



THE MANAGER

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COLLEGE DREAMS HELPED BY MEA

By Bendix Anderson

A scholarship from the MEA's Career Development Program (CDP) is already helping **Yusuf Zafar** pay for college costs that keep growing — often in unexpected ways.

"The scholarship helped me with extra fees, hidden costs that you don't really see," says Zafar, who is studying Industrial Labor Relations at Cornell University. He received a \$750 scholarship from the CDP, which offers MEA members and their child/dependent the opportunity to apply for a scholarship award through the annual Joel Fishelson Scholarship Award.



Yusuf Zafar

Zafar plans to study law after he graduates. "It helps a lot with the excess costs — like if I go visit the doctor, that gets added on to my Bursar's bill. Cornell is pretty expensive."

Zafar is one of 14 students who received a scholarship of \$500 to \$750 in the 2022-2023 school year from the MEA's CDP. All of the scholarship winners are the child/dependent of New York City managers who are active members of the MEA. For example, Zafar's father, **Mehdi Zafar**, is an Investment Officer at the New York City Employees' Retirement System.

SCHOLARSHIPS HELP BIG PLANS

This year, the MEA scholarship program awarded a total of \$10,000 to help with the growing cost of going to college. The winners are using the awards to support education in schools from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Michigan, to Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida — though

about half attend schools in the greater New York metro area, including Manhattan College, St. John's University and several schools in the City University of New York (CUNY) system.

The scholarship winners have big plans for the future.

"I have the desire to spend my life after school in research revolving around human cognition and how it intertwines with the physical aspect of our biology," says **Alyssa Bahadur**, currently enrolled at the University of Connecticut, Storrs, where she is studying Physiology and Neurobiology.

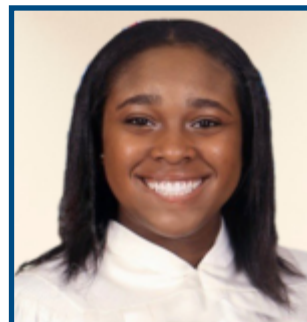


Alyssa Bahadur

"I am very grateful to have won this scholarship that I can use in my education," says Bahadur. She received a scholarship of \$750. She first heard about this opportunity through her mother, **Deomattie Bahadur-Singh**, a Senior Associate Director at Kings County Hospital.

"My plans for the future include obtaining my Bachelor of Science in Nursing then being a travel nurse so I can experience different genres of populations and work with different areas of nursing,"

says **Angelica Chavez-Downes**, who is studying at Temple University in Philadelphia. Her mother, **Vida Chavez**, is Director of Social Services at the NYC Department of Homeless Services.



Angelica Chavez-Downes

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UNSEASONABLY MILD



By NYCMEA President
Darrell L. Sims

I hope everyone had a wonderful and mild winter!

Executive Director Alice Wong and I testified at the NYC Council Civil Service and Labor Committee Hearing held on January 9, 2023. The hearing was titled “Health Insurance Coverage for City Employees, City Retirees, and Their Dependents” and its primary purpose was to determine if City Council should vote on *Intro 0874-2023* to amend *Section 12-126* of the *Administrative Code of New York City* to permit the transfer of retirees from Medicare to a Medicare Advantage Plan. Upon losing the NYC Organization of Public Service Retirees’ lawsuit and appeal preventing the transfer of 250,000 City retirees and their dependents

from Medicare to a Medicare Advantage Plus Program; the Administration and Municipal Labor Committee (MLC) proposed that the City Council amend the *Administrative Code* to accommodate the health insurance transfer. With skyrocketing cost of health insurance benefits, a potential savings of \$600 million per year in retiree supplemental health insurance premiums was the incentive promoting the proposed health insurance transfer.

Our testimony presented MEA’s objection to the proposed amendment of *Administrative Code, Section 12-126* enabling the City to impose Medicare Advantage as the only premium-free retiree health insurance plan.

