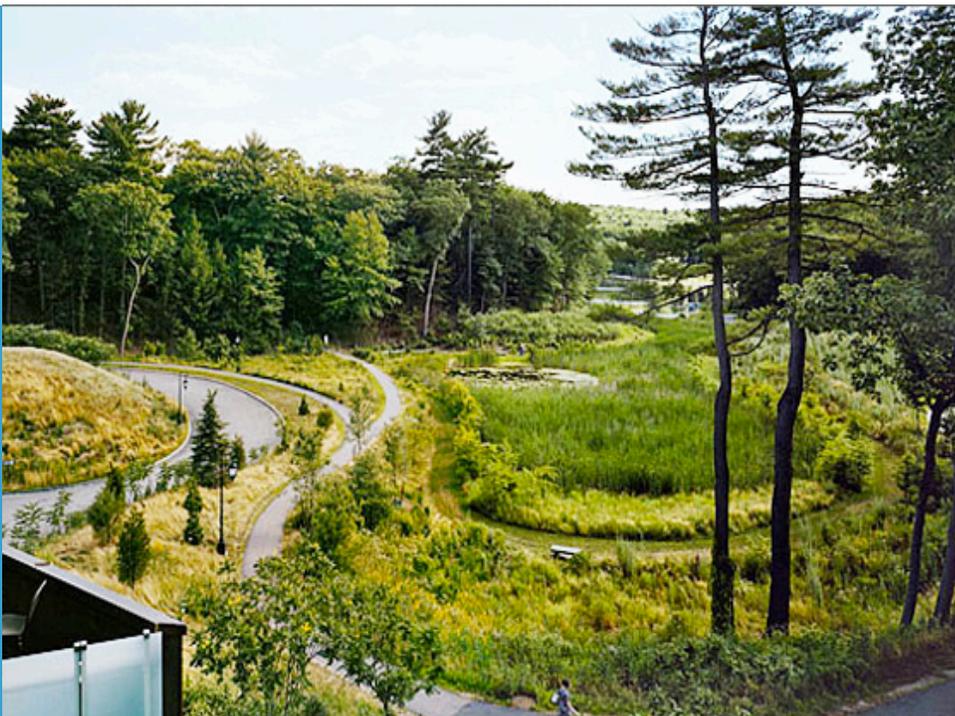


# Every Step



Spring 2014

## Wellesley College Peace & Justice Studies Newsletter

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### Welcome

In this edition of the newsletter, we are pleased to announce that Dr. Ronald Osborn will be with us for the next two years as a Mellon Post-Doctoral Fellow, teaching four classes during his appointment and providing support and advice for our students (see page 2 for a brief profile of Dr. Osborn). Larry Rosenwald will come back from his sabbatical leave and resume his post as Director of the Program. It has been a rewarding and challenging experience to co-direct the program in this year of transition. We look forward to working together with Larry to shape P&J direction and programs in the upcoming years.

We write these words of welcome shortly after the 2014 Commencement ceremonies, where we celebrated and sent off to the world twelve P&J graduates. It is always a bittersweet farewell: we are proud of our students' accomplishments and, with them, full of hope about their future. We envision them engaging in work for peace and justice thoughtfully, meaningfully and with humility and care. We know that, in whatever they choose to do, they will make a difference. And we look forward to keeping in touch and following them in their journeys. These newsletters are one of our efforts to do so: letting our friends know about the life of the Program and about the lives of our students and alums.

We cannot do this without all of you: keep in touch, let us know what you are doing, write us emails, don't be a stranger.

Susan Skeath and Catia Confortini  
Co-directors, Peace & Justice Studies Program

