

May 2006

The President's Commission on White House Fellowships



"Men make history and not the other way around. In periods where there is no leadership, society stands still. Progress occurs when courageous, skillful leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better."

— Harry Truman

Upcoming Events

May 18-20, 2006
Regional WHF Meeting
Seattle, WA

May 23, 2006
Alumni Happy Hour
WHF Office
6:00 – 8:00pm

June 8-11, 2006
Commission Meeting &
Selection Weekend
Annapolis, MD

October 19-21, 2006
WHF Association Annual
Meeting & Seminar
Washington, DC

**South America
Trip Itinerary**

Panama City, Panama
May 1-3

Bogota, Colombia
May 3-6

**Valparaiso & Santiago,
Chile**
May 6-9

**Sao Paulo & Brasilia,
Brazil**
May 9-11

**Buenos Aires,
Argentina**
May 11-13

REFLECTIONS ON LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE

Becoming a Social Entrepreneur

My experience as a White House Fellow (96-97) completely altered my career and led me to become a "social entrepreneur". I arrived at the Vice President's office just after President Clinton had signed an MOU enabling schools to receive surplus Federal computers. My assignment – make something of this directive. Similar to starting-up a new business, I assembled a team and built a program that used web technology to facilitate computer donations.



Elisabeth Stock (96-97) is President & Co-Founder of Computers for Youth. She can be reached at 212-563-7300 or via email at info@cfy.org

The program was deemed successful but I was not satisfied. The neediest schools were often unable to use the donated computers effectively – sometimes they sat stored in the basement, sometimes they were assembled in classrooms but remained untouched because teachers were afraid to use them. Rarely did the students have sufficient access, and almost never were the computers well integrated into teaching. I became convinced that the best way for computers to improve learning was for children to have them in their homes.

Two years later, I co-founded Computers for Youth (www.cfy.org), a non-profit organization focused on placing computers in children's homes to close the learning gap between low-income kids and their more affluent peers. Unlike my fellowship experience, starting up a non-profit was a risky venture. Not only is it hard to survive, it's especially hard to grow. Of the 30,000 US non-profits created each year, 50% fail. Of the 500,000 in operation, only 8% have an annual budget of \$1 million or more. CFY has beaten these odds. We have become a national organization with revenues of more than \$2.5 million and we are still growing. Our first year we provided computers, training and technical support to 230 families in the South Bronx. We now serve more than 2,000 families per year in New York City and Philadelphia and have plans to expand to additional cities.

**National Finalists
Announced Today!
Congratulations to:**

Mr. Christian Caballero
Dr. Kenneth Carson
Mr. Jason Dean
LCDR John Dettleff
Maj Thomas Drape
LCDR Jeffrey Eggers
Mr. Eric Eisenstein
Ms. Fatema Gunja
Ms. Stephanie Holden
LTC Miguel Howe
Mr. Eugene Huang
Mr. Bedouin Joseph
CDR Frederick Kacher
Dr. John Langell
Mr. Matthew Meyer
Mr. Westley Moore
Mr. Eric Patterson
Ms. Jocelyn Pickford
Mr. Marc Ricks
MAJ Kendric Robbins
Dr. George Ruiz
Ms. Lena Sene
Ms. Julianne Smith
Maj Mark Smith
Mr. Jason Snyder
Mr. Jeffrey Stern
Mr. Matthew Stremlau
Mr. Awais Sufi
Mr. Mark Vlasic
Maj John Wagner
Mr. Thomas Watts
Ms. Linda Wayner

How does leadership play a role in the success of CFY? Below are three lessons I have learned on my journey.

Keep true to mission. In the beginning, few understood what we were trying to do. Many funders urged us to focus on schools or libraries. Instead, we stayed true to our convictions, refined our model and demonstrated its power. Each year our impact grew. Now more than 80% of students say having a home computer helped them do better in school and almost two-thirds report working harder in school.

