life of this nation.” ~First Lady Michelle Obama

Welcome 2010-2011 Class of White House Fellows!

Ms. Samar Ali
Department of Homeland Security

Dr. Pat Basu
Export-Import Bank of the United States

Mr. R. Erich Caulfield, Ph.D.
Domestic Policy Council

Lieutenant Colonel Jason Dempsey
Office of the First Lady

Mr. Harley Feldbaum, Ph.D.
Agency for International Development

Dr. Thomas Fisher
Health and Human Services

Lieutenant Commander Bill Gallagher
Office of Management and Budget

Lieutenant Commander Holly Harrison
NASA

Ms. Erica Jeffries
Environmental Protection Agency

Dr. Rachel Thornton
Housing and Urban Development

Ms. Kubby Rashid, Ph.D.
Small Business Administration

Mr. Jeffrey Prescott
Office of the Vice President



Fellows meet with Chief of Staff, Peter Rouse.

Lieutenant Commander Sunny Ramchandani
Office of Personnel Management

ORIENTATION TRIP REPORT

Although the WHF Class of 2010-2011 officially began its year with orientation, all of us had started to develop close bonds during Placement Week in July. Not only did we share countless interview stories, we were also introduced to the enormous amount of support that the staff and alumni would provide us. Placement Week and its events helped set the stage for orientation – as all of us already felt very comfortable talking about very personal issues and professional aspirations.



Lt. Commander
Sunny Ramchandani,
US Navy Physician

The week kicked off with a logistical meeting at the WHF office and a lunch during which we were formally introduced to our respective agencies. After beginning the “checking in” process and handling a few administrative matters, we were off the next day for Pennsylvania.

Our time in Gettysburg began with a lunch with Susan Eisenhower, who discussed an insightful way of analyzing presidential leadership by appreciating the corresponding currents that simultaneously impact America’s history. Her thoughts on how presidents (both Republican and Democrat) have guided the country through “transformative times” gave us a unique perspective on how to better understand modern day politics.



Fellows participate in ropes course activities.

The ropes course was a fun, symbolic way to preview how we would all be asked to go out of our “comfort zones” throughout the year. A few of us created some friendly competition with some of the challenges, and everyone had a great time in the summer sun. Another highlight was the Gettysburg battlefield tour, where we were able to see where many critical events occurred. Our class read Michael Shaara’s “Killer Angels” prior to orientation, thus facilitating in-depth leadership discussions and a broader understanding of how the pivotal Gettysburg battle impacted the Civil War.

Interspersed throughout the week were Committee Meetings on the location of our trips, what community service activities we would undertake, and which speakers we hoped to invite. Yet the most insightful moments for all of us were during the Fellows’ Forums. This year, each Fellow was allowed to talk about any topic of his/her choice, including both personal stories and/or professional insights. The laughs, tears, and hugs that resulted from these talks brought us closer – and helped our class become a close-knit family.

Later in September, our class was welcomed to DC at a reception hosted by John Phillips, the Commission Chair, and his wife Linda Douglass. Their home was the perfect venue at which Commissioners, Fellows’ Principals, and other influential individuals from DC were all introduced to our class. The reception was a clear highlight of the first few weeks, allowing us to bounce ideas off many current political and media leaders.

If orientation and the first few weeks are any indication of what is to come – it would be safe to say that all of us in the current class are tremendously excited about the months ahead. A special “thank you” goes out to the entire WHF Staff: Cindy, Natalie, Erika, Pandoria, Danielle, and Melissa for doing an amazing job in making our initial experiences so very special.

- Contributed by Sunny Ramchandani

LETTER FROM PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

**THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON**

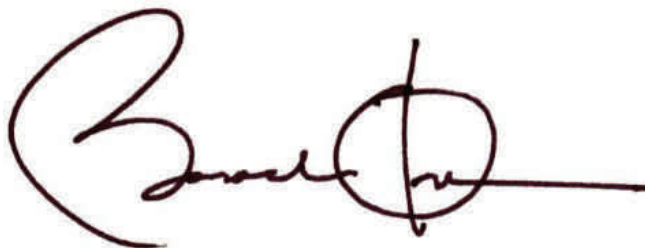
October 8, 2010

I send greetings to all those celebrating the 45th anniversary of the White House Fellows program and I thank you for participating in the 2nd annual “Legacy of Service Day.”

