



# McNair Spotlight

Fall 2009

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## Scholar Update: Song Nguyen



Song participated in the UVM McNair Scholars Program from May 2006 until her graduation with a BS in May, 2008. She was a Human Development & Family Studies major in the College of Education and Social Sciences who conducted her McNair summer fellowship on the topic: *How Does No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Relate to Poverty and Low Achievement in Burlington, VT?* Song's research mentor was UVM faculty member Cynthia Gerstl-Pepin, PhD.

Song's home town is Essex Junction, VT and currently resides in Washington, DC. Song is an AmeriCorps\* VISTA Coordinator in DC for the non-profit agency, *Turning the Page*. Song provided the following update on her experiences since leaving Vermont: "After taking some time off from school, I'm ready to enroll in graduate school for the fall of 2010. Currently, I'm researching colleges with best match my needs and plan to pursue my Masters in Public Health. I'm working in my second year parent involvement in education. I once thought I wanted to work within or for school systems but now realize parent involvement and parent education are most beneficial to children before they even enter school. That being said, I plan to pursue my Masters in Public Health with a focus in Community Health and/or Maternal and Childcare Health. I hope to enroll in a graduate program in the surrounding DC area and later, to work within intercultural communities."



"*Turning the Page* works with Title I public schools in northeast and southeast parts of DC. Our goal is to push parent, classroom, and community involvement across our 7 partnering schools with the motivation that every child has the ability to succeed in education if given the opportunities to do so. During the first year in my position, I worked specifically with a particular school in northeast DC as a school liaison and worked closely with the PTA and supported their academic initiatives throughout the school year. I educated parents during "Community Night" workshops on varying topics such as parent-teacher involvement, different learning styles, how to track your child in reading and math, summer learning opportunities, and much more. As part of our classroom resource programs I participated in two of our literacy-based

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photography programs “Literacy Through Photography” and “Community Visions” where students are given cameras and have an opportunity to use their personal photos to encourage writing.

“This year I’m the program coordinator of our Community Visions program. Students embark on three museum field trips, accompanied by classroom visits and classroom activities built around themes of community. They will have the use of digital cameras to document their journeys and encourage writing in the classroom. The 32-week program will end with a community celebration and photography exhibit at one of our partnering museums. In addition to this role, I am also responsible for building relationships with our 3 university partners, work-study students, and volunteers. I will be working across college campuses recruiting and training students to work with us during our events and to encourage learning in parts of DC they aren’t usually exposed to.

“I truly appreciate the opportunities and relationships that came out of the McNair Program. Thank you!”

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## Scholar Updates: Where Are They Now?



- Daniel Aguek, 2005 Cohort - University of Vermont MBA Program
- Abraham Awolich, 2005 Cohort - Earned his Masters of Public Administration in May 2009 from the Syracuse University Maxwell School of Government – currently researching PhD programs in International Affairs and Diplomacy
- Bior Kuer Bior, 2005 Cohort - University of Vermont PhD Program in Biology
- Katie Buss, 2004 Cohort - Earned her Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine in May 2009 from Colorado State University and is currently working in rural New Hampshire
- Danilo Frias, 2004 Cohort - Senior Business Analyst - Ziff Davis Enterprises
- Carla “Willow” Holden, 2005 Cohort - Middlebury College Breadloaf Writing Program
- Rajesh Khemraj, 2004 Cohort - Iona College MS Program in Business & Information Technology
- Bridget Kreger, 2008 Cohort – Researcher, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Seattle, WA
- Rachel Lacy, 2005 Cohort - Ross University School of Medicine
- Jaime Leclerc, 2006 Cohort - Cancer research training fellow - NIH, Bethesda, MD
- Dominick Lemas, 2004 Cohort - University of Alaska Fairbanks Program in Cell & Molecular Biology
- Daniel Lim, 2007 Cohort – Pratt Graduate Institute for Community Development & City Planning
- Evan Litwin, 2004 Cohort – University of Massachusetts – Boston, McCormack Graduate School of Public Policy
- David Lucero, 2006 Cohort - University of Vermont PhD Program in Biology
- Mellisa Ly, 2005 Cohort - Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute PhD Program in Chemistry
- Gabriel Mabil, 2006 Cohort – AmeriCorps\*VISTA Rep - VT Refugee Resettlement Program
- Samantha Munro, 2005 Cohort - University of Pennsylvania Law & PhD Program in Philosophy
- Jennifer Nakhla, 2007 Cohort - The Ohio State University M.Ed. Program in Higher Education & Student Affairs
- Benjamin Nsiah, 2008 Cohort – AmeriCorps\*VISTA Water Resource Researcher, Birmingham, AL
- Emmanuel Nsiah, 2004 Cohort – Medical Technologist, Denver Health Center, CO
- Johanne Osias, 2004 Cohort - Saint Michael’s College Masters Program in Clinical Psychology
- Kesha Ram, 2006 Cohort - Elected VT State Legislator representing City of Burlington
- Heather Taylor, 2005 Cohort - University of California Santa Cruz PhD Program in Computer Engineering
- Lisa Weiss, 2004 Cohort - University of Maine Graduate Program in Plant & Soil Science