# Greetings from our 2014-2015 Mellon Fellow

## Ronald Osborn

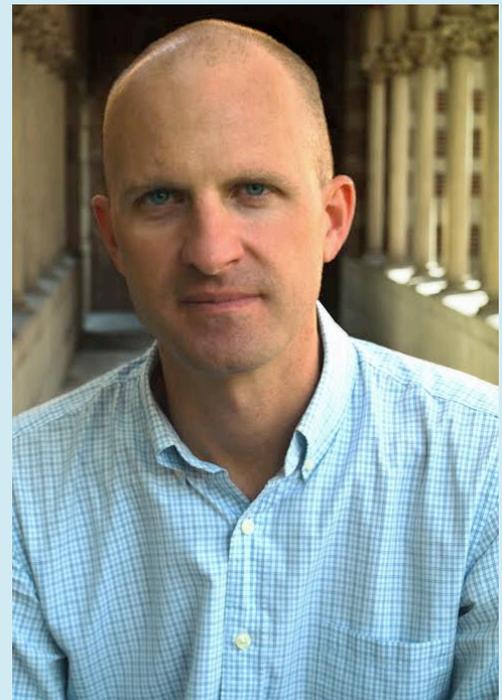
I am very excited to be joining the Peace & Justice Studies program and look forward to meeting many of you in August!

I am currently an adjunct faculty member in the Department of International Relations at the University of Southern California and in the Honors Program at UCLA. I earned my PhD in 2012 in Politics and International Relations at USC and also hold an MSc in Violence, Conflict and Development from the School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London). My teaching, research, and writing has crossed several disciplines (from political science to literature) but has been broadly concerned with questions of violence, human rights, and political ethics.

I hope to be able to teach courses at Wellesley over the next two years in areas of conflict mediation and negotiation, and at the intersection of religion, violence, and peacemaking. My scholarship has been shaped in important ways by my experiences growing up in Thailand, Taiwan, and Zimbabwe, which left me with a passion for travel and a commitment to cosmopolitan values. I have worked with several human rights and development NGOs overseas, and have provided emergency food and shelter relief to returning refugees in Kosovo (my first job out of college) and documented evidence of torture inside a prison in Guinea, West Africa.

More recently, I had the opportunity to conduct field research on the ideology of the Shining Path insurgency in Peru, and on the role of religion in resistance against the Indonesian Army's genocidal invasion and occupation of East Timor.

Apart from academic pursuits and conspiring trips to far-flung parts of the globe, I enjoy



swimming with a masters swim club, Latin dancing (although with more heart than talent), re-reading *The Brothers Karamazov*, the films of Terrence Malick, and eating Thai and Middle Eastern food (I am a vegetarian because I find it easier sneaking up on vegetables).

Any words of advice you might have as I prepare to move east, or just friendly notes of greeting and introduction, are very welcome. I can be reached at: [ronaldosborn@gmail.com](mailto:ronaldosborn@gmail.com)

## Alumna Profile

# Tenzin Dongchung

Class of 2013

## *Diasporic Identities & Education*

Dear P&J siblings,

Last May, I graduated from Wellesley with a Peace & Justice degree with a concentration on the historical and anthropological analysis of nationalism, identity and conflict. I want to share with you the story of how this academic journey unfolded.

When I first arrived as a freshman in 2009, it was exactly one year after the historic Beijing Olympics and the lesser-known 2008 uprisings inside Tibet. As a second generation Tibetan brought up in India, the events of 2008 and (the eventual hardening of Chinese government's policies inside Tibet) impacted me deeply. I convinced myself that to understand what needs to be done in Tibet, I must learn more about China. Taking the history, politics and language classes on China, I slowly began to understand how deeply western imperialism impacted Chinese national consciousness and just how tumultuous and traumatic the ordinary Chinese people's experiences were under Mao's regime. A class on Cultural Pluralism in the Middle East at MIT allowed me to learn about the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire into the many nation-states of Middle East. Through these courses, I developed interest in understanding the



