

# HOPE

PUBLIC INTEREST  
RESOURCE CENTER

## Summer Fellowship Program

2011

MIAMI**LAW**



---

**MIAMILAW** | **HOPE** Public Interest  
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI SCHOOL OF LAW | Resource Center

1311 Miller Drive B446 - Coral Gables, FL 33146

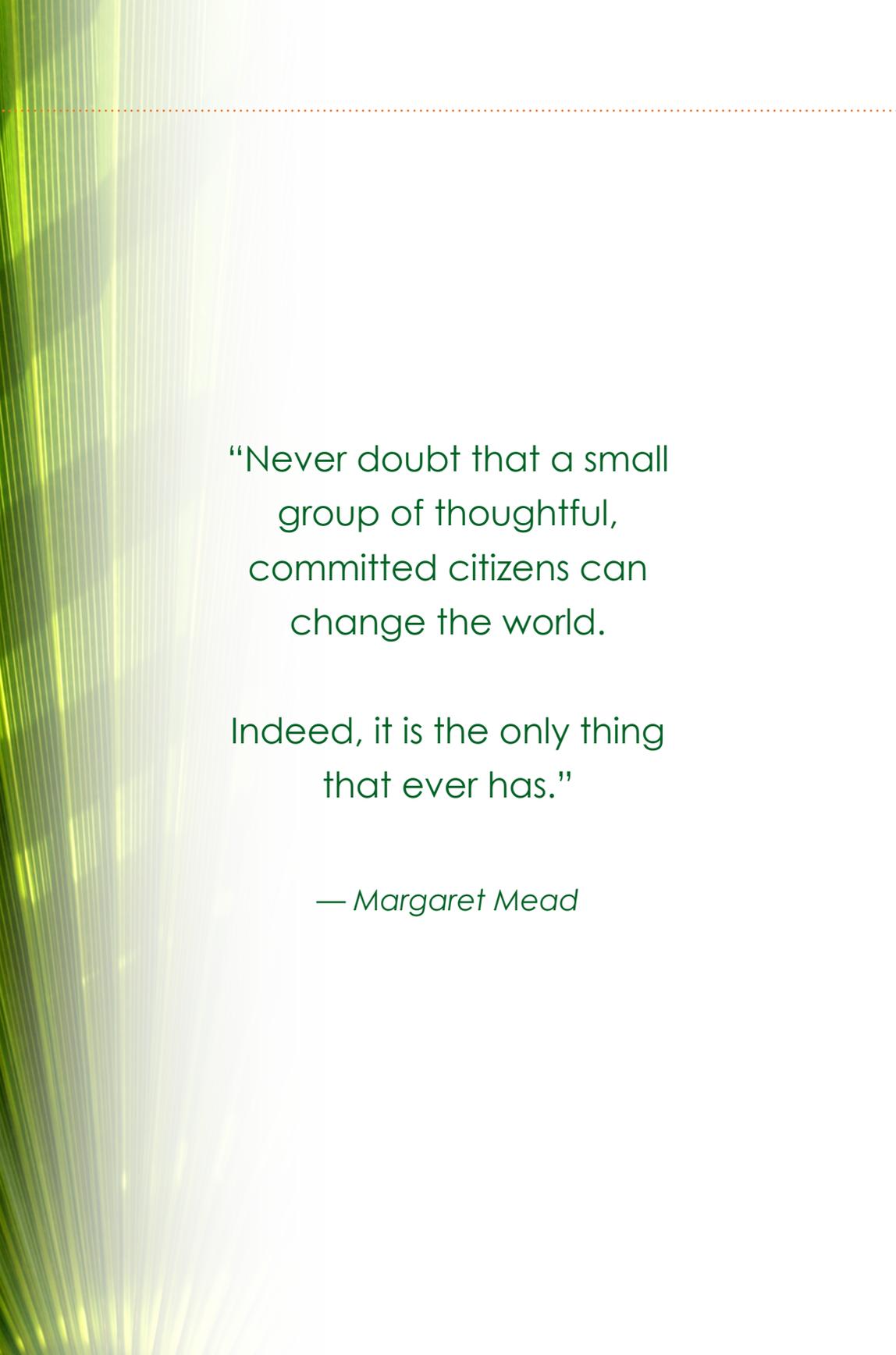
P: 305.284.2599 - F: 305.284.3646

Email: [umhope@law.miami.edu](mailto:umhope@law.miami.edu)

# HOPE Fellowship Program

The HOPE Fellowship Program gives students with a commitment to public interest advocacy the opportunity to work at an organization of their choice and receive a stipend from the HOPE Public Interest Resource Center. HOPE Fellows work with domestic and international public interest organizations to provide much-needed legal advocacy. Over the years, the program has grown from just two fellows placed in local agencies to include local, national, and international placements.

