

EEO VIEWS

Vincent Sapienza
Acting Commissioner

Carolina Gazal | Terrel Sykes | Natalie Venegas
EEO Summer Interns

Martha Osenni
Director of EEO



Left to Right: Carol Brooks, Tamara Williamson, Kimberly Cusumano, Adrian Allen, Natalie Venegas, Terrel Sykes, Martha Osenni, Alejandra Lamarche, Gloria Rodriguez, Tanika Thomas.
Photo Credits to Carolina Gazal, EEO Summer 2016 Intern

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2nd Annual Disability Pride Parade

On July 10, 2016, thousands of New Yorkers, including DEP employees, friends, and family, marched through the streets of Manhattan for the 2nd Annual Disability Pride Parade to celebrate people with disabilities and the strides that have been made towards creating a more accessible city. The goal of the parade is to end the stigma surrounding the term "disability", and to recognize the diversity of New York City. The inaugural parade was held last summer to honor the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the nation's first civil rights law fighting for the needs of people with disabilities¹. The purpose of this act was to create a clear national directive for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities. The act prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, public services, and public accommodations. Prior to this act, people with disabilities were often denied the same rights and opportunities afforded to non-disabled people in terms of accessibility, education, employment, homeownership, telecommunications, among other facets of everyday life we often take for granted.

The Disability Rights Movement gained momentum in the 1960s alongside other civil rights movements, where people with different kinds of disabilities (physical, mental, visual, hearing, and others) came together to fight for a common cause². Through their efforts and persistent activism, New York City passed Local Law 58 of 1987, which brought forth the first

significant changes regarding access to the built environment for people with disabilities³. Since the early victories of NYC Local Law 58 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, New York City activists, organizations, politicians, and allies have continued to work together to push through new legislation to protect the rights of the disabled community.

The New York City Disability Pride Parade demonstrates that through collective action and diversity, progress is achieved. DEP will continue to participate in future Disability Pride Parades to continue to raise awareness and to promote diversity and inclusion throughout the Agency.

You can view our 2nd Annual Disability Pride Parade video here <http://portal/Pages/default.aspx> under the subheading "Inside DEP."

¹ The Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress. "Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990." *US Equal Employment Opportunities Commission*. N.p., 1990. Web.

² Linton, Simi (1998). *Claiming Disability Knowledge and Identity*. New York: New York University Press. p. 9.

³ NYC Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities "A Summary of Local Law 58". Web. <http://www.nyc.gov/html/records/rwg/mopd/html/local58.html>

NEW STAFF



Sean Hinds
Attorney | Investigator Specialist

Sean began working for the NYC Department of Education in 2004 as a high school English teacher. After attending law school he began working as an Assistant District Attorney in Kings County. Before joining DEP, Sean was a Labor Relations Specialist with the NYC Health and Hospitals wherein he conducted investigations into misconduct and settled grievances. Sean joins DEP as an Agency Attorney/Investigator Specialist, where he will investigate internal complaints of discrimination, provide legal counseling on employment matters, and will conduct various EEO training throughout DEP. He has a B.A in English from City College of New York, an M.S. in Education and Special Education from Touro College, and J.D. from Penn State University. He is also a member of the EEO Diversity Committee.

“Injustice anywhere is injustice everywhere.” -Martin Luther King Jr.



Gloria Rodriguez
Diversity Liaison

Gloria recently graduated with a Masters in Public Administration with a concentration in Human Resources and Operations and Management. Before joining DEP, she worked at John Jay College as a College Assistant facilitating student programs, service projects, events and fundraisers. She joined DEP in 2015 as a College Aide, and was recently appointed as a Diversity Liaison. She has assisted in the development and planning of DEP’s 3rd annual Diversity Celebration and the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Gloria is a critical member of our Diversity and Inclusion group that promotes DEP’s diversity events and recruitment initiatives.

“ Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.”
-Confucius

FAREWELL SUMMER INTERNS



Carolina Gazal
Boston College '19 | English Major

The function of the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) is to ensure that all DEP employees are comfortable in a diversified and respectful environment. This is guaranteed through diversity and inclusion programs, such as the Disability Pride Parade and Diversity Celebration, as well as programs on a fundamental basis, such as structured interviews and dogged efforts to diversify the candidate pool. I have worked on publicizing these efforts; making a promotional video for the Disability Pride Parade, researching and selecting photos for the Diversity Celebration, making sure every floor of the DEP building was in compliance with Executive Order 16, and handling casework when employees felt they have been discriminated against. In the melting pot that is New York City, we have the unique advantage of drawing from other people’s differences and achieving insurmountable progress as a whole.