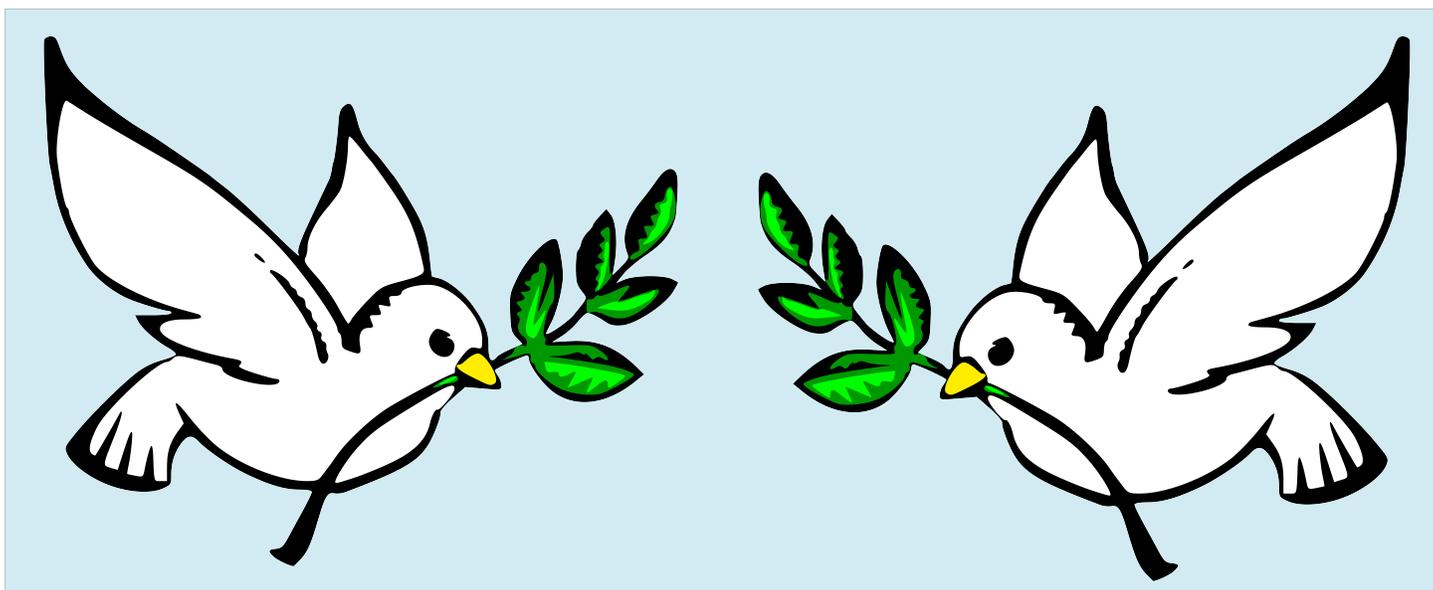
historical period when an empire transitions to nation-states, nationalism rises and people change from subjects to citizens, be it the Ottoman or the Qing. The flexibility of Peace & Justice allowed me to pursue this interest and complement it by taking anthropology classes to gain conceptual understanding of national identity, nation-state and related ideas.

Through an independent study in my senior year, I explored the historical factors that led to the national identity formation in the Tibetan Diaspora, i.e. people of my hometown, and studied about the first generation Tibetans who came to India and were the first to get a modern education. Through interviews, I was struck by how influential their schooling (both formal education and boarding experience) was to their later understanding of history, nation and identity. This became an important point because many of these people ended up building political and cultural institutions in India and molded the narratives of Tibetan-ness in exile.

Having studied at a Tibetan school, this experience made me connect the history education of the older generation to the current nationalism in exile. I was deeply concerned by the narrowing and insulating influence of nationalism on the current Tibetan education system, particularly in homogenizing the different stories of history and politicizing language classes. To explore how learning can occur in a way that children grow up with flexible ideas of nation, culture and history, I applied for the Knafel traveling fellowship to look at history and language curriculum of other minorities, who like the Tibetans have their own language and seek to balance the dilemma of integrating without losing one's culture.

I started my research in occupied Palestine at a few Arab Christian schools, where I found history education to be difficult and painful, for the teachers are not allowed to teach the children of their Palestinian past and must instead follow the curriculum on Israeli (i.e. Jewish) history. Not surprisingly, many of the students expressed no interest in learning history. This was in sharp contrast to the Welsh middle schools in the UK, where the education was hopeful. After centuries of oppression, the efforts of parents and teachers have led to the revival of the Welsh language and start of Welsh middle schools. Among the students, I found a growing appreciation of the efforts of the older generation to make this learning possible and they unanimously agreed on the importance of knowing one's history. Currently, I am in Peru to look at the Japanese Peruvian community here. Exposure to the art of Japanese Peruvian artists showed me the potential of the fusion of cultures and the positive impact of knowing one's roots but being open to the majority culture as well. Over the next few months, I will continue on the fellowship journey to my final destination: South Africa.

I want to end by saying that while at Wellesley, Peace & Justice allowed me to take initiative for my learning, to develop a feminist curiosity, to listen hard and listen well and to resist simplifications. All of these tools have helped me in my personal and academic journey so far. I am grateful for this learning.



