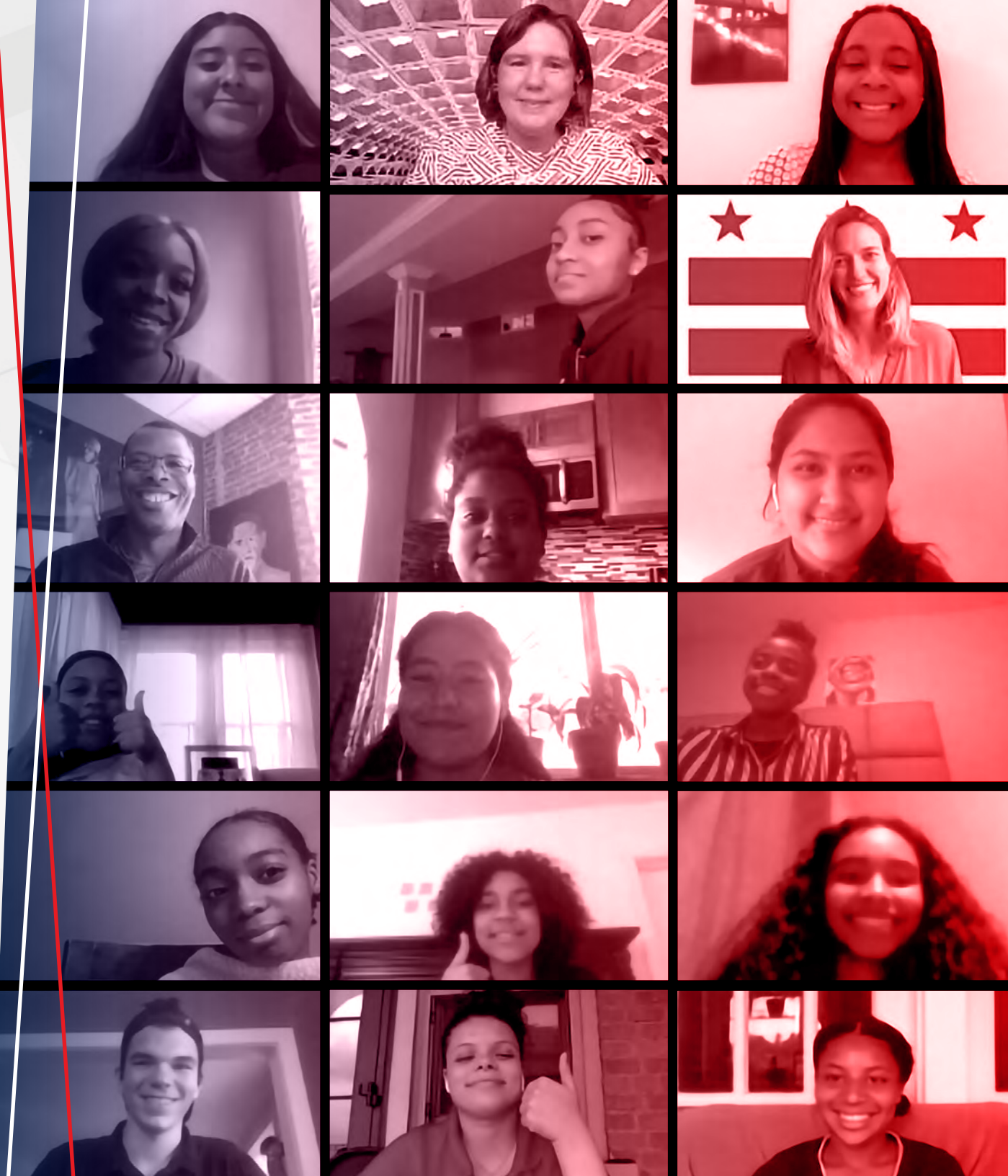




AMERICAN
experience
FOUNDATION

**2020
ANNUAL
REVIEW**





The American Experience Foundation (AEF) enriches the lives of students through inspirational travel experiences and educational opportunities to cultivate the next generation of hospitality industry professionals. AEF invests in young people in our community, supporting their college and career readiness.

OUR ANNUAL PROGRAMS PROVIDE

- ★ **Free field trips** to the nation's capital for low-income students from DC and across the country
- ★ **Internships and educational opportunities** to connect students with hospitality industry professionals
- ★ **Scholarships** to qualified students and alumni from DC's four high school Academies of Hospitality & Tourism

DC ACADEMIES OF HOSPITALITY & TOURISM



2020 BY THE NUMBERS



384

Total student engagements



60

Students on Washington, DC field trips



72

Summer Career Ready interns



8

Scholarships awarded



230

Students participating in educational programs



SINCE 2015
\$75,000

Awarded in scholarships

“One of my favorite aspects of my job is working with students. We’ve been fortunate to be able to provide an introduction to the industry despite battling a global pandemic.”

ELLIOTT L. FERGUSON, II
President & CEO,
Destination DC



OVERCOMING COVID-19

As we close 2020 and travel experiences feel distant, we reflect on a year of turmoil and the pandemic's impacts on students, professionals and our country overall.

