

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

LO Alumni Give Back by Creating Opportunities for Current College Bound Students and Grads

ALUM TEAM UP WITH THEIR COMPANIES TO EXPOSE LO STUDENTS AND GRADS TO CAREER OPPORTUNITIES



OCTAVIA CEPHAS (LEFT) AND TAMIKA EDWARDS (RIGHT)

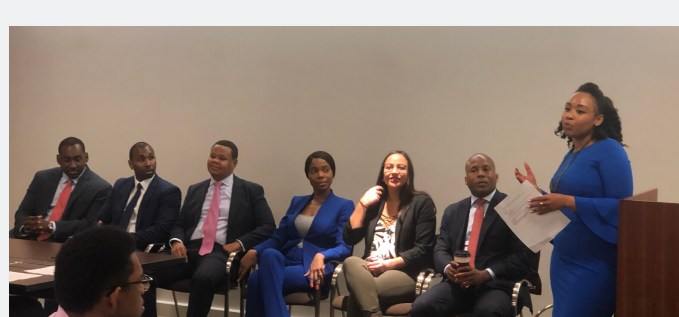
Two years ago, alumnus Ulysses Ifill '06 decided to give back to LO by creating opportunities for College Bound students to learn more about professional careers beyond the law. He thus contacted Ms. Edwards and invited groups of students to interact and engage with professionals at Con Edison, where he works. The trips to Con Ed have now been integrated into the Professional Development Program for LO's freshmen.

Following in Ulysses' footsteps are two other alumnae, Octavia Cephas '09 and Kerina Thay '06, who, through the companies where they work, have also organized exposure trips for LO's current students & alumni, respectively.

In June, prior to leaving Merrill Lynch, Octavia organized a half-day trip to her Merrill office for LO's sophomores. Twenty students were introduced to the world of finance and banking. Octavia organized a panel of diverse financial professionals who shared their educational and professional journeys and provided valuable information about credit and banking. The presentations were engaging and exciting as students were introduced to new career possibilities. Octavia shared her thoughts on the trip:

"During my time at LO, I was able to imagine a brighter future for myself - going to a great college and perhaps to law school. Although I majored in Theatre, after college, I gained exposure to the financial industry and decided to pursue a different type of opportunity at Bank of America Merrill. After having worked my way up for six years, I came to realize, however, that a number of my colleagues, most of whom came from wealthy families, had already been exposed to the industry and thus had been searching for internship opportunities as soon as they stepped on campus during undergrad. I wanted to create a bridge for students in LO so that those who were inspired by the presentations at Merrill Lynch could begin to plot their path forward as soon as possible. I'm grateful to Merrill Lynch and my former colleagues for helping me give back in a meaningful way."

In August, Kerina, who also made her way to the financial industry, was able to convince her employer, Credit Suisse, to host an event for twelve LO alumni currently in college. The alumni who attended the event received information about all the affinity networks at CS and the types of projects they take on annually. They took a tour of the beautiful offices across from Madison Square Park, which included various office spaces, the gym, medical office, and a cafeteria with a variety of food choices. Kerina then organized a panel of volunteers from different sectors at Credit Suisse. The panelists shared their career journeys and the focus of their practices. Afterwards, the volunteers gave tips for applying for summer positions at Credit Suisse and reviewed students' resumes in one-on-one sessions. Kerina expressed her excitement about the event:



"It was great to work with fellow LO alumni and show them what it's like to work in this industry. They were exposed to the inside workings of a global financial institution and to the benefits of working for an organization like CS. When people think of working in the financial and banking industry, they immediately assume they have to major in finance or other business-related areas. However, through this event, LO alumni met CS employees who majored in non-business subjects such as law, mathematics, and computer science and ended up working at CS. I think this really inspired them to achieve at a level that would provide them with entry into the field of finance and banking, regardless of their major."

Do you want to give back and open doors of opportunity for College Bound students? If so, please contact Ms. Edwards at tedwards@legaloutreach.org or call her at 718-752-0222 x 202.



ALUM INTRODUCE LO STUDENTS TO THEIR BOOK CLUB, BROOKLYN GIRLS READ

Earlier this month, two LO alumnae Chrishana White '06 and Elizabeth Canela '06 returned to Legal Outreach to introduce current students to their book club known as "Brooklyn Girls Read." The book club uses an online forum that, as Elizabeth explains, "focuses on the reader as much as the book."