Michelle and I deeply support the ideals of the White House Fellows program. Its mission—to encourage active citizenship and service to our Nation—is as important today as it was when President Lyndon Johnson established the program in 1964. Both the President’s Commission on White House Fellowships and the White House Fellows Alumni Association continue to play an important role in preparing and shaping America’s young leaders for the challenges of our new century.

I commend all those taking part in a day of service to help build a playground for school children in Washington, D.C. By investing in the community, you are setting a strong example for future generations and leading our country to a brighter day. I hope you continue to encourage and inspire others to follow in your footsteps.

I applaud your ongoing commitment to leadership and public service, and I wish you all the best on this special occasion.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Barack Obama", with a large, stylized initial "B" at the beginning.

PLACEMENT UPDATE

It was just over a year ago that I received permission from the Army to compete for a White House Fellowship. At the time I had an 'office' in a dusty plywood building on Forward Operating Base (FOB) Shank in Afghanistan's Logar province. The FOB sat at just over 6200 feet, which was great for expanding one's lungs, but not necessarily one's perspective, and I wasn't spending a lot of time thinking about grand plans for my future. So as I began to work on my application I envisioned that the Fellowship, if I got it, would entail working on security policy related to Afghanistan, just at a higher level.



*Lt. Colonel Jason
Dempsey,
Office of the First Lady*

Over November and early December, I started drafting my essays with the goal of being done with them before we redeployed: I didn't want to have anything 'to do' when I got back to my family in January. But this was harder than I thought because I quickly realized that "I'm not really sure" probably wasn't an adequate response to the question of what I wanted to do with my life. This was the first indication that I was in for something that would challenge me more than I expected.

As the application process moved along, I slowly realized the breadth of opportunity offered by the White House Fellowship. I also came to understand that I was not only being asked who I was and where I wanted to go in life, but was I willing to take a risk in order to broaden my horizons? This process of self-examination culminated with selection week, which presented an incredibly diverse range of options for placement. While I was thankful for the breadth of choices, I faced some tough decisions as I looked across options that spanned diverse policy areas including service, energy, and administration (I'd be remiss not to give kudos to Cindy and the rest of the WHF staff for managing an epic week of scheduling challenges). Helping navigate these tough decisions were the 12 other Fellows of this year's class, who have already proven to be a supportive group of friends.

Ultimately, I ended up in the Office of the First Lady. Structurally and demographically, it would be hard to imagine a place more different from FOB Shank than the East Wing of the White House. On the one hand

I'm used to seeing guys with guns hanging out in the hallway, but I'm still trying to figure out where all the ladies hide their chewing tobacco. Cultural differences aside, the pace and energy of the office are nothing short of inspiring, and I have already learned a tremendous amount about the art of policy-making. Luckily we have a First Lady who is deeply committed to military families, so I have been able to immediately engage on a set of issues central to my career while also getting a feel for the nuances of national-level politics. Over the next year, I expect military-family outreach to be my primary focus, but I will also be working on issues related to community service and education. It promises to be a great year.



*White House Fellows and their families tour
the White House..*

-Contributed by Jason Dempsey

WHITE HOUSE FELLOWS' FAMILIES

Transitioning your family to a new job and, in some cases, a new city is always a challenge. This is especially true if your significant other is a White House Fellow. The program tries to support the families of WHF by including them in social events and invitations to special events at the White House. Since the beginning of this class year, family members have been invited to dinner at two Commissioners' homes, Debbie Harmon and John Phillips, as well as the homes of Fellows Pat Basu and Jeff Prescott. They have toured the White House, watched a Marine One departure, and will have lunch at the White House Mess with Director Cindy Moelis.