The hospitality and tourism industry, one of the largest in Washington, DC, normally employs more than 76,000 people and contributes over \$850 million in tax revenue. COVID-19 has decimated the industry, not only closing restaurants, attractions and hotels, but forcing major events and conventions to cancel, putting thousands of people out of work and reducing tax revenues to a tiny fraction of what was anticipated. We are unsure when tourists and conventions will return to the city and what that full recovery will look like.

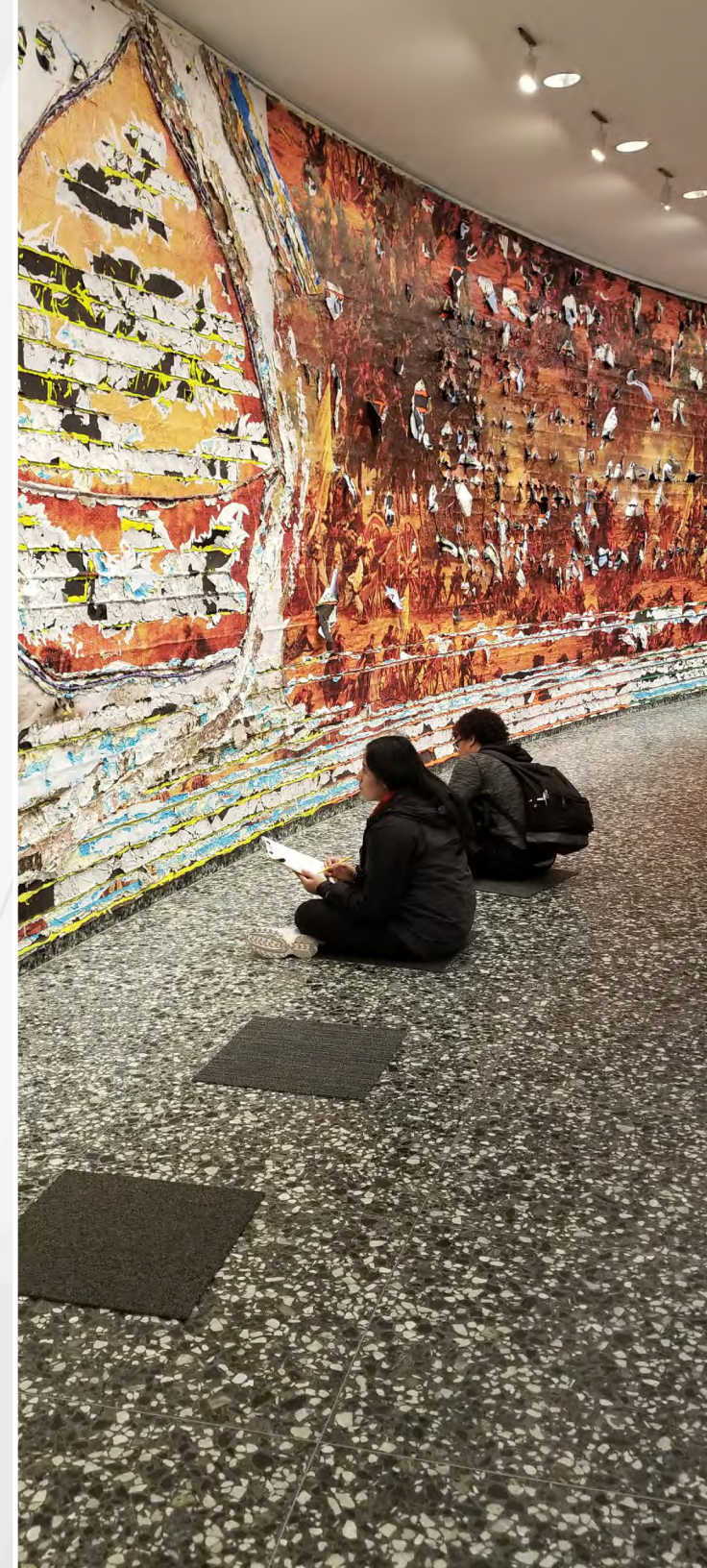
Simultaneously, we've heard the call to action of Black Lives Matter and know it is not exclusively about accountability for cities and police departments, but a demand for equitable opportunity in all facets of American life.

We are called to reimagine what our industry could look like as we rebuild after COVID-19.

How can we:

- ★ Ensure equal opportunity and diverse leadership?
- ★ Make Washington, DC a welcoming and safe city for everyone to live in and travel to?
- ★ Honor and promote DC's rich Black history and culture to tourists from all over the world?

It is imperative that we include young people in these conversations and empower them to be the future of our industry. Despite challenges they face, they remain curious, enthusiastic and ready to help rebuild our city and our industry. Thank you for being a part of this story.



DISCOVERING DC

Each year, hundreds of thousands of students travel to the nation's capital to deepen their knowledge of history and culture. AEF's field trips help deserving students across the country and here in Washington, DC.

BACKYARD BOUND

In October 2019, AEF hosted 20 members of **Raising a Village's Driven 2 Succeed** program at DC's **H.D. Woodson High School** for a day of exploring. Students toured the monuments with **Old Town Trolley**, posed with presidents and celebrities at **Madame Tussauds**, had lunch at **Le Pain Quotidien**, attended a special performance of August Wilson's *Fences* at the historic **Ford's Theatre** and visited the **National Museum of African American History and Culture**.