“The world is full of obvious things which nobody by any chance ever observes.”- Mark Haddon, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*



Terrel Sykes
John Jay College of Criminal Justice '17 | Criminal Justice, M.A.

I assisted with Equal Employment Opportunity complaint cases, reasonable accommodations determination reports, assisted with the compiling of EEO PowerPoint training presentations, and provided administrative support. Additionally, I assisted in bringing LeFrak Headquarters into compliance with Mayoral Executive Order 16, which allows individuals to use the restroom, locker rooms, or other single-sex facility consistent with their gender identity or gender expression. With the help of the EEO staff, I ensured the Executive Order 16 signage was posted in the appropriate places, as well as conducted facility inspections to ensure they were not removed or tampered with. While working here this summer I learned the immense importance of EEO, and diversity and inclusion in the workplace. I was fortunate enough to help organize and attend several diversity events such as the Disability Pride Parade, and the Brown Bag: Exploring the Life of People Differently Able.

“I know there is strength in the differences between us. I know there is comfort, where we overlap.”- Ani DiFranco



Natalie Venegas
John Jay College of Criminal Justice '18 | Inspection and Oversight, MPA

While working with the Equal Employment Opportunity Office, the summer of 2016, I had the opportunity to expand my knowledge about current issues concerning diversity and inclusion. It has been a pleasure working with the EEO staff and fellow interns on diversity events, such as the Disability Pride Parade and the upcoming 4th Annual Diversity Celebration. With the support of the EEO team, I learned how to develop and draft memorandums and reports for complaint cases and reasonable accommodation cases. This summer I also contributed by creating flyers for upcoming events and by designing and editing EEO trainings and newsletters. I look forward to what lies ahead as I continue to work with the EEO team as a College Aide.

“It is impossible to live without failing at something, unless you live so cautiously that you might as well not have lived at all. In which case you fail by default.” -J.K. Rowling

Are You Ready for the "T"?



Presenters Steve DeValk and Elana Lancaster at the IgbT: Are you Ready for the "T"? Training

On Thursday, July 21st, 2016, the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), with the assistance of The EEO Office and OD&HR, hosted a training titled *IgbT: Are you Ready for the "T"?* This training is part of a mandate from Mayoral Executive Order 16. Executive Order 16 allows individuals the right to use the restroom, locker room, or other single-sex facilities consistent with their gender identity or gender expression. Another mandate required by Executive Order 16, is that proper signage must be placed in conspicuous places and on bathroom doors throughout all DEP facilities. The EEO office has been working diligently to ensure agency compliance on that front.

The facilitators of the training were Steve DeValk and Elana Lancaster from the Future Work Institute, a workplace training organization that specializes in sensitivity training dealing with race, gender, and LGBTQ issues. The training started with Elana, a transman, giving a detailed explanation of what being transgender means legally, socially, and medically. To cement this understanding, the presenters showed a video of a family adjusting and accepting a very young transgender child. Next, Elana explained the important difference between being transgender and sexual orientation. Elana wrapped up his explanation about transgender, gender identity, and sexual orientation with an interactive quiz. This activity afforded the managers and supervisors the opportunity to participate and ask questions to better their understanding of a topic that may be alien to many. Steve started his part of the presentation summarizing Executive Order 16 and what it means for the agency. Afterward, he went over the do's and don'ts when engaging transgender employees. To solidify his explanation, Mr. DeValk split the audience up into groups and had them work on mock workplace scenarios. This allowed for them to think about how to handle those situations properly, while also provoking them to ask questions specifically tailored to their units. The two facilitators concluded the presentation with an intense and engaged Q & A session.

At the end of the training, it appeared as if the participating managers and supervisors had a better understanding of transgender people and their responsibilities as manager to enforce Executive Order 16. It is as the great American author John Steinbeck once said, "Try to understand men. If you understand each other you will be kind to each other. Knowing a man well never leads to hate and almost always leads to love."

* Elana Lancaster's preferred gender pronouns (PGP) is he, his, him

For more information on PGP's visit: <https://www.gsafewi.org/wp-content/uploads/What-the-heck-is-a-PGPI.pdf>

By Terrel Sykes, EEO Summer Intern

"Rise up and become the person you were meant to be."
- Dieter F. Uchtdorf

Brown Bag: Exploring the Life of the Differently Abled

On July 28th, 2016, DEP's EEO Office partnered with the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) to host "Exploring the Life of the Differently Abled," a brown bag event commemorating Disability Pride Month and the 26th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The key speakers were Danielle Barrett and Kadian Outar from DCAS and Walei Sabry from MOPD.