The HOPE Fellows Program challenges students to identify host agencies and develop on-site projects to uniquely address the unmet needs of the organization's constituency. In addition, upon their return to Miami Law, HOPE Fellows design and implement initiatives to educate and engage law students in advocacy related to their area of concentration. HOPE is proud to support the public interest work of an increasing number of students who serve clients and communities in extraordinary ways.



“Never doubt that a small  
group of thoughtful,  
committed citizens can  
change the world.

Indeed, it is the only thing  
that ever has.”

— *Margaret Mead*

**LINDSAY M. ALTER | CLASS OF 2012**

GIRLS ADVOCACY PROJECT, MIAMI, FL



Lindsay spent her summer interning at the Girls Advocacy Project (GAP), the only comprehensive prevention and education project in Florida specifically designed for serving girls in detention. Her prior experience as a volunteer at GAP motivated her to volunteer with the *Bridging the Gap Writing Workshop Project*, a project that helps educate female juvenile offenders on issues relating to the mistakes made by female adult inmates.

**NABEEL BASIT | CLASS OF 2012**

FLORIDA LEGAL SERVICES, MIAMI, FL



Through Miami Law's Community Lawyering Clinic, Nabeel has worked with the *Community Justice Project* of Florida Legal Services. His work in the clinic included the provision of legal assistance to community organizations fighting for racial and economic justice in Miami's low-income communities of color. Nabeel continued his work at Florida Legal Services as a HOPE Fellow, where he focused on tenants' rights.

**THERESA BRESLIN | CLASS OF 2012**

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, WASHINGTON, DC



As an intern with Miami Law's Immigration Clinic, Theresa advocated on behalf of clients in immigration and civil proceedings. Theresa was a summer intern for the Department of Justice's Counterterrorism Section. The Counterterrorism Section formulates legislative initiatives, policies, and guidelines for numerous U.S. governmental agencies. Theresa brought a unique perspective to the Department as she worked towards finding the delicate balance between individual rights and protecting national security.

## MEGAN BRITT | CLASS OF 2013

UNIVERSIDAD PONTIFICIA BOLIVARIANA, MEDELLÍN, COLOMBIA



After spending an alternative spring break working with Heffer International in Honduras, Megan spent a year studying in Costa Rica. Megan returned to Costa Rica for another year, where she taught English and worked with displaced Nicaraguan immigrant groups. Since she began attending the University of Miami School of Law as a Miami Scholar, Megan has become involved with the International Law Society, Human Rights Organization, and the Public Interest Leadership Board. As a HOPE Fellow, Megan worked on a collaborative project investigating the paramilitary groups that existed in Medellín, Colombia.

## GRACIA CUZZI | CLASS OF 2012

FLORIDA IMMIGRANT ADVOCACY CENTER, MIAMI, FL



Prior to law school, Gracia volunteered as a first grade teacher in an impoverished community on the outskirts of Arequipa, Peru. After her first year at Miami Law, Gracia participated in a unique human rights program that monitored trials in Windhoek, Namibia. Gracia interned for the *Workplace Justice Project* at the Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center (FIAC) where she worked to illuminate the issue of wage theft, primarily among domestic workers, through a photography exhibit. As a Hope Fellow, Gracia continued her work at FIAC, bringing justice to victims of wage theft and trafficking. She hopes to continue using art as a unique medium to help vulnerable immigrants know their rights.

## FARRAH ELCHAHAL | CLASS OF 2012

HUMAN RIGHTS CLINIC, MIAMI, FL



Farrah was a member of the Gender Justice Team in the Miami Law Human Rights Clinic (Clinic), which focuses on the implementation of human rights norms in the domestic violence arena in the U.S. Farrah had the opportunity to gain knowledge on the issue of violence against women in detention by observing client interviews conducted by an attorney from the Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center. Farrah continued her work with the Clinic as a Hope Fellow, where she worked with other organizations to coordinate and plan events for a civil society session at the Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland.