"It's important to know the city you live in and understand the complexities of our community. Students had read and performed *Fences* at school, so getting to see that play performed at historic Ford's Theatre by professional actors was an especially meaningful part of the day."

JALEESA HALL
Founder & CEO,
Raising a Village



ACADEMIES FIELD TRIP

In January, AEF hosted 40 students from DC's Academies of Hospitality and Tourism on a Backyard Bound field trip.

The group explored attractions, including the **Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden**, the **International Spy Museum** and the recently reopened **Washington Monument**. Students slept in style at the **Marriott Marquis Washington, DC** and received a behind-the-scenes tour of the hotel.

Hyatt Place National Mall hosted them for a professional networking luncheon where they learned all about dining etiquette from the **Etiquette Institute of Washington**.

“

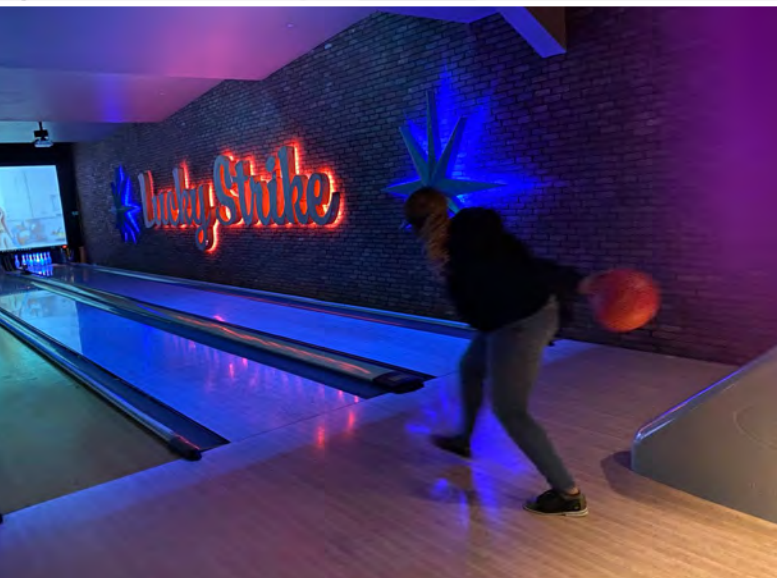
There are so many people living in DC, but they don't ever take the time to explore around or meet people from other parts of the city. There are a lot of opportunities that people should go out and seek.”

BREONA MENIEFIELD

Class of 2020, NAF Academy of
Hospitality and Tourism
Maya Angelou Public Charter School



AmericanExperienceFoundation.org | 5



WORKPLACE LEARNING

AEF and Destination DC have unique access to dedicated professionals who create remarkable experiences.

NYC TRIP

AEF's annual Times Square Hotel Tour brought 30 students to the Big Apple in November 2019 for a behind-the-scenes tour of the **New York Marriott Marquis** and **W New York - Times Square**. Students were also treated to a VIP private night tour with **Big Bus NYC**, an escape room team-building experience at **Clue Chase** and dinner at **Virgil's Real BBQ**.

Special thanks to Marquis General Manager Dan Nadeau and W Hotel Director of Operations Thomas Sturniolo for their hospitality, and to the **Hotel Association of Washington, D.C.** for their generous financial support of this field trip.

WASHINGTON AUTO SHOW

In January, the **Washington Area New Automobile Dealers Association**, a long-standing AEF partner, welcomed 30 students to its annual Media Day to kick off the **2020 Washington Auto Show**. Students watched press conferences and interacted with representatives from the world's largest auto makers. Ryan Alexander of the **Calpro Group**, which handles show production, took students behind the scenes.

ENCHANT CHRISTMAS

Last year, students heard from the **Enchant Christmas** producers about the time, effort and people needed to transform **Nationals Park** into a December winter wonderland. Decorators, electricians and sales teams informed students of their duties. The students then explored the light maze and ice rink.



NATIONAL JOB SHADOW DAY

Many know Feb. 2 as the day groundhogs see their shadow, but it is also a day when local hospitality professionals get a shadow of a different kind. Across the city, AEF helped place 65 students at 35 hospitality and tourism businesses for Job Shadow Day experiences.

Destination DC welcomed six students. In addition to learning all about working at a destination marketing organization, students got a firsthand look at how they work with partner businesses through tours of the **Conrad Hotel** and **ARTECHOUSE**.

Michelin-starred chef Nick Stefanelli and his team at **Masseria** welcomed two students from Ballou High School's Academy of Culinary Arts to cook side-by-side with sous chef Ryan Smith.

The Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) welcomed 25 students to **National Airport** for a behind-the-scenes look at the thousands of career opportunities at the airport. Special thanks to Tanisha Lewis and the entire MWAA and National Airport teams.



INTERSHIPS

The COVID-19 pandemic all but eliminated summer internship opportunities for students in DC's Academies of Hospitality and Tourism, Academies of Mass Media and Career Bridge Program.

In the true spirit of hospitality, Destination DC and the American Experience Foundation worked with the Career Ready Internships program to offer 72 high school students a virtual summer internship.

While learning all about the hospitality and tourism industry, interns were asked to imagine how the industry can recover from the devastation of COVID-19 while working to make it more equitable.