Encourage healthy risk-taking. When you're breaking new ground, taking risks is critical. To create truly innovative programs and explore new ideas, CFY has to tolerate failure. Our mantra is: You've never taken risks if you've never failed.

Listen, learn, incorporate. CFY created its own research department to better listen to our families and understand the impact of our work. Surprisingly, we learned that home computing and family relationships were linked: 91% of students whose computer helped them perform better in school, said their computer improved their family relationships. We seized upon this finding by incorporating into our program additional computer workshops that enhance parental involvement.

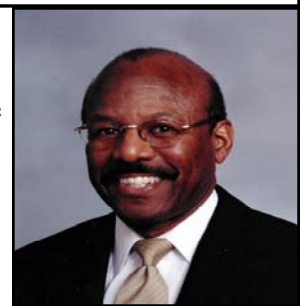
The White House Fellows program gave me the courage and the networks necessary to start a nonprofit. For me, this sector has been a perfect fit. I am able to interact with people from all rungs of the income ladder – from the working poor in Harlem to the wealthy elite in TriBeCa – and I get to measure my work not just by the number of families served but by the number of lives transformed. I have learned a few things about leadership along the way but the quest to become a great leader is always a life-long process.

Contributed by Elisabeth Stock (96-97)

Fulfilling the American Dream

It seems like only yesterday that the Supreme Court made one of its most significant rulings in American history, in *Brown vs. the Board of Education*. Although this wasn't the first challenge to segregation in our schools, the decision striking it down moved our nation's moral compass closer to true north—and afforded people like me the opportunity to attend better schools.

Yet a half-century later, citizens from all



Dr. Stanley is the President of Scholarship America. He can be reached at 952-830-7381 or via email at stanleycl@scholarshipamerica.org.

walks of life still struggle to fully embrace the spirit and the intent of *Brown*. Millions of students aren't receiving even the most rudimentary education, and even more grow up in impoverished environments without support, guidance and inspiration from parents, teachers or society. Many of these students eventually fill our jails, die tragically and too soon on our streets, or die prematurely as a result of poor health care. Regrettably, many also tend to bequeath the ignorance that surrounds them upon their own children, and the vicious cycle continues in spite of our best intentions to break it. In short, we have an education problem in America.

This is an oversimplification, of course, but it makes clear the challenges we face in ensuring that all citizens are encouraged to develop their minds. They are particularly troubling when we consider the vision of our nation's Founding Fathers—these idealists, addressing the educational needs of the country, aimed to strengthen our democracy by developing productive citizens of character. While that remains the essential mission of education, it is complicated by a host of issues—race, gender, poverty, globalization, immigration, health care—that were never imagined 300 years ago.

My year as a White House Fellow nurtured my interest in these essential aims of democracy, and further developed my optimism about the vibrancy and strength of our nation. Not that I didn't believe in our democracy before my Fellowship year; in fact, I took an oath to defend it by serving as a United States Marine. However, since serving as a White House Fellow with the FBI during Director William Session's tenure, I've met a host of citizens with a passion for civic engagement and fairness. They have encouraged and assisted me along the way, and it has been gratifying to connect with so many diverse and qualified leaders from so many professions and occupations. I am, of course, alluding to the vast network of White House Fellows I've been privileged to know and serve with in numerous volunteer capacities since my Fellowship year.

I am, today, a proud beneficiary of this phenomenal program. I retired as a general officer from the United States Marine Corps, and presently serve as the President of Scholarship America. The organization, founded by an optometrist named Dr. Irving Fradkin just four years after that landmark *Brown* decision, has played its own role in maintaining that spirit, distributing over a billion dollars to more than a million students, and growing from a small network of community foundations into our nation's largest private-sector nonprofit educational organization. While the educational challenges mentioned above still loom, I am confident that the lessons learned during my Fellowship, along with Scholarship America's commitment to make college possible for all students, will help us move closer to fulfilling a 21st-century version of our Founding Fathers' educational vision.