## Class of 1950 Emily Greene Balch Scholarship Recipient

The Emily Greene Balch Grant is a \$3,500 summer internship stipend for students to carry-out a summer project which analyzes the ways in which injustice is linked to conflict, and encourages the study of the relationship between peace, justice, and social change. It is generously funded in perpetuity by the Class of 1950. Congratulations to this year's recipient **Idalmis Vaquero!**

### Environmental Justice and Community Empowerment: Idalmis Vaquero



My internship opportunity this summer is supported by the generosity of the Class of 1950's Emily Greene Balch Internship Fund. This opportunity will allow me to advocate for environmental justice in my community by working with Communities of a Better Environment. CBE is a California-based organization founded in 1978 known for its environmental justice work in Northern and Southern California. It focuses on community organizing, public advocacy, and research.

Working with CBE will allow me to engage in a project to campaign against further expansion of the I-710 freeway. This project is important to me because the I-710 freeway runs primarily through my community in East Los Angeles. Freeway expansion means that my community will be exposed to more noise, air pollution, and adverse health risks. Los Angeles' highly industrialized environment has led to high rates of asthma, chronic and respiratory illnesses among children and adults, especially in low-income, minority communities.

The expansion of the I-710 freeway is linked to systematic oppression and racial, ethnic, and class residential segregation that makes under-resourced, low-income, ethnic and racial minority communities more disproportionately exposed to environmental and health hazards. For example, my family's low socioeconomic status has placed us in a government-housing apartment near high levels of environmental pollution caused by industrial factories. We live within walking distance of multiple metal refineries, a recycling and disposal facility, and a meat production and packing factory--all of which emit harmful chemicals into the soil and air we breathe.

I feel very passionate to work on an environmental justice project that has the potential to improve the lives and health of my low-income, immigrant, Latin@ community.

My project will begin by establishing connections with local communities and working with the Coalition of Environmental Health to organize attendance to city council meetings that discuss freeway expansion. I hope to bring local voices to the decision-making table and ensure that health is accounted for. Hopefully through this internship, I can help advance demands for a healthy environment, clean air, and an improved quality of life for communities that live along the I-710 freeway. Ultimately, the goal of this project is to advocate policy changes that ensure clean transportation alternatives instead of the diesel-based freight transport the region currently uses. This project will help me analyze ways in which environmental justice issues are linked to conflict by vocalizing community members' concerns, and it will help my understanding of peace by finding ways that my community and local governmental agencies can compromise and engage in dialogue.

Through the support and generosity of the Class of 1950, I will be able to make a difference in my community. I will be able to use my Wellesley education and passion for service to help improve my family's and community's well-being and the environment we live in.

## Class of 1950/Class of 1945 Emily Greene Balch Scholarship- Alba Jameson Memorial Fund Recipient

Congratulations to this year's recipient **Michele Ross!**

### Combating Food Injustice: Michele Ross



Through the generosity of the Class of 1950/Class of 1945 - Emily Greene Balch Scholarship/Alba Jameson Memorial Fund, my research project this summer will be dedicated to working with the Cambridge Weekend Backpack Program. I will write grants, initiate fundraising campaigns, and work with several Cambridge Whole Foods locations to bring the issue of childhood food insecurity to the forefront in the Cambridge community. I am excited to have a chance to use my newly honed grant writing skills (Learning by Giving Sociology/Writing 307 fall semester 2014) to support this important local nonprofit. As a Peace & Justice Studies major with a concentration in Urban Inequality Issues, the work being done by the Cambridge

Backpack Program falls neatly into my area of study, and, as a mom, it is very close to my heart.

The problem of childhood hunger is not simply a moral issue. It is a social justice issue. It is a crucial indicator of larger structural issues in our communities. Childhood hunger hampers a young person's ability to learn. A child who struggles to learn is more likely to suffer from poverty as an adult. Food insecurity is just one symptom of a larger, more endemic problem affecting an increasing number of families in our communities – inequality of opportunity. A hungry child, one who we can see in our own community, should alert us to this bigger issue: food insecurity happens to families living in poverty and, in addition to hunger, children in these families confront issues of inequality of opportunity before they even enter school. Once they enter their local public school, which, in a poor neighborhood is most likely underfunded, these children immediately struggle to catch up. Their opportunities pre K have been fewer than those of their peers, and once they are enrolled in school, these disparities are blatantly obvious. Helping to eliminate one symptom, hunger, gives a child the chance to begin to overcome some of these disparities.