These student interns were supported with nearly 50 guest speakers and 30 project judges for weekly presentations.

SPECIAL THANKS TO INTERNSHIP PARTNERS



Education Design Lab



“

**You ran the best
virtual hospitality
internship program
in the country!”**

ALEX WILSON

Director of Academy of
Hospitality & Tourism,
Wilson High School



INTERNS INSPIRED

“

I enjoyed listening to [Destination DC Sports Sales Manager] **Chris Thompson** and [Washington Nationals Vice President of Corporate Strategy] **Emily Dunham** because sports is something that I am interested in doing as a career someday. I wasn't aware that it could be such a big thing in the hospitality industry.”

“

[Destination DC President & CEO **Elliott Ferguson** and Visit Baltimore President & CEO **Al Hutchinson**] inspired me because they were both very outspoken and welcoming. I could relate to their stories and the things they said really stuck with me. They are very inspiring with the obstacles that they had overcome and the respect they have earned from others. It's inspiring to see two Black men at the top.”

“

Dr. Erinn Tucker [Georgetown professor and co-founder of DMV Black Restaurant Week] and **Bakari Ibrahim** [Co-Founder of Caandor Labs] really showed us why it's important to work together and support Black-owned businesses across our city.”

STUDENT INTERNS

Alaya
Tyndle

Alexander
Strauss*

Amir
Perkins**

Andrew
Irwin-
Leventhal*

Angelique
Barnhardt*

Anura
Sharma**

Arjanae
Mitchell*

Benjamin
Wander*

Brianna
Moody**

Cenaria
Fells-Watson**

Dakota
Joi Inniss**

Darren
Buchanan*

De'Anna
Williams*

Don'nayah
Harris

Durell
Ford

Eryka
Kornegay**

Herbert
Banks

I'shawnna
White*

Jaden
Randolph-
Schoneck**

Janae
Lewis-Price**

Jasmine
Taylor

Jaye'quan
Seegers**

Jazzmen
Morant**

Jermanie
Coleman*

Johnathan
Jennings*

Kahlil
Slater*

Kashmere
Lewis**

Kayla
Watson*

Kelly
Cantarero-
Flores*

Khalelah
McCollum*

Kyndal
Barber**

Layla
Green**

Le'Asyah
Mays*

Leena
Rahman*

Lesly
Reyes**

Luke
Forcier**

Macie
Ellis**

Makayla
Wright**

Marie
May*

Matthew
Weissman*

Mia
Heyward**

Monaia
Swinson

Mya
Kelly

Nakia
Thomas**

Nar'dya
Sloan

Racquel
Jones*

Ryan
Howard*

Sabrina
Bouaichi*

Sapriyah
Hancock

Sarah
Etinoff

Sascha
Cannon*

Stephen
James**

Sydni
Lewis**

Taiyler
Henderson-
Thorpe*

Taria
Short**

Tori
Barnett

Vanessa
Romero-
Gutierrez**

Yazmyne
Dixon*

Yeshetuwe
Mulugeta**

*Completed all 6 weeks of the internship

**Completed all 6 weeks plus 2-week extension

Interns were from the DC Public Schools Academies of Hospitality & Tourism, Mass Media and Culinary Arts, and from the Career Bridge program for recent graduates. Students came from eight DC public high schools: Anacostia, Ballou, Columbia Heights Educational Campus, Cardozo, Dunbar, Coolidge, Roosevelt and Wilson.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?



Host a behind-the-scenes look at your company either during a field trip or a summer internship.

INTERNSHIP SPEAKERS & JUDGES



INTERNSHIP SPEAKERS


PRISCILLA ALVAREZ
International Sales
Coordinator, Destination DC

RICO ASHAB
Executive Assistant to the
President & CEO,
Destination DC

NALELI ASKEW
Events Operations Manager,
District Experience

**BRIGITTE
BÉLANGER-WARNER**
Canadian Media & Marketing
Specialist, Virginia Tourism
Corporation

THERESA BERPULSI
Vice President of Tourism,
Sports & Visitor Services,
Destination DC

 **RAY BENNETT**
Chief Global Officer
of Global Operations,
Marriott International

MICHAEL BORRIS
National Account Manager,
PSAV


RON BRACCO
Vice President of Events,
Hargrove

CLAIRE CARLIN
Vice President of Partnerships
& Alliances, Destination DC

TYLER CARROL
International Marketing
Manager, Virginia Tourism
Corporation

REGINALD CHARLOT
Managing Director of
Tourism Development,
NYC & Company & Chair,
IGLTA Foundation

TORRI CHRISTIAN
Associate Director of
Marketing, Destination DC

 **JEROME DAVIS**
Executive Vice
President & Chief
Revenue Officer, Metropolitan
Washington Airports Authority

DANIELLE DAVIS
Director of Communications,
Destination DC

EMILY DUNHAM
Vice President of Corporate
Strategy, Washington Nationals


ELLIOTT L. FERGUSON
President & CEO
Destination DC

ALEX GNAFAKIS
Creative Director,
Destination DC

AUSTIN GRAFF
Manager of Acquisition
& Branding,
The Washington Post

CARA HEDGEPEETH
Senior Social Media
Community Advisor, AARP

DAWN HOLDEN
Former Vice President of
Membership Engagement,
Destinations International

