

Fairfax County Youth Leadership Alumni News

Inaugural Edition

Welcome to the First Issue

Volume 1, Issue 1

November 16, 2005

Remember the growing camaraderie among your fellow Youth Leadership representatives stemming from the sharing of "war stories" from your summer internships? That full day meeting in July when you finally got to relax and get to know your fellow participants better and to appreciate what you learned on the job? Remember the group decision making room where interesting (and sometimes somewhat inappropriate) comments were shared anonymously about the program and the "hot" participants?

The YLP class of 2005 is fresh from that experience and they are busily putting together middle school



Youth
Leadership
Graduation
January 26, 2005

presentations in addition to working on the rest of their hectic senior year schedules. As we finish the fifth year of the YLP program, we find ourselves reflecting back upon previous classes, and important and hilarious moments from the past five years of the Youth

Leadership Program. The program has grown over these years to include a new teacher coordinator, Ms. Eileen Noonan, who joins Mrs. Datta, Dr. Szwajkowski, Mrs. Reed, and Ms. Molly Cooper.

Fairfax County Government

continues to support YLP and is offering opportunities and avenues for past participants to reconnect and to apply for college level internships. To that end, a newsletter and an email list are being compiled. We think of all of our YLP graduates and want to keep up with your changing lives and hopefully, give you some fun opportunities to reconnect, network and meet the newer faces of YLP.

We look forward to hearing from you so we can keep you apprised of future get togethers and opportunities. Please see the back page for instructions on how to submit

Dr. Cynthia Szwajkowski Named Virginia Social Studies Teacher of the Year

Annually, the Virginia Council for Social Studies (VCSS) recognizes outstanding teachers of social studies in grades K through 12. This fall the award was given to Dr. Cynthia Szwajkowski.

Dr. Szwajkowski was nominated both because she has been an exceptional and influential classroom teacher, and because she has made a significant impact in the community through her work as director of the Fairfax County Youth Leadership Program.

Teachers are evaluated based on seven different criteria. These include a teacher's creative and effective use of instruction materials, a demonstrated ability to foster a spirit of inquiry, the development of democratic beliefs and values, as well as the skills needed for citizen participation.

The Virginia Social Studies Teacher of the Year is recognized at the Annual Meeting of Social Studies Educators in Roanoke, Virginia.

Please join us in congratulating Dr. Szwajkowski on her award at the December Youth Leadership Reunion. Details of the event are inside.

"Her efforts provide a lasting legacy on the lives of her students and also on the civic life of Fairfax County."

Russell Phipps
Fairfax County Public Schools

Inside this issue:

- | | |
|--|----------|
| December Youth Leadership Reunion | 2 |
| Internship Experiences Shared by the Class of 2005 | 2 |
| YLP Graduate Update: Pat McCafferty, Class of 2004 | 3 |
| New College Level Internship for YLP Graduates | 3 |
| How to make sure you're on our contact list | 4 |

Internship Experiences Shared by the Class of 2005

One of the goals of the Youth Leadership Program is to help high school students gain an understanding and appreciation of how local government impacts their everyday lives. The summer internships are one of the best ways to accomplish this goal, introducing students to a broad range of government activities. Participants from the class of 2005 spent a few weeks this summer interning all over the County. Although their individual experiences varied greatly, most completed the internship confident that they had learned a great deal about themselves and the County. Following are several interesting accounts from students this year.

Amanda Karim

Herndon High School

Sully Plantation

My internship at Sully Plantation was amazing! Having such a unique internship gave me a really awesome opportunity to experience things that I otherwise never would have! I had the chance to churn butter, open/close the main house & outbuildings, give tours to the public, dress up in time period costume, work with children, and make friends! I can honestly say I was sad to leave when my three weeks at Sully ended.