The Cambridge Weekend Backpack program is dedicated to addressing this issue, one child and one school at a time. This program began with one school in 2012. It grew out of one parent's concern for the hunger she witnessed in her own children's public elementary school in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The people who need the backpack program are people we all know - some are people who one would never guess are in need. That next person in need could be any of us. Instead of waiting for food insecurity to come someone else's way, the Cambridge Weekend Backpack program is dedicated to solving this problem together, so it's not affecting any of us.

I learned of the Cambridge Weekend Backpack Program on WBUR's Radio Boston earlier this year. It was a classic NPR moment: I pulled over, jotted down notes, and reached out the minute I got home! I heard back from the parent spearheading this project almost immediately and began a correspondence. I learned that this year 7 of the 13 elementary schools in Cambridge are participating in this program, serving a total of 149 children, at a cost of \$6.00 per day. The remaining 6 elementary and 2 secondary schools have signed on for the coming 2014/15 school year. These additional schools will add 211 children to the program, bringing the total cost of the program from just under \$35,000 per year to over a projected \$81,000 next year. The growth projected for 2014/15 will more than double the budget for the Cambridge Weekend Backpack program. The rapid growth of the program has created an urgent need for more 'hands' to help, and with the award I have received from our wonderful alumnae classes, I am able to add another pair of helping hands to this important work. I am very grateful to the Class of 1950/Class of 1945 - Emily Greene Balch Scholarship/Alba Jameson Memorial Fund for making my research and work with this important nonprofit organization possible this summer.

# Peace & Justice

## Jobs and Internships

### La Alianza Hispana's Family Counseling Center

**Location:** Roxbury, MA  
**Contact:** Rosita Colon  
(617) 427-7175 Ext. 221  
[rcolon@laalianza.org](mailto:rcolon@laalianza.org)

La Alianza Hispana's Family Counseling Center, located at 78 Forest Street in Boston's Roxbury neighborhood, provides bilingual and culturally competent mental health and family support services to the Greater Boston Area residents, with special emphasis in the Latino community.

### La Alianza Hispana's Education and Workforce Development

**Location:** Roxbury, MA  
**Contact:** Rosita Colon  
(617) 427-7175 Ext. 221  
[rcolon@laalianza.org](mailto:rcolon@laalianza.org)

La Alianza Hispana was founded to provide English language services to Latinos. Since then, our Education and Workforce Development programs have played a vital role in creating and enhancing the economic opportunities for thousands of Boston area immigrants.

### Women's International League for Peace and Freedom – Centennial Congress and Women's Power to Stop War Conference

**Location:** Geneva (Switzerland), Boston, MA and New York, NY  
**Contact:** [internship@wilpf.ch](mailto:internship@wilpf.ch) (Switzerland/New York); Ria Kulenovic [rkulenovic@wilpf.org](mailto:rkulenovic@wilpf.org) (Boston)  
<http://www.womenstopwar.org/internships/>  
<http://www.wilpfus.org>

### The Food Project (Job)

**Location:** Lincoln, MA  
**Website:** <http://thefoodproject.org/get-involved/work-here>

Food from the organization's farms is distributed through community supported agriculture programs and farmers' markets, and donated to local hunger relief groups. Participants help in all of these distribution streams, and gain insight into the issues of food

### U.S. Department of Labor/Women's Bureau

**Location:** Boston, MA  
**Apply online at:**  
<http://www.internships.com/government/nonpaid>

The Bureau has the duty to "formulate standards and policies which shall promote the welfare of wage-earning women, improve their working conditions, increase their efficiency, and advance their opportunities for profitable

### Wellesley Centers for Women

**Location:** Wellesley, MA  
**Contact:** (781) 283-2500

The Wellesley Centers for Women at Wellesley College is one of the largest gender-focused research-and-action organizations in the world. Scholars at the Centers conduct social science research and evaluation, develop theory and publications, and implement training programs on issues that put women's lives and women's concerns at the center. Since 1974, our work has generated changes in attitudes, practices, and public policy.