 **AL HUTCHINSON**
President & CEO,
Visit Baltimore

BAKARI IBRAHIM
Co-Founder, Caandor Labs

LILLIAN IVERSEN
Vice President, National
Cherry Blossom Festival

BRITT JULIOUS
Columnist, *Chicago Tribune*
& Freelance Writer

ERIC KINCAID
National Account Director,
Destination DC

 **DR. SELENI MATUS**
Executive Director,
George Washington
University International
Institute of Tourism Studies

ROBIN MCCLAIN

Senior Vice President of
Marketing & Communications,
Destination DC

TARA MILLER

International Account Sales
Director, Destination DC

**THOMAS PENNY**

President,
Donohoe Hospitality

JEAN RILEY

Senior Event Manager,
American Institute of
Aeronautics and Astronautics

MELISSA RILEY

Vice President of Sales &
Services, Destination DC

JENNIFER RODRIGUES

National Account Sales
Director, Destination DC

GAURI SARIN

Director of Events &
Activations, Streetsense

LETIZIA SIRTORI

Director of Tourism Sales,
Destination DC

**STACY EACHO
SMITH**

General Manager,
Hyatt Place National Mall &
Chair, Destination DC Board
of Directors

CHRIS SOTO

President, CTC Events and
Productions

MARC ST. HILAIRE

Executive Recruiter,
Issacson, Miller

BRUNO SCHWARTZ

Director of Membership,
Destination DC

CHRIS THOMPSON

Sports Sales Manager,
Destination DC

**DR. ERINN TUCKER**

Director of the Global
Hospitality Leadership
Program, Georgetown
University & Co-Founder,
DMV Black Restaurant Week

**PONNEH VARHO**

Managing Partner,
Issacson, Miller
Washington, DC

EMILY VECCHIONI

Member Events Manager,
Destination DC

DIANNA WALDROUP

Director of Convention
Services, Destination DC

PROJECT JUDGES

**ANA MARTINEZ
CHAMORRO**

Ana Isabel Photography

ANDREA HOSTETLER

National Cherry
Blossom Festival

CAROLINE CAMPBELL

U.S. Travel Association

CRISTINA GOSPODIN

Sofitel Lafayette Square

DIANA MAYHEW

National Cherry Blossom
Festival

ELIZABETH JACQUES

Liz Stewart Photography

ERIN ALIAJ

Booking Holdings

FELICIA RUFFINO

Brasserie Liberté / Ottoman
Taverna / Al Dente / Mirabelle

KATE BURNS

Leading Authorities, Inc.