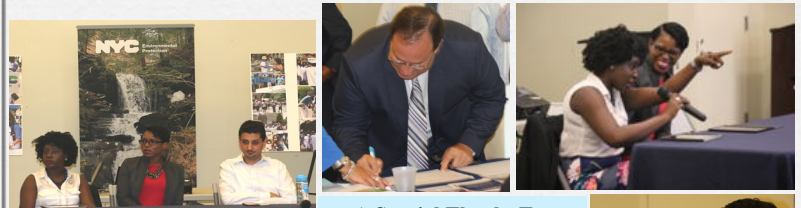
First, Mr. Sabry explained to the audience what it means to be visually impaired and how his role as a Housing Coordinator at MOPD has positively impacted the disabled community. Mr. Sabry revealed that his transition becoming visually impaired was difficult, but it did not impede him from maintaining a normal lifestyle. He earned a Master's degree in disability studies and has worked specifically in website accessibility, advocating alternative practices, such as "alt text", to enable visually impaired individuals to access the web. According to Mr. Sabry, accessibility allows people with disabilities to go through college, take examinations, and to be productive members of society. "There is about 9,048 people with disabilities in New York. MOPD is trying to promote accessibility and make NYC more accessible." Mr Sabry also noted that there is great diversity even in one set of a disability, and that every person must customize their adaptations to suit their needs. MOPD continues to promote accessibility through partnerships with other city agencies such as the Department of Transportation, Human Resources Administration, Department of Finance, and Department of Parks and Recreation.

The second speaker, Kadian Outar, the Director of Citywide Recruitment for DCAS, shared her early experiences growing up with her "super power"—severe hearing loss—and how these experiences shaped her career. Ms. Outar regards her hearing impairment as a superpower because she can remove all background noise with a touch of a button on her hearing aids. Growing up, she became skilled at reading lips because it took a long time for her to accept her disability and seek the proper medical assistance. It was not until her first job as a recruiter for DCAS that she realized the importance of hearing aids, and asking for help when needed. According to Ms. Outar, the Office of Citywide Recruitment at DCAS was created in 2015 as "an initiative dedicated to reaching out to the community and informing individuals about the civil service process." Ms. Outar conducts trainings and outreach events to inform residents seeking City jobs about accommodations and programs that can be offered to individuals with disabilities. She stressed the importance of "starting the conversation" about one's disability, so that qualified employees can receive the appropriate accommodations to perform their job duties, thereby ensuring that the City retains an equitable and diverse workforce.

Lastly, Danielle Barrett, DCAS' Executive Director of Training and Diversity Management in the Office of Citywide Diversity and Equal Employment Opportunity (CDEEO), informed employees about the 55-a program. Ms. Barrett explained that the 55-a program is a citywide initiative to promote diversity and inclusion. The program enables applicants with disabilities to qualify for certain City employment opportunities without taking civil service exams. Often, people with disabilities are not able to take civil service exams due to medical conditions, and are therefore greatly misrepresented in certain job titles. She explained that this program is different than requesting for a reasonable accommodation because "a reasonable accommodation is a modification to the workplace environment, task, or responsibility that hinders the individual's capability to perform their job." Ms. Barrett stated that, "having a disability is by no means a bar to employment. It is a challenge, and the 55-a program in particular is an opportunity to overcome these obstacles."

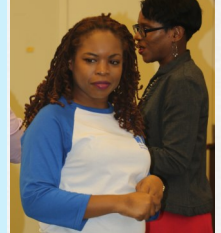
* View the entire brown bag event here: <http://portal/Pages/media.aspx> *

By Gloria Rodriguez
EEO Diversity Liaison



A Special Thanks To:

Acting Commissioner, Vincent Sapienza
Kadian Outar,
Danielle Barrett,
Walei Sabry,
OIT Team
Employee Engagement Team
Executive Administration
FMC



THE HISTORY OF THE WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT

The commencement of August always brings back to school commercials, final end of summer sales, and in typical New York fashion, heat waves that keep many of us inside. With all of this, it is easy to forget what the month of August truly stands for. Many historical advancements were made for the women's rights movement this time hundreds of years ago, and on August 19th we remember these efforts for World Humanitarian Day. This day of remembrance was created by the United Nations to recognize those who face danger and adversity in order to help others.