Viann Nguyen

Stuart High School

Health Department

When I first walked into the conference room back in November, I didn't know what to expect. All I saw was a group of 40 other students, none of which I knew. YLP brought together an eclectic mixture of students from around the county. However, we did have something in common: We were all mature young adults who had an interest in learning new things. I really enjoyed being around people who were motivated to learn and who were also confident in themselves. In a way, their motivation and confidence spread to me. I learned a lot about the local government and about Fairfax County itself; it made me appreciate where I lived because I didn't know how good or economically well-off the County was until I joined the program.

The internship itself was the best part overall. I was glad that I got a chance to work with professionals in the Health Department to see what they did on a daily basis. I worked with Dr. Jorge Arias and Mr. Carl Silvertsen for the West Nile Virus program. I learned a lot from my co-workers, who were very friendly, welcoming, and willing to teach me about topics they were passionate about. Because they were so welcoming, I didn't feel inferior, especially with my lanyard and badge that they put together just for me! The internship was an excellent way to see first-hand how a County department actually worked and it was a great way to sum up everything we had learned at the monthly meetings during the school year. YLP was an awesome experience.

Deborah Lee

West Springfield High School

Health Department

I was assigned to the Health Department at Kelly Square and my experience was wonderful! How often does a high school senior get to work at an official government building? I was responsible for entering and updating data into the Emergency Alert Network, an advanced program that includes emergency information in case of a bio-terrorism attack. The program gave me the opportunity to work in a professional setting and helped me realize how much dedication and effort each employee puts into this County. It was fun to play the role as a fellow employee. The staff at the Health Department welcomed me with open arms and listened to any ideas I put forth. Overall, it was a life-changing experience that changed my perspective as a student and resident of Fairfax County. After working there, I realized that I, a mere 17-year old, made a difference in our community.

Aisha Toor

West Springfield High School

Fire and Rescue Department

I really think that I was one of the luckiest kids in the program because I think I had the best internship out of anyone else. I was so excited I had to tell everyone of my

“Overall, it was a life-changing experience that changed my perspective as a student and resident of Fairfax County.”

experiences. When I first got assigned to intern at the Fire and Rescue Department, I was not really happy because it wasn't what I wanted. However, if I had to go back and request what I wanted to have I would choose the Fire and Rescue Department without a doubt. I was so excited and nervous about working with the Fire Chief I couldn't wait. I really thought that everyone on the seventh floor of the Massey Building (that's where the Chief's office was) were very serious and hardly ever had FUN! But boy was I wrong! I had so much fun and I never once felt like I had to act any differently when I was with the chief. On the 14th of July, me and 5 other interns who were working with the public safety section of the County went to the PSCC. This was where all of the 911 calls were received. We all got assigned to sit with one of the workers there and listen to all of the calls. I first listened to the non emergency calls. Some of the calls were very, very funny. They wouldn't even be considered emergency calls. However, the worker would act very serious and give very precise and in-depth answers to all of the caller's questions and concerns. The best part of this trip was the fact that we got to see the behind the scenes action of what happens when we dial 911. While I was there I got to hear another interesting aspect of the calls received. In one very serious call I got to see how we use interpreters to get in touch with the caller and to understand their emergency. That was very interesting and it kept me on the edge of my seat the whole time.



YLP Graduate Update: Pat McCafferty, Class of 2004

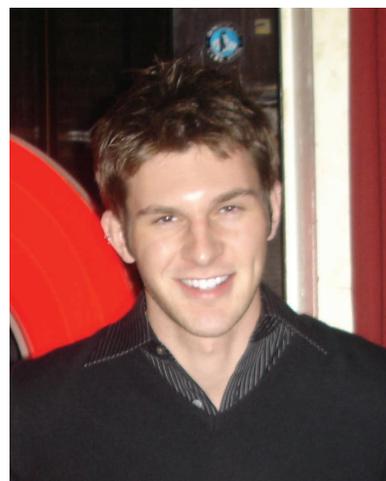
I am not a politics major, I can't say I've ever taken a government-related class in my three semesters at college, and I could definitely use a subscription to the *Washington Post* to keep up with current events. Yet, I find myself, here, almost two years after graduation from the FCYLP class of '04, with its effects on my life still resonating in unexpected and subtly profound ways.