Throughout the year, the families are provided opportunities to participate, but the tradition started by the Class of 1999-2000 is worth highlighting. The Class of 1999-2000 established the Elaine Fund in honor of Elaine Cook-Price, wife of Fellow Barrye Price. Elaine was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer during her husband's fellowship. She personified the importance of families to the program. This fund provides \$1,000 per year to be used by each class for family



events. Last year, the Class of 2009-2010 planned a picnic and a behind-the-scenes tour of the DC zoo. This year, the Fellows and their families attended a Nationals baseball game. A special thanks to the alumni who set up this fund.

Left (clockwise): Tom Fisher, Pat and Erika Basu, Erica Jeffries, Jason Dempsey, Holly Harrison, Erich Caulfield, and Sunny Ramchandani take in a Nationals baseball game.

WHF STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

Erika Henderson, Deputy Director

Erika Henderson, previously the Education Program Director, was promoted to Deputy Director. Many of you will be working closely with her on the selection process for the Class of 2011.

Natalie Bookey-Baker, Education Program Director

Natalie Bookey-Baker joined the Fellows staff after working for the Chief of Staff in the Office to the First Lady. Prior to her work for the First Lady, Natalie worked for the Finance Committees for the Presidential Inaugural Committee and Obama for America.

Danielle Jimenez, Staff Associate

Danielle Jimenez is the Staff Associate. Before joining the staff, Danielle was a Spring 2010 White House intern. Danielle graduated from Yale University in May 2009, and she is originally from Los Angeles, CA.

Melissa Youssef, Fall 2010 Intern

Melissa Youssef is a graduate from Westmont College with aspirations of becoming a Constitutional lawyer, fueled by her first DC experience in Sen. Feinstein's press office. She served as Head Delegate at NYC's NMUN, awarded for implementing peer mentoring programs, and was a youth-empowerment advocate with the Miss America Organization. She also is trilingual and traveled to 17 countries these past two years.

EDUCATION EVENTS AND SPEAKERS

Orientation, Gettysburg, PA | August 31-September 3

Ms. Susan Eisenhower, Chairman Emeritus, Eisenhower Institute | August 31

Ms. Sonal Shah, Deputy Assistant to the President, Director of the Office of Social Innovation and Civic Participation | September 12

Judge Leon and Mr. John Podesta, Founder, President and CEO, Center for American Progress | September 14

Mr. Christopher Lu, Assistant to the President and Cabinet Secretary | September 16

John Phillips' Welcome Reception for the Class of 2010-2011 | September 22

Mr. Peter Rouse, Chief of Staff | September 23

White House Tour, East Wing | September 25

Mr. Jonathan Alter, Senior Editor and Columnist, Newsweek | September 28

Chancellor Michelle Rhee, District of Columbia Public Schools | September 30

Dr. Ezekiel Emanuel, Senior Advisor for Health Policy, OMB | October 5

Marine One Departure | October 6

Community Service Event at Food & Friends | October 6

Secretary Shaun Donovan, Department of Housing and Urban Development | October 7

Mr. Jamie Dimon, Chairman and CEO, JP Morgan Chase | October 7

Administrator Bolden, NASA | October 12

Mr. Richard Wolffe, Journalist | October 15

Mr. David Sanger, New York Times | October 19

Alumni Welcome Reception, Willard Intercontinental Hotel | October 21

712 Jackson Place Open House Reception | October 22

Legacy of Service Day | October 23

Legacy of Leadership Reception and Dinner | October 23

White House Press Briefings | October

UPCOMING EVENTS

Secretary Gates, Department of Defense

Meet the Press

Senator Tom Daschle

Secretary Ken Salazar, Department of the Interior

Secretary Steven Chu, Department of Energy

Attorney General Eric Holder, Department of Justice

Ms. Cokie Roberts, Senior News Analyst, ABC

Senator Tim Wirth

This Week with Christiane Amanpour

Domestic Policy Trip, Seattle | November 8-12

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

2009-2010 Class Update

Laura Bacon

Laura is currently the Acting Director of "Clean Energy Education & Empowerment" (C3E), an initiative she co-designed while a White House Fellow. She moved to Princeton, NJ and continues to work for DOE from the Princeton Plasma Physics Lab. Laura recently joined and started performing with an orchestra in Princeton, and she also played cello in the wedding of fellow Fellow Sarah Johnson!