A consequence of approving *Intro 0874*, the current Medicare / Senior Care plan would cost retirees and their dependents at least \$191 a month per person or possibly be eliminated. The amendment would allow the City and MLC to negotiate premium rates for everyone and place retirees and their dependents (insurees) into different economic classes based on financial ability to pay. *Intro 0874*, if approved, would permit coverage and benefits reductions, and eliminate protections and

equal treatment that insurees have at this time. In addition, we stated that the quality of health care insurance and the performance of the insurer are of the utmost importance. Based on government investigations, Medicare Advantage is inferior to Medicare because of questionable business practices in claim submissions, and denials and delays in pre-approval of medical procedures.

The MEA recommended that a working committee representing all concerned parties, including retirees, be formed to develop appropriate and sustainable long-term solutions to address the high cost of health insurance. The exorbitant costs burden should not be resolved by diminishing codified insurance coverage, benefits and protections that City workers, City retirees and their dependents have had for more than 50 years. MEA requested that the City Council not vote in favor of *Intro 0874*. As a result of the enormous presence of City retirees objecting to *Intro 0874* and City Council’s unwillingness to support the amendment, *Intro 0874* never came to a City Council vote.

UPDATES

On February 17, 2023 a tentative Economic Agreement (Contract) was reached between the Administration and DC 37. Of the approximately 90,000 DC 37 members, 45,936 members cast ballots during the Contract ratification period. On April 1, 2023, DC 37 announced that the Contract was ratified with over 97% of the ballots cast being in favor of ratification. The Contract includes 16.2% in pay raises retroactive from May 26, 2021 through November 6, 2026.

A special attraction of the Contract is the potential for flexible work schedules with options to work from home. As in the past, managerial pay raises will most likely follow a pattern similar to the DC 37 Contract



President Darrell Sims (Left), Executive Director Alice Wong (Center), and President Emeritus Stu Eber (Right) testifying at the January 9, 2023 City Council

Member Profile

A DYNAMIC CAREER IN CIVIL SERVICE AND EDUCATION TERRANCE BLACKMAN STROUD

By Vanessa DeSantis



Terrance Blackman Stroud

Terrance Stroud has seen many sides of City government in just over fifteen years of City work. The Deputy Commissioner of the Office of Training and Workforce Development (OTWD) at the Department of Social Services (DSS) since 2018, he previously worked at four different agencies.

"My journey first started in 2008, in the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment, then transitioned over to DoITT where I managed relationships with agency CIOs, then I went over to DCAS in the Citywide procurement office," said Stroud. "That's where I got into training."

At DCAS Terrance coordinated vendor-based training before assuming another role at Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), where he worked as Director of Continued Occupancy and oversaw the day-to-day administration of section 8, also known as the Housing Choice Voucher Program. There he created his own training unit and soon oversaw training for all of HPD as the Director of Training and Development.

At HPD Stroud learned more about the vital role of DSS, the City's social safety net and the largest social services agency in the country.

"I learned about this agency that was assisting my clients on the Section 8 side."

When he became Deputy Commissioner his familiarity with DSS and what it does, along with his experience managing more than 100 people, came in handy.

His work there is twofold: on the Training side, he oversees program specific training, such as overseeing a team of trainers who train workers in the Family Independence Program, which handles the SNAP and cash assistance. On the Workforce Development side, the focus is agency-wide, rather than program specific. In that capacity he oversees the five-day new hire program and the professional development training academy, as well as leading agency-wide de-escalation training.

OTWD DURING A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

Terrance was a little over one year into his job as Deputy Commissioner of OTWD when New York shut down because of the Coronavirus. There was a tsunami of demand for SNAP and cash assistance, and everyone was working remotely.

His team included fellow MEA member June Coxson, Assistant Deputy Commissioner of OTWD — and managed to successfully train re-deployed DSS workers with no prior professional knowledge of Cash Assistance and SNAP programs, by creating training hotlines.

"You don't appreciate how important and dynamic DSS is until a situation like this," said Stroud, calling his agency an "amazing safety net," for the City.

A major factor was considering the redeployed workers comfort levels

with technology. When they created the hotlines, they had one that was analog friendly and offered training via the phone. Another, for those with proficient tech know-how, used Microsoft Teams.

