

**Yale University President's Public Service Fellowship Application
Summer 2021**

Organization: Discovering Amistad, Inc.

Address: 129 Church Street, Suite 521
New Haven, Connecticut 06510

Website: www.discoveringamistad.org

Direct Supervisor: Kai Perry
Presumed Director of Summer Leadership Academy
(203) 498-8222

Placement Dates: June 1-August 13, 2021
Placement dates can be flexible
We are able to accommodate a Fellow working in a different
time zone

Proposed 37.5 hour per week work schedule.

Discovering Amistad Description:

Discovering Amistad's mission is, "To provide learning and dialogue opportunities for children and adults to: discover the relevance of The Amistad Uprising to today's world and collaborate to dismantle systemic racism and achieve social justice."

Discovering Amistad is an educational organization focusing on social justice that provides full-year programming for children and adults. We present programs: virtually, on our tall ship, the *Amistad*; in classrooms; and at partner organization sites. Our programs enable children and adults in Connecticut and across the region to learn about the story of the Amistad and its impact on Connecticut and the nation.

Since its inception in 2015, Discovering Amistad has offered an engaging education program focused on equity, diversity and racial and social justice. As the nation wrestles with the painful reminder of the reality of racism and oppression

embedded in our society, the lessons of The Amistad Uprising of 1839---of human rights, resistance, justice and freedom—have never been more relevant.

1-2 Sentence Summary of the work that the Fellow would be conducting

The Fellow will assist our Summer Leadership Academy Director in organizing and implementing two Summer Leadership Academies (30 students each) for New Haven High School Students---one for freshmen and sophomores and the second for juniors and seniors. Each cohort will meet for two weeks (M-F), for three hours/day.

A more complete description of the specific project you propose and list the duties/outcomes expected of the Fellow.

During Summer 2020, Discovering Amistad successfully piloted a virtual Student Leadership Academy, under the direction of Kai Perry. We adapted our curriculum to address the pressing issues of equality, identity, oppression, and privilege. Working with local educators and community organizations, we identified thirty of the best and brightest budding activists and brought them together in a virtual classroom to learn about our history, their communities and themselves.

Over a two-week period, the Summer Leadership Academy set sail on a journey which took students from 1839 Mendeland (present day Sierra Leone) to 2020 Minneapolis, and culminated with their presentation of a collaborative community service project and an emotional and gratifying graduation. The community service projects were designed as an opportunity for the participants to apply the knowledge they acquired from the first week and exercise their leadership skills by addressing a present-day social justice issue. They worked in teams of five or six members. They established team roles, agreed on a specific social justice issue they wanted to address, collectively wrote a project proposal and presented their “pitch” to the entire “Academy” and Discovering Amistad board members. Projects included: adding multicultural books to school libraries; eliminating the use of the “N-word” by teaching students the history of the “N-word” through social media; and developing an intra-district peer tutoring program to increase interracial cooperation and exposure to racial diversity.

During Summer Leadership Academy 2021 we will seek to replicate this highly successful program for a total of 30 rising Freshmen and Sophomores and 30 rising

juniors and seniors during two two-week sessions. Each session will run approximately 3 hours daily (remotely).

Duties:

1. Assist supervisor (Summer Leadership Academy Director) with recruitment and promotions by reaching out to New Haven Schools and youth serving agencies to arrange discussions with groups of students about the Summer Leadership Academy.
2. Assist with communications to prospective and confirmed participants.
3. Assist with developing and launching website and social media posts about the Summer Leadership Academy.
4. Assist with Student Leadership Academy small group break-out sessions.
5. Participate in trainings to facilitate effective group process and youth development.

Specific skills/experience required for this work.

1. Experience with distance learning platforms such as ZOOM and/or similar platforms for facilitating live interactive webinars and virtual meetings with break out rooms.
2. Ability and willingness to work with a team.
3. Some experience in working with high school age students.
4. A passion for addressing issues of social and racial justice.

Equipment/resources you will provide to help Fellow conduct work:

1. Discovering Amistad will provide access to an e-mail address and our office phone system.
2. A laptop computer if the Fellow requires one.

Briefly describe the work that Yale PPSF Fellows have done with your organization in the past and present.

Discovering Amistad has never had a PPSF Fellow.

However, this Fall we hired a part time Graduate Student Intern, Alexandra Thomas, who is a Ph.D student in African American Studies (joint with History of Art) at Yale. She has been very successful in her work with us and is working to assist us in locating a Winter/Spring Graduate Student intern.