Jonathan Finer

Jon has extended his fellowship year at the White House and continues to work on National Security issues.

Sarah Stewart Johnson

Sarah and John got married in September. She's still at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and plans to stay until next spring, at which point she'll return to the Society of Fellows at Harvard.

Robert Lyman

Robert has begun work on Air Force strategy in the office of the Department of the Air Force's Deputy Chief Management Officer. His wife Nancy and daughter Ava are doing well. They are also expecting another addition to the Lyman family, due in April 2010. They are all very excited.

Emil Michael

Emil is currently a Special Assistant for the Secretary of Defense helping to lead a major efficiency effort aimed at changing the culture of the Department into a more cost-conscious and effective organization. Emil is still living in Washington DC, but he is excited about moving on to his next venture in a few months.

Anish Mahajan

Anish is an Assistant Professor in Residence at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA.

Mehret Mandefro

Mehret is the VA's first Senior Medical Historian in the Office of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. She is also part time faculty at the George Washington School of Public Health and Health Services in the Department of Health Policy.

Kendric Robbins

Ken is currently an Army Fellow at the State Department working in the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization. He takes command of 1-2 Stryker Cavalry Squadron in July of 2011.

Adam Taylor

Adam just completed a month-long speaking tour for his first book *Mobilizing Hope: Faith-Inspired Activism for a Post Civil Rights Generation* and starts October 25 as the Vice President at Advocacy for World Vision USA, a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice.

OPEN HOUSE, OCTOBER 22, 2010



*Please join the
White House Fellows
for an Open House Reception*

*Friday, October 22, 2010
4:30-6:00 pm
at
712 Jackson Place, NW*

Special thanks to:

- John DeLuca for his generous donation of wine for this event.
- All alumni who donated a book to the White House Fellows Office.
- Robin Wilson Home, Compel Furniture, 567 Framing, and Cubicle Mart for their generous support in our historic office renovation.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Recruitment Events

This fall, outreach events will be held around the country. Planning is underway in the following cities:

Ann Arbor, MI **New York, NY**
Chicago, IL **Seattle, WA**
Nashville, TN

If you are interested in hosting an additional event or attending, please contact Diane Yu at Diane.yu@nyu.edu or 212-998-2340 or Erika Henderson at ehenderson@whf.eop.gov. Watch your email for dates and more details.

Recruitment Webcast

On December 8, 2010 from 12:00-1:00 pm, we will be hosting a live web cast, "Everything You Wanted to Know About the White House Fellows Program." This will be a great opportunity for current as well as future applicants to learn more about the Program. This new initiative is being hosted through the generous support of WHF Commissioner Steve Gunderson and the Council on Foundations. Please note that more detailed information will be posted on our website at www.whitehouse.gov/about/fellows.

Reading Applications

Please volunteer to read and evaluate applicants for the 2011-2012 Class of White House Fellows. Reading is easy and can be done in a group or as an individual. We would be delighted to have volunteers host a reading group. Reading groups are a fun way to reconnect with WHF Alumni and assist with maintaining the rich legacy of the program. If you are interested in helping, please email Erika Henderson at ehenderson@whf.eop.gov.

ABOUT THE WHITE HOUSE FELLOWS PROGRAM

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

Fellowship Selection Criteria:

- A record of remarkable professional achievement early in one's career.
- Evidence of strong leadership skills and the potential for further growth.
 - A demonstrated commitment to public service.
- The knowledge and skills necessary to contribute successfully at the highest levels of the Federal government.

The President's Commission on White House Fellowships

Phone: 202-395-4522 Fax: 202-395-6179

Please send any comments, submissions or other newsletter-related communication to
WhiteHouseFellows@whf.eop.gov