Both routes of training had to be staffed throughout the day to ensure continued support, resulting in fielding more than 2,000 calls a month. More than 28,000 calls were logged for the two programs combined.

The CA and SNAP hotlines were set up in less than two weeks.

"I admire the patience, skill, and determination of staff to walk through training; they showed patience and resilience," said Stroud in a recent interview.

Their heroic efforts are being recognized: last year their team received the Quality Agency Award by the American Public Human Service Association /National Staff Development Training Association for Exceptional Leadership and Educational Contributions to the Field of Health and Human Services.

Additionally, Stroud was individually honored in the Public Sector Network's 2022 Global Government Innovators eBook for his groundbreaking work in virtual training of redeployed staff.

"His inclusion (in the eBook) was well-deserved," said Ms. Coxson. "He cares about the people, he cares about the staff, as a leader who cultivates other leaders."

This year Terrance and his team received a Best Award given by the Association for Talent Development (ATD), called the world's largest association dedicated to those who develop talent in organizations. The award recog-

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Chavez-Downes received a scholarship of \$750. "The scholarship has gone to pay the remainder of my tuition balance for this semester," says Chavez-Downes. "Getting the scholarship has allowed me to work less hours so I can study more. The BSN program is a rigorous program and I need extra time to study, but also need to work to pay for books and tuition."

"The less that I have to worry about paying for school, the more I can focus on studying, getting further ahead in my education, and getting some work done earlier," says **Keane Albright**, who received a scholarship of \$750 and is studying computer science and math at Wabash College. Keane's mother is **Dr.**



Keane Albright

Kenisha Kidd-Albright, Senior Director Internal Audit at NYC Department of Finance. "She was the one that told me about the MEA, and was the person who sent me the scholarship application. Thanks mom!"

For many of the scholarship winners, their undergraduate education is just the beginning.



Sahadah Lawani

"I am currently a pre-medical student, and I plan to apply to medical school in the future to become a physician," says **Sahadah Lawani**, who is studying biomedical sciences at St. John's University. She received a scholarship of \$750. Her father, **Abdul-**

Aziz Lawani, was an Associate Director for NYC H+H. "Currently, in my undergraduate years, textbooks alone cost up to hundreds of dollars, and I plan on using the scholarship to help with that," she says.

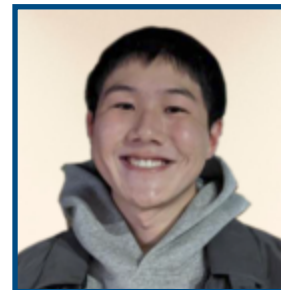
"I'm planning to go to vet school after undergrad," says **Leandre John**, who is studying Human Biology, Health and Society at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. "I plan to use this scholarship to lessen the financial burden of paying for college on my family." He received a \$500 scholarship. His mo-



Leandre John

ther, **Shanaya John**, is Director of Training and Child Care Communications at the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

"I hope to become a registered nurse — my plan for the future is to apply to nursing school," says **Thuan Luu**, who is studying biology at City College of New York. His father, **Hung Luu**, is a manager at the Department of Environmental Protection. "This scholarship helped me reach my goals by lessening the burden of college," says Thuan Luu. "I just used it to pay for the remainder of my tuition for this semester. My plans would have differed a bit by having to worry about the tuition for this semester."



Thuan Luu

The scholarship committee chose the winning students based on cumulative scores from their grade point average, how long their parent or guardian has been an MEA member, a rated 250-word essay and for the first time, a rated video interview.