# New Course Offering (Spring 2015): **PEAC 205: Gender, War, & Peace- building**



*Girls, boys, women wearing soldiers' uniforms (?), World War I – Source: Flickr*

It is increasingly recognized that war is a profoundly gendered experience. First, differently gendered people experience war differently. Second, war and gender relations are mutually constitutive. Finally, gender is a powerful idea and symbolic construct that configures the ways we see and makes sense of the world around us, a world which often includes conflict and war. In this discussion based course we will explore together (teacher and students as co-learners) these gendered dimensions of war, focusing on the post-Cold War period. We will pay particular attention to what feminists have described as the continuum of violence, from the “private” to the “public” sphere, from militarization of every day living to overt violent conflict. We will address specific issues such as the political economy of war, sexualized violence, the militarization of gendered bodies, gendered forms of cooperation with violence and political activism. Finally, we will reflect on the implications of gendered wars for human security and the building of peace, looking at the gendered aspects of “post-conflict” reconstructions, and gendered forms of resistance to political violence.

*Instructor: Catia Confortini*

# Alumni Updates & Advice to the Class of 2014

## **Molly Cyr** **Class of 2013**

After graduating in May of 2013, I was a wilderness-tripping guide for the summer and then moved to France to begin a year teaching English. I am now working for an elementary school in Dax, France outside of Bordeaux. Next year, I will be in Dublin, Ireland where I will be enrolled in a Masters program in International Peace Studies at Trinity College, Dublin.

As young alum, I would say to those graduating that, if you don't feel as though you have a lot of direction following graduation, *follow what your heart tells you to do*. As cheesy as it sounds, if you think often about a particular place you visited or a type of lifestyle you once experienced, start there - do a geographic job or school search or see what you can make happen in a particular region.

## **Rachel Goldenberg** **Class of 2012**

As a recent grad, I already see how important Peace & Justice Studies are for being a successful and well-rounded employee. I work for a liberal Congressman in the US House of Representatives, and I find myself doing a lot more questioning and less answering. As a P&J student, I learned to question people's assumptions and to dig a little deeper into ideas we (and in this case, our government) take for granted.

I'm proud to be one of the voices in our office trying to shift the dialogue away from conflict and obstructionism and towards compromise and shared values. I really do use my P&J critical thinking skills on a daily basis and am so grateful to have been awarded the opportunity to learn at Wellesley College.

## **Grace Yasumura** **Class of 2010**

I am working on my PhD in Art History. While this is not what I envisioned doing with my degree when I was at Wellesley (I thought I would be working in public health), being a Peace & Justice Studies major has deeply informed my research and methodological approach to the discipline of art history.

Much of my intellectual efforts as an undergraduate were spent examining the extent to which the causes and consequences of environmental degradation are influenced by social inequality. As such, my current research centers on the inequalities of gender, class, and race that exist at the center of social relations and the extent to which these inequalities structure material production of art. By extension, I am interested in analyzing the ideological discourses operating within advanced industrial societies and the ways these discourses shape the representation of art objects and their critical reception.

## **Amy Keir** **Class of 2010**

I am applying my P&J degree to my work in the nonprofit field. I am in my second year of a Master of Nonprofit Management program at the University of Oregon. My focus is in education and social services. I am involved with a few local education and youth mentoring organizations. I live in Eugene, Oregon and enjoy hanging out here with fellow Class of 2010 Peace & Justice alum, Maria Bybee (we met on the Wintersession in India trip!).

My advice to the graduating class: *Don't be afraid of a winding path, especially in the field of community work and social justice*. It will all be worth it, as long as you focus on the people you meet and the care you put into your relationships.

**Jo Murphy**  
**Class of 2009**

Currently, I am at Harvard Divinity School in my second year of a three-year Masters program in divinity. Over the summer, I worked with two different organizations in the slums of New Delhi and Mumbai, writing and leading project-based justice classes for youth as well as an advocacy and leadership development curriculum for young women. Prior to coming to HDS I worked as a Peace Corps volunteer piloting and organizing environmental projects in Malawi, Africa. My advice for graduating seniors is: *if you do what you love, you will find who you love and these findings make the best and the most just communities.*

**Rebecca Pisarski**  
**Class of 2008**

I am currently a 7th grade math teacher at a culturally diverse middle school in CT. I focused on race relations within Peace & Justice Studies, and I decided to work on social and racial justice by working in education, so I took 30 credits in math and received a Masters in Education.