KATHLEEN NELSON

Skylark Creative Group

KATHRYN KEANE

National Geographic Museum

LEE CALLICUTT

Visit Montgomery

LILLIAN IVERSON

National Cherry Blossom
Festival

LORI CHALK

District Experience

MARI RODELA

DC Brau Brewing

MARTIN HAMBURGER

Hamburger Gibson Creative

NAN MARCHAND BEAUVOIS

U.S. Travel Association

NORA THOMAS

U.S. Travel Association

PATRICK REVORD

The Wharf

RANDY HERRON

Herron Printing & Graphics

RAUF SHAKIR

USA Guided Tours

RENE MCCOY

Hersha Hospitality West End
Hotel Collection

SARA MALLOY

The Mayflower Hotel

SOCRATES CALA

CalPro Group

STEFAN MIREVSKI

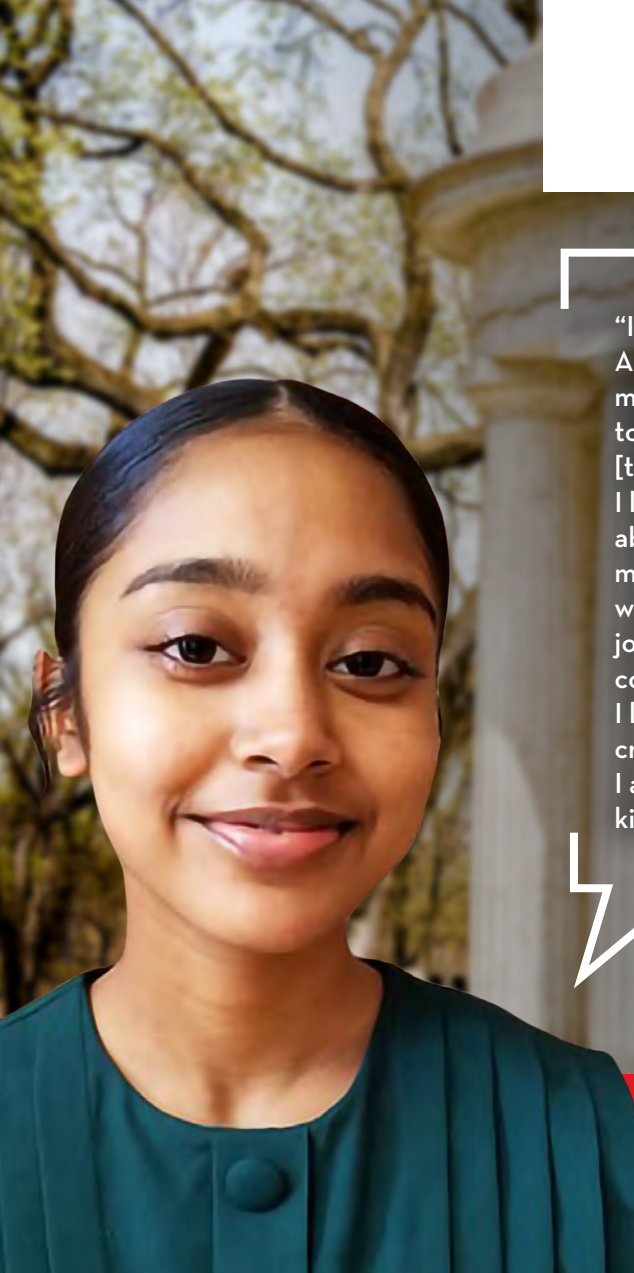
The Capital Hilton

HOW CAN YOU HELP?



Share your expertise by serving as a judge,
guest speaker or host employer.

INTERN SPOTLIGHT

A portrait of Maria Sharmin, a young woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a teal top. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with trees and a building.

"I wanted to intern with AEF because I want to major in hospitality and tourism. I really enjoyed [the internship] because I learned so much about how a destination marketing organization works. My dream job is to be an event coordinator because I love to organize, be creative and multitask. I also love to work with kids and help people."

**MARIA
SHARMIN**

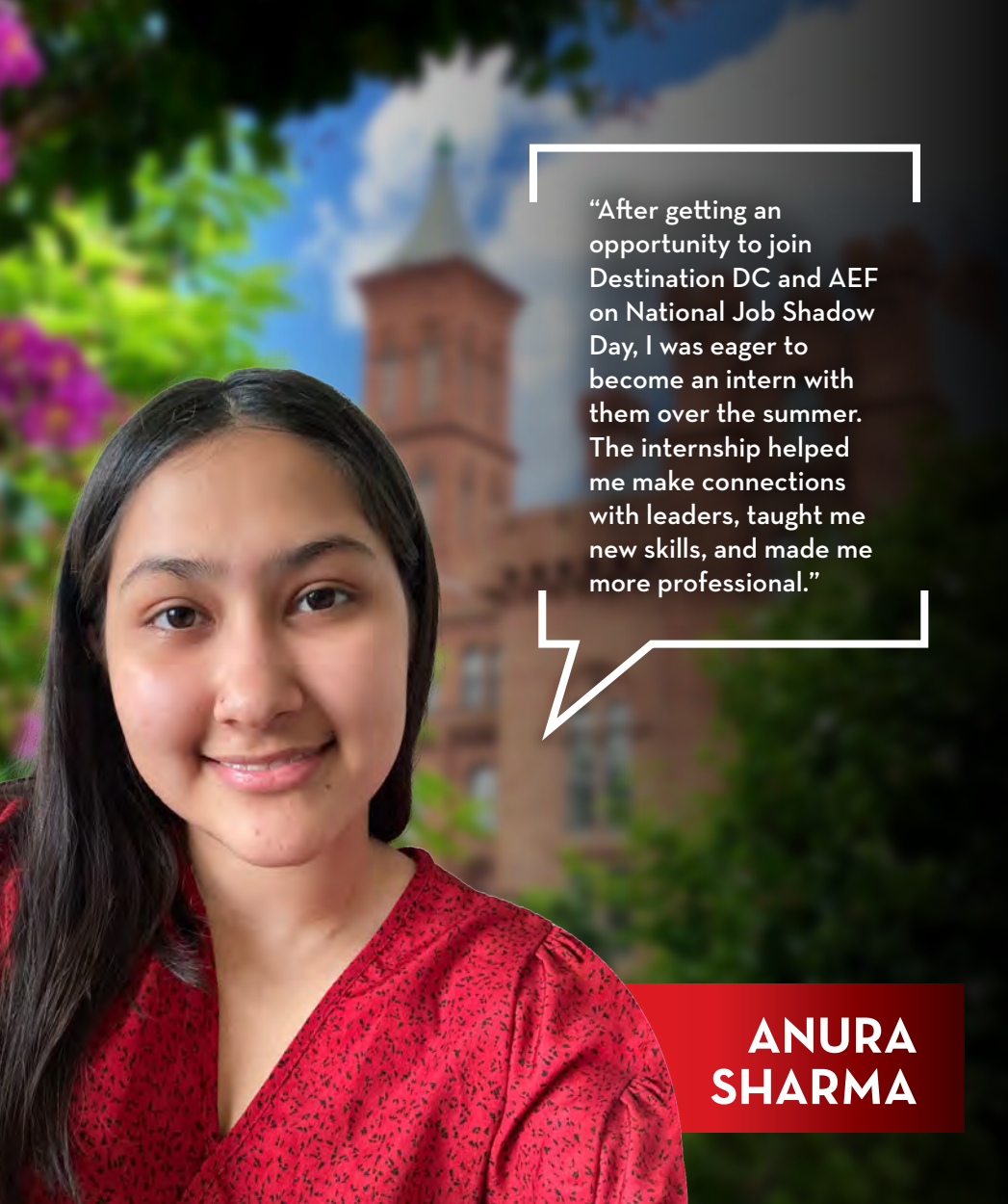
A portrait of Zoe Roberts, a young woman with dark hair in braids, wearing a yellow top. She is smiling broadly and looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with a building and trees.