**RACHEL GOLDSTEIN | CLASS OF 2012***OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER, MIAMI, FL*

As a Hope Fellow, Rachel worked to bridge the gap between Miami Law's Children & Youth Law Clinic and the Juvenile Justice Division of the Miami-Dade Office of the Public Defender. Through her clinical experience, Rachel found that almost all of her clients had a juvenile record or are currently going through criminal proceedings. An open communication system between the two agencies will build relationships and promote rehabilitation for the clients and ultimately form a support system for many of the children in both the dependency and delinquency systems.

**AMANDA LEIPOLD | CLASS OF 2012***ADVOCACY AND BENEFITS COUNSELING FOR HEALTH, INC., MADISON, WI*

As an intern for the Community Lawyering Clinic (Clinic), Amanda learned a great deal about the connection between housing and health. At the Clinic, Amanda participated in legal and policy research, canvassed and organizing low-income tenants, as well as facilitating 'know your rights' sessions on evictions. Her experience gave her a unique perspective for her HOPE Fellowship at Advocacy and Benefits Counseling for Health, Inc. (ABC for Health). ABC for Health is a non-profit public interest law firm dedicated to assisting special needs clients with the information and legal services they need to navigate the complex health care financing system.

**SAMUEL LEROY | CLASS OF 2012***GUARDIAN AD LITEM, MIAMI, FL*

Sam's experience with the Financial Literacy Program, through which children who are aging out of foster care are taught how to manage their finances, motivated him to apply for Miami Law's Children & Youth Law Clinic. Connecting with parentless children and their guardians as well as seeing those children routinely being denied access to sufficient legal representation encouraged Sam to apply for a HOPE Fellowship with the Florida Guardian ad Litem (GAL) Program. GAL is a partnership between the Miami-Dade community and legal professionals seeking to investigate the "best interests" of Florida's abused, abandoned, and neglected children.

## ASHLEY MATTHEWS | CLASS OF 2012

GEORGIA JUSTICE PROJECT, ATLANTA, GA



Ashley spent her summer at the Georgia Justice Project (GJP), where she focused on re-entry public relations and journalism. By offering free legal, social, and employment services, GJP is dedicated to ensuring justice for criminally accused indigent clients and their families. GJP relies heavily on social media and its website to publicize its innovative work, and Ashley was specifically asked to help revamp GJP's social media outlets. Ashley has extensive experience in this area and used video, audio, photography, and journalism to create an audiovisual online exhibit that tells the stories of prisoners and their families in a narrative format, while also touching upon pressing legal and public policy issues.

## BENJAMIN MCCULLOCH | CLASS OF 2012

SECURITIES & EXCHANGE COMMISSION, MIAMI, FL



A former investment representative and bond trader with *Comerica Securities* in Detroit, Michigan, Benjamin brought a unique perspective to his internship with the Securities & Exchange Commission (SEC). Benjamin focused on ensuring fair dealing at the SEC and worked on a project that successfully implemented many of the new consumer protection provisions of the Dodd-Frank Act into operational processes at the SEC. Specifically, Benjamin worked to create a training manual that will be provided to the SEC's junior attorneys working on "Pump and Dump" matters.

## RASHANDA MCCOLLUM | CLASS OF 2012

KRISTI HOUSE, MIAMI, FL



Rashanda has participated in many of Miami Law's public interest programs, including the Public Interest Leadership Board, Street Law, and the Black Law Student Association. As a HOPE Fellow, Rashanda worked at Kristi House – a Miami based agency that provides treatment and prevention services to child victims of sexual abuse. Sharing in Kristi House's vision to protect and heal child victims, Rashanda promoted Florida Safe Harbor Legislation, which recognizes sexually exploited children as victims rather than criminals. Rashanda facilitated community education programs as well as assisted in developing and implementing training and prevention strategies for local task forces.