Contributed by Clifford Stanley (88-89)

CAPITOL HILL SHADOWING

Thank you to Congressman Joe Barton and WHF Commissioner Cathy Gillespie for arranging Capitol Hill Shadowing for the current WHF class. Thank you also to the following Members of Congress who are participating in the program:

Curt Weldon, R-PA
Henry Bonilla, R-TX
Chip Pickering, R-MS
Jeb Hensarling, R-TX

Don Young, R-AK
Harold Ford, Jr., D-TN
Ike Skelton, D-MO
Nathan Deal, R-GA

Mark Kirk, R-IL
Jo Ann Davis, R-VA
Buck McKeon, R-CA

FELLOWS FORUM

WHITE HOUSE FELLOWS GUEST

SPEAKERS

MAY 2006

Condoleezza Rice,
Secretary of State

David Boaz,
Executive Vice
President, Cato
Institute

Donald Rumsfeld,
Secretary of Defense

Strobe Talbott,
President, Brookings
Institution

Michael Chertoff,
Secretary of the
Department of
Homeland Security

Samuel Bodman,
Secretary of the
Department of
Energy

Mark Weston,
Scholar, Author of
Mid-East and
Oriental History

Building Character in Aspen

This White House Fellowship year has been a transformational experience for me both personally and professionally. Through my placement at the Department of Veterans Affairs, I have had the opportunity to work closely with many disabled veterans. One such opportunity was during my visit to the 20th Annual National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic in Aspen, Colorado.

The clinic, sponsored by The Department of Veterans Affairs and the Disabled American

Veterans, is an annual rehabilitation program for veterans with spinal cord injuries, visual impairments, amputations or other disabilities. During the clinic, over 350 veteran participants, with significant physical or visual impairments, are taught adaptive downhill and cross-country skiing. Educational workshops where veterans participate in and learn adaptive sports such as rock climbing, sled hockey, ice hockey, hand cycling, yoga, wheelchair fencing and many others activities fill the remainder of the week.

For many, this clinic is the catalyst that allows them to pursue Paralympic sports. The Olympic silver medalist in down hill skiing from the 2006 Paralympics in Torino, Chris Devlin-Young, is a disabled veteran who got his start at the Winter Sports Clinic many years ago. This year he was part of a race-development program with U.S. Olympic coaches to identify veterans with Paralympic potential.



*Laurie Zephyrin, (05-06)
is currently placed at the
Department of Veterans
Affairs.*

The opening day of the event was marked by double amputee, Dana Bowman, descending onto the ski slopes with the American flag high above his head. A Special Forces soldier and member of the US Army's elite parachute team, the Golden Knights, Dana Bowman, lost both legs in a mid-air collision over a decade ago. Since that time, his perseverance and determination have carried him over 1000 jumps, and launched a career as a motivational speaker and advocate for veterans. As I saw him parachute down onto the slopes, I was reminded of the strength and new possibilities that one can create continuously in their lives. I was inspired by the strength of the human spirit and learned an invaluable lesson about life and courage and the ability to succeed and persevere.

As White House Fellows, we are chosen because of our commitment to public service and leadership. Through this shared experience we are interconnected and depend on each other for courage, advice, friendship, mentorship and much more. At the Winter Sports Clinic I felt a similar connectedness with the veterans. While snowshoeing with visually impaired veterans, we discussed that the Aspen trees are the largest known life form on the planet because their roots are interconnected underground.

One man likened his and others experience of being disabled veterans to a shared bond connecting all veterans together. Through the experiences of that week; participating in ice hockey with veterans who were paralyzed or lower extremity amputees; snow shoeing with blind veterans leading the way; skiing for the first time with veterans who were skiing their first time, I felt connected to their lives and struggles. I was energized by the comradery of the veterans. These young men and women, who share a common experience, push themselves to the limit and take on new challenges while building lasting friendships.

I was inspired by the strength of the human spirit and learned an invaluable lesson about life and courage and the ability to succeed and persevere. Despite adversity and challenge, one can continue to move forward and create new possibilities.



