



AMERICAN JEWISH WORLD SERVICE

GLOBAL JUSTICE FELLOWSHIP FOR RABBINICAL AND GRADUATE STUDENTS 2014-2015

The AJWS Global Justice Fellowship is a selective, year-long program designed to inspire, educate and train key opinion leaders in the American Jewish community to become advocates in support of U.S. policies that will help improve the lives of people in the developing world.

AJWS has selected 17 fellows for the Global Justice Fellowship for Rabbinical and Graduate Students, which will take place from fall 2014 to fall 2015. The fellowship includes a 10-day trip to El Salvador and Nicaragua, during which participants will learn from grassroots activists working to overcome poverty and injustice. The trip will be preceded and followed by innovative trainings that will prepare participants to mobilize and organize their communities and networks to advance AJWS's campaigns and other efforts for global justice.

The 17 Rabbinical and Graduate Student Global Justice Fellows come from five U.S. states and Israel. They represent a broad array of backgrounds, communities, professional experiences and networks.

RABBINICAL FELLOWS



Emily Barton is a fourth-year rabbinical student at the Jewish Theological Seminary in Manhattan. She was part of the Davar Acher Leadership Program with Encounter and served as the rabbinic intern at Congregation Eshel Avraham in Be'er Sheva, Israel. Prior to rabbinical

school, Emily worked as a professional pastry chef, and she also served as a chaplain in a trauma hospital in Seattle, Wash. Emily holds a Bachelor of Commerce in International Business and a Bachelor of Arts in English literature from McGill University. In addition to becoming a congregational rabbi, Emily is learning to be a Jewish mindfulness and meditation instructor.

Laura Bellows is an emerging leader in the field of Jewish environmental and justice education. She is pursuing rabbinical ordination at Hebrew College, in Boston, after nearly 15 years as an educator, organizer and advocate for just communities. Previously, she served as director of congregational and community programs for the Teva Learning Alliance, building relationships with more than 40 congregations to promote environmental justice, minimize global climate change and inspire transformative Jewish education. She has also taught for the National Havurah Committee, Jewish Farm School, Limmud, Interfaith Youth for Climate Justice and AVODAH, and continues to teach justice, art and spirituality at Boston's Prozdor School. Laura holds a Bachelor of Arts in environmental studies from Oberlin College. As an artist, she makes pottery, sings and teaches Hebrew calligraphy.





Deena Cowans is a graduate of Duke University, where she studied cultural anthropology and Spanish. Since graduation, she has lived and worked in Washington, D.C. as a corps member with AVODAH; in Jerusalem as a JDC Global Service Fellow; and in Kathmandu, Nepal as a volunteer with Tevel B'Tzedek. In the fall, Deena will begin a Master of Public Administration in development practice at Columbia University. Deena is a Yoga Alliance-certified yoga instructor and an avid blogger, and has backpacked throughout India, Cambodia and Thailand.

Avishai Gebler is a second-year rabbinical student at Yeshivat Chovevei Torah and the rabbinic intern at the Prospect Heights Shul, where he teaches classes, delivers sermons and facilitates formal and informal programs for the community. He received his Bachelors of Arts in Religion from Columbia University. While studying at Columbia, Avishai served as a member of the Judaic studies faculty as well as the director of student activities at the Kohelet Yeshiva High School in Merion, Pa. A banjo player, he also played in the Columbia Bluegrass Band.



Jina Davidovich is currently pursuing a master's in Jewish philosophy at Yeshiva University while working as a program associate in the Educational Resources and Organizational Development Department at UJA-Federation of New York. In her role, she facilitates student programming and teaches Jewish studies courses to lay leadership. Previously, Jina participated in the Drishna Institute Arts Fellowship Program, where she explored the relationship between Jewish text and performance poetry. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in English literature from Stern College.

