

CAROLINE ROSS

Gallatin School of Individualized Study

Bachelor of Arts, May 2010

Youth Organizing



Caroline Ross studies Youth Organizing at Gallatin, with emphasis on the experience of young people of color in school in urban centers. She believes that young people have a unique and powerful role in creating change in their schools and communities, and she is invested in methods that cultivate and maximize youth power. Integrating American Politics, Schools and Education, the Urban Economy, and Community Organizing into her individualized curriculum, Caroline works to establish young people as a political identity and a viable constituency and age group for achieving social change.

Before attending college, Caroline served a one-year term as an AmeriCorps volunteer with City Year Washington, DC, a full-time National Service program for 17 to 24 year-olds. During her corps year, Caroline developed and taught an innovative theater-based substance abuse education program for over 4,000 middle school students. As a teenager working daily in public schools and community centers throughout DC, Caroline became passionate about progressive teaching and learning in urban schools, and involving youth in efforts to strengthen communities.

Caroline continued her work with young people and arts-in-education with Boston Youth and Police in Partnership. As a program coordinator, she trained other young people to educate Boston Police recruits on youth culture, ageism, and racial bias in order to better serve and protect youth. Police officers and young people from the neighborhoods of Roxbury and Dorchester built one-on-one relationships and used theater as a way to educate each other and break down barriers. This spurred her interest in dismantling the prison industrial complex, specifically the school-to-prison pipeline, and reducing the disproportionately high number of adjudicated young people of color. She advocates for the demilitarization of inner-city schools and envisions a shift from reactive policing to community policing.

Upon arriving in New York, Caroline continued her work with young people and law enforcement with the Blackout Arts Collective and NYU's Lyrics on Lockdown program. Alongside her classmates in Lyrics on Lockdown, she created and participated in arts workshops with high school students incarcerated at Riker's Island. As an intern with the Youth ECHO program at the Red Hook Community Justice Center, she worked with the nation's first community court to build a program that would address Red Hook youths' perception of crime.

Previously, Caroline organized Holyoke Youth Pride Empowerment (HYPE) in Holyoke, MA. The city's only community-based support and advocacy group for young LGBTQIA people and their allies, HYPE organizes and educates young queer people in Holyoke to make strides for equality in a historically homophobic city and school district. Caroline and other young people with HYPE served as founding members of the Holyoke Pride Alliance and coordinated the first Western Mass Youth Pride Prom.

Caroline is currently the co-founder and volunteer coordinator for The Malcolm X Prison Debate Project, a debate program for high school students incarcerated at Riker's Island. She plans to pursue a degree in law. As a Reynolds Scholar, Caroline continues to find innovative ways to shift the conception of young people from consumers to creators of policies, to support youth leadership, and to facilitate strong partnerships between young people and adults.

CAROLINE ROSS

EDUCATION

New York University, Gallatin School of Individualized Study, New York, NY

Candidate for Bachelor of Arts, May 2010

Concentration: Youth Organizing

HONORS/SCHOLARSHIPS/AWARDS

- NYU Reynolds Undergraduate Scholarship in Social Entrepreneurship, 2008
- NYU Gallatin School Dean's Honor Society, 2008 - 2010
- Best Capacity Building Project Award, City Year Inc., 2006

WORK EXPERIENCE

South African Education & Environment Project, Cape Town, South Africa

Intern, May – Aug. 2009

- Assisted the Director for Institutional Development in identifying relevant funding streams and preparing information about the organizations for potential funding partners
- Educator for the ADT Teach Programme, a computer literacy program for township youth sponsored by ADT Security

The Malcolm X Prison Debate Project, New York, NY

Co-Founder and Volunteer Coordinator, Sep. 2008 - Present

- Co-founded New York City-based organization that provides high-quality debate education for incarcerated high school students in order to promote civic engagement and critical dialogue, and to reduce the rate of recidivism in youth incarceration facilities
- Recipient of an Ashoka Youth Venture Grant to launch the project and a Grand Prize finalist in NYU Reynolds/Youth Venture's 2008 "Be A Changemaker Challenge"

Red Hook Community Justice Center, Brooklyn, NY

Youth ECHO Intern, Jan. – May 2008

- Instrumental in the development of the Youth ECHO pilot program, a six-month youth organizing project for teens in the Red Hook neighborhood of Brooklyn that culminated in an independent venture by the young people to address a pressing community issue of their choice
- Composed original Youth Echo curriculum about community organizing, social movements in US history, youth power in schools, teen health issues, and media literacy to better inform and empower young leaders