This White House Fellowship experience is creating new possibilities and allowing me the opportunity to share those possibilities with others including the many veterans who have served this country. The theme for this year's clinic was "The Mountain Does Not Build Character...It Reveals It!" This experience definitely revealed the strong character traits of good leaders: perseverance, commitment and courage!

Contributed by Laurie Zephyrin (05-06)

White House Fellow Laurie Zephyrin with Secretary and Mrs. Nicholson along with Dana Bowman, a U.S. Army Special Forces soldier.

Alumni Update

MG Bill Caldwell (91-92) now commanding general of the 82nd Airborne Division, will become Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Effects, Multi-National Forces-Iraq.

Scott Gray (88-89) retired from the Navy and is now the Staff Vice President for Government Relations, Marine Systems Group, General Dynamics, in the corporate headquarters in Falls Church, VA.

Bud McFarlane (71-72) is Chairman of the ECS Group LLC in Arlington, VA.

LTG David Melcher (87-88) the Army G-8, has been nominated for reappointment to Lieutenant General and assignment as the military deputy for budget in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Financial Management.

Ahmed Saaed (05-06) has been appointed Deputy Assistant Secretary, Middle East and Africa, in the United States Treasury Department in Washington, DC.

Judy Rosenstreich (76-77) has been named Senior Policy Advisor for the Division of Mental Health, Vermont Department of Public Health, where she will focus on the Mental Health Futures Project, a statewide, comprehensive undertaking to transform the system of mental health services and to close the Vermont State Hospital.

Jim Scott (78-79) is the Director, Portfolio Strategies, for Van Kampen Investment Management in West Conshohocken, PA.

It is with deepest sympathy we mourn the loss of two former WHF friends, David Calkins (78-79) on April 8, 2006 and Joseph Freitas (67-68) on April 19, 2006.

Elaine Fund

In honor of Elaine Y. Cook-Price, wife of Lt. Col. Barrye Price, the class of 1999-2000 established the Elaine Y. Cook-Price Memorial Fund. The Fund is intended to provide financial resources to each class for activities involving the Fellows, their spouses, partners and families. This fund is a testament to the impact Elaine has had within the WHF community, her family and beyond.

Taking the Heat

Congratulations to Brenda Berkman (96-97) for her feature documentary entitled, Taking the Heat, which aired throughout the country on PBS. The film is a vivid portrayal of Captain Berkman's heroic struggle since 1978 to integrate women as equals and firefighters in the New York City Fire Department.

Transition Panel

Fellows had the opportunity to explore various career options during the Transition Panel on April 19. Participating alumni included:

Paul Antony
Randy Jayne
Kevin Monroe
Stefanie Sanford
Jack LeCuyer
Rod Von Lipsey

SPECIAL PROJECT ASSISTANCE REQUESTED

Education Program Archives

As part of a project on the history of the White House Fellows Program, we are seeking copies of the Education Program from 1965-1980 for our archives. If you have a copy of the speakers and activities from your fellowship year, please send it to Education Director, Candice Grandon, via fax at 202-395-6179 or via email to cgrandon@whf.eop.gov.

Annual Meeting Invitations

We wish to honor people who have been particularly supportive of the Program over the years. We invite you to provide the names and contact information of one or two people who you believe had the most impact on you during your Fellowship year. The individuals you submit will be issued an invitation to attend a special event in their honor at the Annual Meeting in October. To request an invitation for your principal or other mentor, please visit the White House Fellows Association website (www.whff.org) and click on "Invitation Request Form," fill in the appropriate fields and click "Submit Form" at the bottom of the page.

Recruitment Seminars and Receptions

We are looking for Alumni who are willing to host recruiting events in their communities, at their places of business or other appropriate venues. If you are interested in helping with our recruitment activities, please contact Public Relations Director, Page Archer, at parcher@whf.eop.gov or 202-395-7297.

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.

For more information, please visit our webpage at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/fellows>.

The President's Commission on White House Fellowships

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