Lizz Goldstein is a rabbinical student at the Academy for Jewish Religion. Following her studies, she plans to be an "Under-Constructionist" rabbi, teaching the next generation about the importance of social justice in Jewish values. Lizz was inspired to pursue her vision for a rabbinate rooted in social justice by her experiences traveling around the world and her undergraduate studies on terror and climate change at Hampshire College.



Andi Feldman is currently a rabbinical student at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, Ohio. She grew up in St. Louis, Mo. as a member of Congregation Shaare Emeth. In 2009, Andi received her Bachelor of Arts in psychology as well as a certificate in Jewish studies from the University of Wisconsin in Madison. After college, she participated in OTZMA, a 10-month volunteer program in Israel. From 2012 to 2013, Andi served as a fellow in the first cohort of The Jewish Foundation Fellowship in Cincinnati. She has served student congregations in Trenton and Bay City, Mich while teaching religious school at Rockdale Temple in Cincinnati. Andi recently received her Master of Art in Religious Education from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and is currently working as an education intern at Temple Shaaray Tefila.

Meredith Grabek is currently pursuing a dual master's degree at Brandeis University, where she will receive her MBA from the Heller School of Social Policy and Management and a Master of Arts in Jewish professional leadership. Previously, Meredith worked with the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans, where she assisted with fundraising and developed a re-energized Jewish Next Gen program. In 2008, she joined AVODAH: The Jewish Service Corps in New Orleans, La., where she studied social justice and served elderly, low-income survivors of Hurricane Katrina. Meredith holds a Bachelor of Arts in sociology from the University of Delaware. She is interested in further exploring the intersection of social justice and Judaism.





Rachel Kaplan Marks is entering her final year as a rabbinical student at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Having earned her Master of Arts in Jewish education, Rachel expects to be ordained rabbi next spring. During rabbinical school, Rachel has served

congregations in Calabasas, Beverly Hills, and San Pedro, Calif. Rachel hopes to work in the congregational world and to incorporate her passions for Jewish camping and Israel education into her rabbinate. Rachel has a passion for teaching Jewish texts and traditions, and feels strongly that study must be paired with action for social justice. She lives with her husband in Los Angeles.



Rory Katz is a congregational educator at Congregation Beth Elohim in Park Slope, Brooklyn, where she teaches the 4th, 6th and 7th grades. In the fall, she will begin rabbinical school at the Jewish Theological Seminary. Rory has previously worked with the Guadalupano Family Center

in Chicago and the Philadelphia Free School and Jewish Farm School in Philadelphia, Pa. She is also an alumna of Yeshivat Hadar and AVODAH: The Jewish Service Corps. She graduated in 2009 with a Bachelor of Arts in philosophy with a focus on feminist philosophy.



Sasha Kesler is a first-year student at Yeshivat Maharat, the first institution to ordain Orthodox women as spiritual leaders. She currently works with Immerse NYC as a facilitator of conversations on mikvah, the ritual bath, in the Jewish community. Previously,

she participated in a fellowship at the Drisha Institute for Jewish Studies and, during college, she worked for a student-led organization educating the broader community on issues of sexual violence and women's empowerment. A Seattle native, Sasha holds a Bachelor of Arts in international conflict management from Fairhaven College. She resides in New York City with her husband Chaim.

Elie Lehmann is a second-year rabbinical student at Hebrew College in Boston.

In YEAR, Elie and his wife participated in AJWS's Volunteer Corps program, spending a year volunteering with local NGOs in Kenya and on the border of Thailand and Burma. Prior to joining AJWS Volunteer Corps, Elie spent two years as a Yeshivat Hadar Fellow in New York City. In 2009, Elie earned a Bachelor of Arts in Religion from Columbia University and a Bachelor of Arts in rabbinic literature from The Jewish Theological Seminary.