Current students, you'll figure out your calling, *just listen to your gut and focus on things you are passionate about.*

**Justine Parker**  
**Class of 2007**

I went to medical school and did a research fellowship after Wellesley... I'm now in family medicine, in my first year of residency training. I think of teaching, learning from, and working with patients as the deepest, most exquisite love practice I could imagine for myself. *Just do what you enjoy!*

**Danielle Mickenberg**  
**Class of 2005**

I am currently living in New Orleans and working at the Capital Post Conviction Project of Louisiana (CPCPL). I am a Mitigation Investigator at our office, which means that I get to investigate the life stories of our clients and then tell them in a way that a jury would find sympathetic enough to grant a life sentence rather than a death sentence.

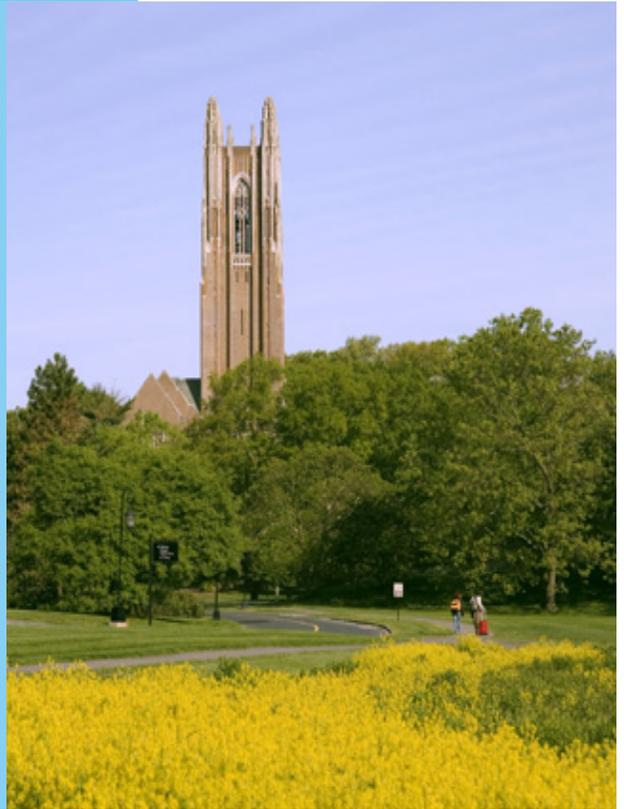
I have been at CPCPL for two years and my journey to this place was not linear, but rather convoluted, trying to find where my passions, interests and skills converged. When I left Wellesley, I knew I wanted to do something meaningful, but I didn't know how or what that meant. The following is a brief description of how I arrived at my current place.

Immediately after graduating from Wellesley, I worked for a couple years at the non-profit Healthy Families as a Home Visitor. I worked with teenage mothers as a case manager and taught them about early childhood development and parenting techniques. Healthy Families may have been meaningful work, but it was not something that I truly enjoyed. So, I decided to go to law school. I attended the University of Connecticut where I received certification in human rights law while also exploring other kinds of public interest law. Yet, at the end of my course of study, I realized that the idea of being a lawyer held little interest for me. While working at the public defender in Connecticut on a death penalty case, I found that I loved the mitigation investigation work. It was something that I thought was meaningful, interesting, challenging, and something that I could be good at. And here I am.

Here is my advice to the graduating class: *follow your interests and your passions.* I think all of us (at Wellesley and especially the Peace & Justice Studies program) want to do good deeds in the world, and what the world needs is people who love what they do. We put so much pressure on ourselves to do great things that sometimes I think we lose ourselves in the process. I love this quote and I wish that I had used this as my guiding principal:

**“Don’t ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.”**

“When we come to it  
We must confess that we are the possible  
We are the miraculous, the true wonder of this world  
That is when, and only when  
We come to it.”  
(*A Brave and Startling Truth*)  
- Maya Angelou (1928-2014)



Spring 2014

# *Every Step*

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