Chrishana and Elizabeth developed a close friendship during their time at LO that has lasted through college and well into their professional careers. Chrishana attended Boston College and now works as the Director of Diversity and Inclusion at Brooklyn Defender Services. Elizabeth attended Duke University and works as a Project Manager at Totem, a small Real Estate and Urban Design Firm in Brooklyn. Many of the lessons they learned while at Legal Outreach helped them achieve both their academic and career goals. Chrishana shared that Legal Outreach provided her with tough love, yet support, and through the process built her confidence. Through the roadmap and the tools LO provided, she was "ready to tackle the world in a brazen way." Elizabeth similarly gained confidence while at LO. For her, LO was the place where she learned to "trust my voice." She is grateful for the many positive role-models who pushed and encouraged her but who also looked like her and could identify with her background.

The lessons learned, the confidence developed, and the skills gained have translated into their current project, Brooklyn Girls Read. Both Chrishana and Elizabeth love to read and discuss books. They wondered what would happen if they brought their two-way conversations to Instagram and created an open discussion. They were aware of similar accounts, but none that focused on authors of color or readers who call Brooklyn home. Since its establishment in March, the book club has gained a significant following and Chrishana and Elizabeth have even organized a few in-person gatherings to discuss the books.

"It has been a fantastic challenge" says Elizabeth, "to think through content that would connect to people. We believe, however, that it's our authenticity that has led to real engagement online. People have connected to the account because we are unapologetically ourselves."

Chrishana's and Elizabeth's decision to introduce current LO students to the book club is a personal endeavor and commitment. They are hoping to inspire current students by exposing them to authors and characters with whom the students can identify. Chrishana elaborated,

"I remember when I was in high school, I never read any books that reflected who I was, who I wanted to be, or who I was becoming. Now, I'm very intentional about reading books that reflect me, my culture, and my experiences. While I volunteer with LO on an as-needed basis, I'm always looking for ways to stay connected with the youth. We thought it would be a great idea to invite College Bound students to read young adult novels with characters that look like them and are experiencing some of what they may be dealing with in their lives, and then to have discussions with them about some of these topics in an informal setting."

Earlier this month, the students gathered for the first time and read *Dear Martin* by Nic Stone, a story about a black boy at a private preparatory school bound for Yale who struggles to fit into the social life at school and his family life at home. After an instance of racist police profiling, he seeks to find his identity by exploring his relationships with peers, teachers, and family.

Legal Outreach is thrilled to count Chrishana and Elizabeth and Brooklyn Girls Read as partners, and we look forward to helping the book club grow exponentially in the years to come. To stay up-to-date on developments, follow them @BrooklynGirlsRead on Instagram. (The club is open to all who are willing to join!)



CHRISHANA (LEFT) AND ELIZABETH (RIGHT)

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR ALUMNI WHO VOLUNTEERED AND/OR DONATED OVER THE COURSE OF THE YEAR!

Aissatou Barry	Essence Caleb	LaTrace Dabney
Akilah Browne	Evelyn Canela	Lily Harford
Alicia Robinson	Frank Peralta	Lorena Rodriguez
Alondra Munoz	Gladys Sosa	Maguette N'dia
Alyson Caro	Jean Muhuza	Maria Santana-Guadalupe
Alyssa Baylor	Jessica Bramble	Mark Hendrax
Anny Bai	Joan Leslie	May Kay Wong
Ayana Austin Depay	Jonathan Jordan	Mimi Ko
Barbara Florvil	Julianna Bacchus	Mohamed Sidique
Candice Allen	Kadish Hagley	Octavia Cephas
Caroline Ng	Karimu Mohammed	Priyata Dey
Chrishana White	Kathy Leung	Quantasia Islam
Christopher Smith	Kenny Jean	Ronteau Coppin
Constance Brown	Kerina Thay	Sandy Santana
Donald Roy Haffenden, Jr.	Kwasi Nyantakyi	Sterling Charles
Elizabeth Canela	Larry Blanco	William Fong
Emma Peralta		