On August 26th, 1920, the 19th Amendment was ratified, giving women the right to vote. However, this effort took hundreds of years and a dedicated team of strong women to fight for their rights. It all began as early as 1769, as colonies adopted the English system of property ownership for married women. This meant women could not own property in their own name, let alone keep their own wages. Although changes in the economy provided new opportunities for women, there were still limitations for women finding careers, even after the Industrial Revolution. Nevertheless, women fought for higher education. By the middle of the 1800's, towns and cities were providing women with educational opportunities. Greater educational access included making male-only subjects, like mathematics and philosophy, essential to the curriculum at female public and private schools. For the women who could afford quality education, social reform grew more tangible.

Higher education prompted women to hold their own women's rights movement. About 300 activists came together in Seneca Falls, New York to discuss how to achieve woman's suffrage. On July 19th and 20th, voting rights for women were first seriously proposed, and participants signed the Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions, calling for equal treatment.

The Progressive Era from the 1890's to the early 1920's brought about reform for the Women's Rights Movement. "New Women" emerged, challenging social changes. Many of these women founded settlement houses to help the urban poor, organized unions, and demonstrated for the right to vote. Young, professional New Women made careers within the reform movement as settlement workers, social workers, and public health workers. Influential leaders included Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who

founded the New York Women's State Temperance Society.

With the arrival of World War I came several industrial efforts by women to help the country. Approximately 1.6 million women joined the workforce between 1914 and 1918 in government departments, public transportation, and factory and land workers. Women became increasingly involved in politics as well. The National Woman's Party advised citizens to vote against anti-suffragist senators running for election. On June 4th, 1919, the 19th Amendment was finally passed by the Senate, and on August 18th, 1920, it was ratified. The 19th Amendment gave women the right to vote and theoretically gave women the same power men had. With this, women started to live outside the restrictions of being a wife and homemaker; women got jobs outside the home, started playing sports, shortened their dresses, bobbed their hair, and began to wear pants.

Several strides have been made to help women's equality. In 1973, the male-only draft during the Vietnam War ended, and women were integrated into all branches of the U.S. military. The Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978 has ensured that employment discrimination on account of pregnancy is treated as unlawful sex-based discrimination. In 2009, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act was signed into law, which expanded worker's rights to sue for pay discrimination. Today there is a gender wage gap of 21%, supporting the idea that discrimination in pay, hiring, or promotions is still an obstacle for working women.

By Carolina Gazal, EEO Summer Intern

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FOR YOUR INFORMATION



4th Annual Diversity Celebration



Join EEO this fall for DEP's 4th Annual Diversity Celebration. This year we will be displaying a gallery exhibit entitled *Chronicles of Change: Diversity at DEP*. It will display historical and present-day photographs (1915-present day) showcasing hard work, tremendous contributions, and diversity of the workforce in the terms of ethnicity, nationality, and skill sets. Receptions will take place in DEP

locations both upstate and downstate. Look out for further instructions on how you can enter raffles.

What is EEO?



The Equal Employment Opportunity Office (EEO) ensures that the workplace is free of illegal discrimination and harassment based on an individual's actual or perceived religion, race, creed, color, national origin (including alienage and citizenship status), age, gender, (including pregnancy, gender identity and expression), disability, status as a victim of domestic violence, retaliation, genetic predisposition, marital status (including partnership status), military status, and sexual orientation, while supporting the principles of equality and diversity. It also recognizes that educating employees about anti-discrimination laws is an important component of maintaining and achieving an equal, safe, productive, and healthy working environment.

August is National Breastfeeding Month!



Did you know that EEO has an Employee Lactation Program? If you are a DEP employee who has returned from maternity leave or a new employee who is nursing please visit <http://tinyurl.com/zdvjpfq> to learn more about the program.

Career Counseling for DEP Employees



Career Counseling is an OD & HR service provided to employees. It incorporates direction on civil service exams, career opportunities, and pathways, as well as recommendations on how to navigate through existing systems and challenges to help employees reach their fullest potential. For more information please contact

DEP's Career Counselor, Herbert Roth, at (718) 595-3377 or via email at herbr@dep.nyc.gov.

DEP's 55-a Program



Section 55-a of the New York State Civil Service Law permits municipalities to employ persons, who have been certified as physically or mentally disabled, in civil service positions on a non-competitive basis. For more information please contact DEP's 55-a Program Coordinator, Candice Clifford, at (718) 595-5853 or via email at CClifford@dep.nyc.gov.