**ERIC OLSON | CLASS OF 2012**

LEGAL AID SOCIETY, MIAMI, FL



Inspired by Miami Law's bankruptcy course, Eric sought a position to assist those in economic distress. Through his summer placement with the *Put Something Back Project* at Miami's Legal Aid Society, Eric was in a position to assist individual debtors through pro bono efforts. He focused on issues surrounding Chapter 7 and Chapter 13 bankruptcies. Eric feels fortunate to be in a position to provide time, dedication, and counseling services to those in need of relief.

**KRISTINA MILLS | CLASS OF 2012**

STATE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, MIAMI, FL



Kristina was an intern in the Miami Law Children & Youth Law Clinic where she handled the cases of foster care children in the Miami area. In addition, she volunteered at the C.A. Dillon Youth Development Center in Butner, NC, a maximum-security youth detention center. Kristina worked with teenagers who recently earned their GEDs and helped them prepare resumes and search for employment or higher education opportunities. Kristina was a HOPE Fellow at the Miami-Dade Office of the State Attorney in the Gangs Division. Kristina worked to start a "Know Your Rights, Know the Law" workshop for youth in at-risk communities.

**ELIZABETH RIESER-MURPHY | CLASS OF 2012**

U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, WASHINGTON, DC



Elizabeth's work in a human rights clinic in Medellín, Colombia and her service in Miami Law's Wrongful Conviction project served as the foundation for the next step in her public interest career. Elizabeth's broad range of public interest work propelled her to a summer internship with the U.S. Attorney's Office in Washington, DC. The mission of the organization is the fair and impartial administration of justice. Elizabeth hoped to uniquely contribute to the organization by strengthening the community outreach and victim advocacy program.

## PATRICIA ROBINSON | CLASS OF 2013

LEGAL ASSISTANCE CENTRE, WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA



PaTricia traveled to Africa to work in the Legal Assistance Centre in Windhoek, Namibia. She assisted with a paper on the Namibian government's pending nuclear policy proposal, putting her in a unique position to observe the juxtaposition of human and environmental rights in a developing country. Since coming to Miami Law, PaTricia has volunteered as a Student Ambassador, has participated in the Books & Buddies Program, and most recently, served as a delegate to the Clinton Global Initiative University. She plans to pursue a career in the field of environmental and human rights law.

## ANA ROMES | CLASS OF 2012

NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER, WASHINGTON, DC



Ana interned at the National Women's Law Center in the Family Economic Security Program. This program focuses on policy work and legislation that will serve to protect and improve the economic security of women and their families. Ana's public interest background includes extensive experience with direct client services in the fields of women's rights and gender equality. Before entering law school, Ana served victims of violence at both a law enforcement agency and a domestic violence shelter.

## STEVE SIMEONIDIS | CLASS OF 2012

U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, WASHINGTON, DC



Steve realized his desire to become a public interest lawyer after working as a law clerk last summer for Legal Services of Greater Miami, Inc. While he often wrote memoranda and helped brief cases heard before the 11<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit and the Unemployment Appeals Commission, he also had the opportunity to frequently meet clients face-to-face and conduct interviews. His daily contact with indigent clients and exposure to their experiences of abuse and mistreatment motivated him to work in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida as a HOPE Fellow.

**KATHRYN WALKER | CLASS OF 2013**

OFFICE OF PUBLIC DEFENDER, MIAMI, FL



Kathryn's dedication to criminal law began when she volunteered at the Miami-Dade Office of the Public Defender where she worked on a Fourth Amendment rights project. Kathryn continued her work at the Office of the Public Defender as a HOPE Fellow in the Mental Health Division. Kathryn conducted client interviews, followed up with treatment programs, and worked on individual cases. Kathryn learned more about advocacy and the practical workings of the system that individuals with mental health issues are forced to endure within the criminal justice system.

**CHELSEY ZIEGLER | CLASS OF 2012**

CIVITAS CHILD LAW CLINIC, CHICAGO, IL



Last summer, Chelsey traveled to Namibia for the Miami Law Neutral Trial Observer Initiative. She served as an intern in Miami Law's Children and Youth Law Clinic. As a HOPE Fellow, Chelsey worked with the Loyola University School of Law's Civitas Child Law Clinic where she focused on delinquency cases in juvenile court. For Chelsey, working within the same field of her interest, but with a slightly different focus, greatly contributed to her growth as an effective child advocate.



UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI  
SCHOOL of LAW

---