Salem Pearce is a second-year rabbinical student at Hebrew College, in Boston,

where she is a Rabbis Without Borders Student Fellow and a CIRCLE Fellow leading interfaith text study. Salem is currently participating in an eight-week human rights and social justice fellowship program through T'ruah, and will serve as the rabbinic intern at The Boston Synagogue this fall. Before rabbinical school, Salem fundraised for a variety of non-profit organizations and volunteered as a hospital advocate, hotline counselor and board member at the DC Rape Crisis Center. She was also a Jeremiah Fellow at Jews United for Justice. A native Texan, Salem has a Bachelor of Arts in Classics from the University of Texas at Austin. She currently lives in Boston with her husband Joe.



Rachel Rothstein is a doctoral candidate in the history department of the

University of Florida and also a graduate student coordinator for the University's Center for European Studies. Rachel has received numerous awards for her work, including grants from the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and a Fulbright for research in Poland. She has also served as a JDC Jewish Service Corps volunteer in Timisoara, Romania. Rachel has a Master of Arts in Jewish studies from Washington University in St. Louis, Mo. and bachelor's degrees in political science and sociology from the University of Georgia.





Juliana Schnur is a rabbinical student at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and a Wexner Graduate Fellow. Previously, she served two roles at Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), first as assistant to the president-elect and then as coordinator of strategic initiatives.

Previously, Juli worked at the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, where she was an Eisendrath legislative assistant, projects coordinator and director of Reform Jewish Voice of New York State. Juli graduated summa cum laude from New York University with a Bachelor of Arts in Jewish history and Spanish literature and a Master of Arts in Jewish history. She is a senior fellow of Humanity in Action, an international educational organization.



Ari Weber is currently spending his third year of rabbinical school studying at Yeshivat Har Etzion in Israel, and will begin his fourth year at Yeshivat Chovevei Torah in New York City in the fall. Previously, Ari spent four years in Israel learning in yeshiva, serving in the Israeli army and

volunteering with the Jewish Agency and Livnot, a community-building program. Upon completion of his studies, Ari is considering working on Hillel campuses or in the chaplaincy field. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with degrees in social welfare and Hebrew.

SCHOLAR IN RESIDENCE:

Rabbi Dr. Aryeh Cohen is Professor of Rabbinic Literature at the Zeigler School of Rabbinic Studies of the American Jewish University. A scholar, teacher, writer, lecturer and activist, he has authored three books and writes for news outlets including The Huffington Post and Daily Beast. Dr. Cohen is also a board member of CLUE-LA, an interfaith organization that works for economic justice, and T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights. Along with several other activists, Dr. Cohen created the Interfaith Sanctuary at Occupy LA. He is also a founding member of the Shtibl Minyan, a consensus-based, lay-led, independent minyan in Los Angeles. He and his wife Andrea have two children, Shachar and Oryah.



AJWS STAFF



John Cape is a senior program officer in the experiential education department at American Jewish World Service (AJWS). His primary responsibilities include developing curriculum and managing group leaders for AJWS's Global Justice Fellowship. Prior to joining AJWS, John coordinated programs

at the Museum of Jewish Heritage. He has also taught English in Costa Rica through WorldTeach, served as a counselor with Seeds of Peace and as a lead instructor for struggling adolescents with Outward Bound. John earned his Bachelor of Arts in government and religious studies from Cornell University. He lives in Harlem with his wife and daughter.



Adina Mermelstein Konikoff is a senior organizer of education at AJWS. She joined the organization in 2004, and over the past nine years has trained and inspired Jewish leaders around the country to mobilize the American Jewish community to fight for the human rights of marginalized people in the

developing world. Adina has worked with hundreds of rabbis and leaders to support them in living their values of seeking greater justice for all. Prior to joining AJWS, Adina attended Drisha Institute for Jewish Education, where she spent a year studying in the Beit Midrash program. Adina graduated from Boston University with degrees in psychology and Spanish and is a Selah Leadership Fellow. She currently lives in White Plains, NY with her husband Ari and children Amalya and Yonah.