"Not only have I gained valuable insight into the function and recovery of the hospitality industry, but I have also had the opportunity to network with industry professionals I otherwise may not have had access to. The experience has strengthened my interest in pursuing this career field. I look forward to being a part of the change that will help recover and sustain our industry."

**ZOE
ROBERTS**

Maria Sharmin interned with AEF all year, through a partnership with Urban Alliance. Maria graduated from Woodrow Wilson High School in June 2020 and attends Temple University. Among her many internship accomplishments, Maria authored and designed our monthly newsletter.

Zoe Roberts is a three-time winner of the AEF Scholarship. Before COVID-19 disrupted the industry, she was a front office lead for the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill in addition to taking on a full course load at George Mason University. During her summer internship with AEF, Zoe helped create and manage the Career Ready Internships program.



"After getting an opportunity to join Destination DC and AEF on National Job Shadow Day, I was eager to become an intern with them over the summer. The internship helped me make connections with leaders, taught me new skills, and made me more professional."

**ANURA
SHARMA**

Anura Sharma, a 2022 student in the Academy at Columbia Heights Educational Campus brought curiosity and a global perspective to her Career Ready Internship. She turned her final internship project focused on a DC traveler safety kit into a full submission to the UNWTO Hospitality Challenge.



"One thing I loved about interning at DDC and AEF was how involved they were with teenagers like me. Seeing the previous students who interned with them continue to be supported by them even after the internship was over, showed me how important the youth are to the company as a whole. I was immediately welcomed, with no judgement I might add, and it helped me work on skills that will help me in the future. I am aware that students are the future and DDC helped mold me into my full potential and every student deserves that opportunity."

**MAKAYLA
CRUZ**

Makayla Cruz, a 2020 graduate of the Academy at Columbia Heights Educational Campus was an AEF and Destination DC Career Ready Intern in 2019 and is a current freshman at North Carolina A&T State University. She testified at the Destination DC 2020 Performance Oversight Hearing for the DC City Council, on what the American Experience Foundation means to high school students like her.

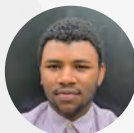
SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

GREGORY MCCARTHY LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIP



Makayla Cruz
North Carolina A&T State University
(Columbia Heights Educational Campus)

DAVID ISELIN AWARD FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE



Adame Temesgen
University of Rochester
(Columbia Heights Educational Campus)

AEF SCHOLARSHIP



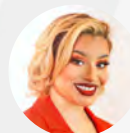
Jermaine Evans
Fayetteville State University
(Woodrow Wilson Senior High School)

AEF ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIP



Deranique Graydon
University of the District of Columbia
(Frank Ballou Senior High School)

AEF ALUMNI HONORARIUMS



Lauren Brown
Howard University
(Woodrow Wilson Senior High School)



Jose Martinez
Marymount University
(Columbia Heights Educational Campus)



Amya McKoy
Bowie State University
(Frank Ballou Senior High School)



Zoe Roberts
George Mason University
(Frank Ballou Senior High School)

HOW CAN YOU HELP?



Your gift of \$2,500 will fund an AEF scholarship.
Make your donation, in any amount, by visiting
AmericanExperienceFoundation.org/Donate

