

Colgate students interning this summer are sharing their experiences. Sam Linnerooth '14 spent his summer at the United Nations with the Gray Panthers NYC.

This summer, I have had the opportunity to work for a Colgate alumnus, Jack Kupferman '77, as an intern with the *Task Force for Emergency Planning and Response for Special Needs Populations in New York City*. The task force is organized under the coordination of Gray Panthers, a small, but iconic, organization dedicated to identifying and eliminating ageism in the United States and around the world.

My work with the task force has mainly been in researching and writing on various topics related to emergency management and older persons in New York City. For the first two months of summer, I was able to carry out all of my tasks remotely from home on the West coast. However, this past month I have been able to get much more closely involved with the task force while living in New York City. Throughout the summer, my work was guided by almost daily communication with Mr. Kupferman, and some of my projects have been received very well in New York.

Once I am given a topic, my major responsibilities have typically been to locate existing reports and research, identify steps that other cities have already taken, and to compile the information into some type of written product for the task force. So far I have written op-eds, position papers, and executive summaries of longer reports all related to the basic economic and social rights of older persons and special needs populations in disasters.

A position paper that I had written in opposition of a New York City special needs emergency registry has been adopted to represent the stance of the task force and Gray Panthers. This particular paper has also been circulated fairly widely and was circulated at a hearing on emergency preparedness of the Council of the City of New York as well as passed along to the office of the current Speaker of the New York City Council Christine Quinn. The report was also distributed at the New York Academy of Medicine, to each city council member, to various advocates throughout city, and at the national level at the Department of Health and Human Services in Washington, D.C.

It has been tremendously rewarding to see my work have real-world impacts in a city like New York. The structure of the internship and working closely with Mr. Kupferman has allowed me to make original contributions to the work of the task force that I never would have imagined possible at the beginning of the summer.

While I have been in NYC, working in a more hands-on capacity has given me a lot of really interesting practical experience. During this past month, I have sat in on a task force visit to the Permanent Mission of the Solomon Islands to the United Nations, attended an AARP-sponsored mayoral forum, and taken part in the United Nations Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing.

The experiences that I have had during this internship have not only been personally rewarding, but they have also changed a lot about my world view. Just three months ago, I was almost entirely oblivious to many of the challenges that older persons face both in New York and around the world. I am now much more aware of the incredible amount of time and energy that groups such as Gray Panthers must dedicate in order to even begin to alleviate some of these problems. Similarly, I never could have imagined the extent of the work that still needs to be done in this area.

I have really enjoyed the internship experience and will begin to look forward to entering the working world at the end of this coming school year.

-Sam Linnerooth '14