New York Taxi Worker's Alliance, New York, NY

Intern, Sep. – Dec. 2007

- Conducted interviews with union and non-union drivers for use as legal evidence in the case against the installation of Global Positioning Systems (GPS) in all NYC cabs
- Helped organize worker action on 10/22/07 in response to the mandatory installation of GPS in all NYC taxis, lack of union recognition, and the need for health care benefits for taxi drivers
- Used research on the absence of union recognition and its impact on immigrant taxi workers to write a report in conjunction with the Gallatin Community Learning Course "Immigrant Rights," suggesting policy and organizing techniques to better secure the rights of immigrant workers

Young People For (YP4), New York, NY

Education and Leadership Intern, June – Aug. 2007

- Was responsible for curriculum development and delivery for YP4's online learning initiative, "The Progressive Academy Online," which offers courses to university students about politics, elections, and social change
- Assisted with development of YP4's first Leadership Academy Fellowship Program and created public relations material on behalf of YP4 regarding program structure, participant benefits, and tax information

Holyoke Youth Pride Empowerment, Holyoke, MA

Organizer, Sep. 2006 – June 2007

- Engaged youth in and facilitated the city's only community-based support and advocacy group for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth and their allies ages 13-18
- Served as a founding board member of the Holyoke Pride Alliance, a group that unites community members and leaders in health and youth services to advocate for equality in Holyoke
- Spearheaded the planning of the first annual Western Mass Youth Pride Prom, an event that gained local and state media coverage and attracted over 300 youth

Boston Youth and Police in Partnership (YPP), Roxbury, MA

Summer Program Coordinator, July – Aug. 2006

- Led fifteen YPP Peer Leaders in a theatre-based program to educate young people about the law, foster one-on-one relationships between police officers and young people, and promote understanding and cooperation between the two groups within the community
- Involved YPP Peer Leaders in service by leading visits to juvenile justice facilities during which Peer Leaders spoke with detained young people about crime, incarceration, and recidivism

City Year, Washington, DC

AmeriCorps Member, Aug. 2005 – June 2006

- Committed to 1,700 hours of national service over a ten-month period in the Washington, DC community
- Developed, gained academic and corporate support for, and implemented a theatre-based substance abuse education curriculum for 4th – 7th grade students that was recognized by City Year Inc. as the Best Capacity Building project of 2006
- Worked cohesively with team members to teach substance abuse education in over 25 public schools through skit shows and in-class curriculum sessions that reached over 4,000 students
- Provided physical rehabilitation for local schools, shelters, parks, and recreation centers
- Served as a one-on-one and group session literacy and math tutor for K-8th grade students
- Organized initiatives to improve the Washington, DC school system by attending and testifying at school board meetings
- Selected to engage more than 150 local and federal officials, corporate sponsors, individual donors, and community leaders through large-scale public speaking events and small-scale networking events
- Served as City Year's representative at conferences, roundtables, and one-on-one outreach visits
- Served as point of contact for media inquiries and corporate sponsors

Calumet Lutheran Camp and Conference Center, Freedom, NH

Senior Counselor, June 2005– Aug. 2005

Junior Counselor, June 2004– Aug. 2004

Leadership & Service Corps, June 2003

- Served as a full-time resident camp counselor for a cabin of ten elementary and middle school students
- Helped establish and run two one-week Camp Calumet Day Camps in Bridgeport, CT and Foxboro, MA

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Newlands West and Matubisizwe Secondary Schools, Bonela Primary School, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

June – July 2008

- Worked with learners and educators in rural, urban, primary and secondary schools in and around Durban, South Africa
- Served as a substitute for absent educators and facilitated “Life Orientation” curriculum in a rural school setting
- Worked with local youth from the KZN Youth Empowerment Program who volunteer in their community as HIV/AIDS educators and provide free breakfast for young people in the Cato Manor township

City Year, New York, NY

Young Heroes Team Leader, Jan. –May 2008

- Lead a diverse team of middle school students in a five-month service/learning program.

Riker’s Island Educational Facility, Queens, NY

Volunteer, Oct. – Dec. 2007

- Facilitated creative writing, spoken word, movement, and theatre workshops for incarcerated high school students within the Riker’s Island jail system as part of The Blackout Arts Collective’s national “Lyrics on Lockdown” program

Girls, Inc., Holyoke, MA

Tutor, Dec. 2006 – May 2007

- Served as a one-on-one literacy and math tutor for elementary school students

Holyoke Charter School, Holyoke, MA

Volunteer, Oct. 2006

- Facilitated process drama workshops for middle school students to deconstruct and imagine solutions for gang violence

The Samaritans of Greater Boston, Boston, MA

SamariTeen Volunteer, Oct. 2002 – June 2005

- Served as a supportive peer for teens in despair through a suicide prevention help line