IN THE MEDIA

JANUARY ACADEMY FIELD TRIP

NBC4 - Jan. 28, 2020

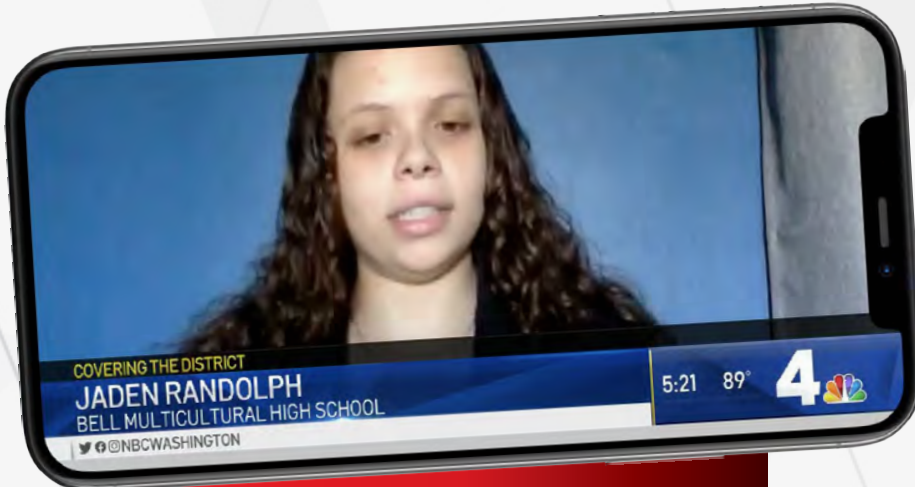
Molette Green



NATIONAL JOB SHADOW DAY

WJLA - Feb. 12, 2020

Kellye Lynn



CAREER READY INTERNSHIPS

NBC4 - July 28, 2020

Aimee Cho



CAREER READY INTERNSHIPS

WJLA ABC7 - July 31, 2020

Alison Starling



STAFF & BOARD

AEF LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

MICHAEL AKIN
Co-Chair, President
LINK Strategic Partners

GREG CASTEN
Co-Chair, President
Oceanpro Industries

NIZAM ALI
Co-Owner
Ben's Chili Bowl

JAMES MICHAEL RILEY
General Manager
Big Bus Tours DC

MICHAEL BORRIS
Regional Account Manager
PSAV

ELLIOTT L. FERGUSON, II
President & CEO
Destination DC

ABBY HIMMELRICH
Teacher
McLean School

JAMES MACGREGOR
VP, Local Markets
American City Business Journals,
Inc

GREGORY MCCARTHY
VP, Community Engagement
Washington Nationals

THOMAS PENNY
President
Donohoe Hospitality Services

GAURI SARIN
Director, Events + Activations
Streetsense

STACY EACHO SMITH
General Manager
Hyatt Place National Mall

GAIL SMITH-HOWARD
General Manager
Hyatt Regency Washington
on Capitol Hill

AEF STAFF

CLAIRE CARLIN
Executive Director
American Experience Foundation
VP, Partnerships & Alliances
Destination DC
202-789-7048
claire@americanexperiencefoundation.org

LISA WALDSCHMITT
Foundation Manager
American Experience Foundation
202-789-7065
lisa@americanexperiencefoundation.org

PARTNERS

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

ARTECHOUSE
DC Public Schools
Destination DC
Hotel Association of Washington, DC
Mastro's Steakhouse Washington, DC
VIDA Fitness
WANADA/Washington Auto Show
Washington, DC Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development

EDUCATION PARTNERS

ARTECHOUSE
Big Bus NYC
Conrad Hotel
Enchant Christmas
Ford's Theatre
Herron Printing & Graphics
Hyatt Place National Mall
Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill
International Spy Museum
Le Pain Quotidien
LEON
Madame Tussauds
Marriott Marquis Washington, DC

Marriott Marquis Times Square
Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority
National Airport
Old Town Trolley
PSAV
Reston Limo
Smithsonian Enterprises
Step Afrika!
The Etiquette Institute of Washington
Virgil's Real Barbecue
WANADA/Washington Auto Show
W Hotel New York Times Square

HOLIDAY PARTY

AC Hotel Washington, DC
American Airlines
ARTECHOUSE
Destination DC
Downtown Holiday Market
Enchant Christmas
Farmers & Distillers
Howard Theater
LEON
Monumental Sports
Paul Stuart
Pisco y Nazca

RPM Italian
Sightseeing Pass
Signature Theatre
Step Afrika!
sweetgreen
Taberna del Alabardero
Tanger Outlets National Harbor
The Canopy by Hilton
Thompson Washington DC
Tommy Hilfiger
TopGolf
United Airlines
Urban Adventures
Vamoose Bus

HOW CAN YOU HELP?



Share your time, expertise or business with students. You have resources and access to help young people.

DONORS

INSPIRATIONAL

Ron Bracco & Pate Felts
Claire Carlin
Elliott Ferguson & Telesa Via

LEADERS

Kola Aina
Randy Herron
Deborah Streater

MENTORS

Rico Ashab
Richard Carlin
John Kim

Beatriz Lopez
Robin McClain
Jennifer Rodrigues
Melissa Riley

Bruno Schwartz
David Touhey
Katarina Vercelli

COLLEGE READY

Terri Carter
Martin Hamburger
Lisa Hill
Mathew Jahromi

Lajuana Jones
Ryan & Chelsea Kaiser
Dennis Koster
Josie Schiavone

Hari Seldon
Robert Vizza

WORKPLACE LEARNERS

Ray Bialek
Brock Carroll

Vanessa Ryan
Merike Henneman

Tara Miller
Bruno Schwartz

SUPPORTERS

Kimberly Araya
Terrell Calloway
Danielle Campana
Katelyn Campbell
Jared Carroll
Meg Caulk
Taylor Dabney
Henry De Leon
Macy Dolton

Rebecca Doser
Josh Feldman
Carla Glynn
Caroline Graves
Dana Hansen
Shelby Luzzi
Kirsten Lyman
Brandon Murray
Carly Norosky

Monica Orr
Ross Pattison
Lucas Queiroz Pires
Sheila Robinson
Talita Schwartz
Suzanne Shogren
Bethann Siegel
Hope Smith

HOW CAN YOU HELP?



Your gift of \$100 directly supports work-based learning opportunities for a future hospitality and tourism leader. Make your donation by visiting AmericanExperienceFoundation.org/Donate



American Experience Foundation
901 7th Street, NW, 4th Floor
Washington, DC 20001
202-789-7065

The American Experience Foundation is the 501(c)(3) charity affiliated with Destination DC, the official destination marketing organization for the nation's capital. Through this affiliation with Destination DC and its 1,000+ member businesses, AEF is uniquely positioned to open doors for students, filling a need for career exposure and paths to success with inspirational travel opportunities and real-life educational experiences.

This work is made possible through the generosity of more than 60 local hospitality, meetings and tourism businesses and organizations with leaders who choose to partner with AEF and invest in the future of Washington, DC.

AMERICANEXPERIENCEFOUNDATION.ORG