I was placed at Sully Historic Site (under the auspices of the Park Authority) for my summer internship. Great, I thought: while my friends are driving in high-speed cop cars and meeting bigwig politicians in the County Executive's Office, I'll be donning a tacky forest green Park Authority polo and prodding groups of octogenarians through some old house. Little did I know that this internship would be an invaluable experience for me.

At Sully, I was given the opportunity to be quite the jack of all trades. My main vocation was giving tours of the 1794 home as a historical docent, which was a blast. However, I also found myself gardening, leading kids' programs, doing some artistic design for signs and advertisements, playing the pianoforte for visitors, participating in a Civil War event, and so much more. I learned more American history there than I did from reading any textbook, but moreover I learned important things about myself. I discovered and rediscovered passions for conservation, human resources, communication, citizenship, interpreting and teaching—being a docent in

the broadest sense.

I ended up working as a Park Authority employee at Sully for two years after my internship had ended, most recently this past summer, and have continued to enjoy the diverse experiences offered there. I began to tutor on the side, teaching elementary math through college-level Spanish, and would like to pursue an independent tutoring business in the future. I am now an Echols Scholar at the University of Virginia, where I'm studying everything from Buddhism to poetry writing (although probably majoring in English or Biology). I volunteer as an ESL tutor and hope to use my Spanish skills on an Alternative Spring Break service-based trip to Ecuador in the spring and when studying abroad in Spain next year. After college, I plan on applying for Teach for America, which places recent graduates as teachers in lower-income inner-city and rural school systems. Being educated in a county which, as I learned in the FCYLP, allocates over 50% of its budget to schools, I feel that this would be an incredible opportunity to give back to society as a teacher and citizen. On a final note, I'd like to commend all of the work done on the parts of the FCYLP coordinators and participants, for the things it they have done for me personally and for continuing to shape the leaders in all fields in the generation to come.



Pat McCafferty, University of Virginia
YLP Class of 2004

Announcing a new College-Level Internship Open to Youth Leadership Graduates Only

Interested in gaining valuable work experience in a summer-long internship with the County? Beginning in the summer of 2006, Fairfax County will sponsor a new internship program specifically for YLP graduates. Several internships will be in various County agencies and promise to provide participants with a more in depth experience than the 3-week YLP summer internships. If you are interested in this opportunity, please be sure to send us your contact information. Instructions follow on the back page. Information regarding the application process will be available early 2006.

December Youth Leadership Reunion

Please join your fellow Youth Leadership graduates for an informal gathering at the Fairfax County Government Center. This will be a great chance to say hello to friends and teachers. Come find out what everyone's up to, learn about how you can stay connected to the Fairfax County Youth Leadership Program and hear more about a new college level internship program for graduates of the YLP program.

Who: All past YLP Graduates and Teacher Sponsors

Date: December 19th

Time: 3pm - 5pm

Location: Fairfax County Government Center, Conference Rooms 9 & 10

Please R.S.V.P. by December 15th by emailing: molly.cooper@fairfaxcounty.gov
or calling (703) 324-2391

Inaugural Edition

Fairfax Count Department of Management and Budget
12000 Government Center Parkway
Suite 561
Fairfax, Virginia 22035

Phone: 703-324-2391
Fax: 703-324-3940



**Make Sure You are on the
YLP Contact List**

Please e-mail your most up-to-date information to:

molly.cooper@fairfaxcounty.gov

Please include your name, high school, school you currently attend, current address, email and phone number.

Or mail us the form attached below.



YLP Contact List Information

Name: _____

Are you interested in a college level internship next year?

High School: _____

_____ Yes _____ No

What you're doing now/or what school you currently attend:

Current Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Year you completed the program: _____

Please mail this form to:
Fairfax County Department of Management and Budget
C/O Youth Leadership Program
12000 Government Center Parkway
Suite 561
Fairfax, Virginia 22035