2022-2023 JOEL FISHELSON SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS		
MEA MEMBER	STUDENT WINNER	SCHOLARSHIP AWARD
Igor Kigel	Alan Kigel	\$750
Deomattie Singh-Bahadur	Alyssa Bahadur	\$750
Vida Chavez	Angelica Chavez-Downes	\$750
Kazi F. Zaman	Ian Zaman	\$750
Edward Campbell	Jade Campbell	\$750
Kenisha Kidd-Albright	Keane Albright	\$750
Shanaya John	Leandre John	\$500
Bruce Bernstein	Matthew Arenas	\$750
Ralph Musolino	Matthew Musolino	\$500
Ernest Athanailos	Peter Athanailos	\$750
Abdul Aziz Lawani	Sahadah Lawani	\$750
Hung M Luu	Thuan Luu	\$750
Liqiu Li	Yu Zhang	\$750
Mehdi Zafar	Yusuf Zafar	\$750

after other union contracts are agreed upon.

As of January 1, 2023, the administrator for the Management Fund Benefits Dental Program was changed from Healthplex to Administrative Services Only, Inc. (ASO, Inc.). Additionally, as of January 12, 2023, retiree co-payments were suspended by a temporary court injunction questioning the validity of co-payments imposed on City retirees by the City's supplemental insurance companies. Litigation regarding copayments is scheduled for later this year.

The schedule for chapter elections has been updated by Executive Director Alice Wong. We encourage members to participate in chapter elections and volunteer as candidates to fill chapter officer

positions. It is extremely important for all agency chapters to be represented on the Executive Board. As chapter director, you are an ambassador for your agency and MEA — sharing managerial concerns and issues, and having a vote on the Executive Board. We also encourage members to invite non-MEA managers to the chapter meetings in an effort to recruit new members for your chapter as well as to increase MEA's membership. Please remember, recruitment leading to membership growth is the MEA's life blood — "There is strength in numbers".

Because of limited ticket sales and COVID-19, the 2022 Annual MEA CDP Joel Fishelson Scholarship Holiday Event, scheduled for December 6th at the Penn Club, was canceled. The Events and

Fundraising Committee is planning an outdoor event for late spring or early summer.

It is with regret that I must inform you that Adrienne Leaf has resigned as Chapter Director of the MEA's Retirees Chapter in January because of personal reasons. Ms. Leaf's invaluable service as Retirees Chapter leader is sincerely appreciated and will be sorely missed.

The MEA Executive Board acknowledges and appreciates the hard work of our New York City Managerial Employees Association members and will continue representing NYC managers to the best of our abilities. We wish everyone a Safe, Healthy, Peaceful, and Happy Winter that is full of achievable hopes and dreams.

MEMBER PROFILE: TERRANCE BLACKMAN STROUD *Continued from Page 3*

nizes organizations that demonstrate enterprise-wide success because of employee talent development.

Terrance will also be a featured speaker at ATD's Government Innovation New York event, to discuss the Future of Work in New York with other top leaders.

CAREER AS AN EDUCATOR AND RECENT PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTMENT

Mr. Stroud was recently appointed to the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars. The commission is comprised of a group of distinguished private citizens who are appointed with the task of selecting and honoring high-achieving high school seniors as Presidential Scholars.

Stroud is a fourth-generation educator who teaches as an Adjunct Professor at the Maurer School of Law at University of Bloomington, Indiana and as an inaugural Global Affairs Fellow at the Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies.

"My family is from Trinidad; my great-grandfather was a teacher, my grandmother was a teacher, my mother was a teacher, and my uncle was a teacher."

Stroud was born in Brooklyn, growing up in the Caribbean community of East Flatbush and stayed local for his undergraduate degree, attending Brooklyn College. When it came time to apply to law school, many local colleges reached out to him, but he was ultimately wooed by the Maurer School of Law in the Midwest.

After receiving his JD there in 2003 he became an adjunct professor overseeing the University's externship program and won adjunct professor of the year. He was the first Black person to do that.

"The amalgamation of those things was part of the reason I was selected to serve on the commission," he said.

Asked how he manages to balance two Adjunct professor appointments with his manager role with the City, Stroud responded, "When

you love what you do it's energizing," he said. "Seeing my students preparing to enter the global workforce is inspirational."

ON BEING AN MEA MEMBER AND A CITY MANAGER

Stroud joined the NYC MEA in 2018 when he became a manager, after hearing about it from current MEA President Darrell Sims. His mother, Rowena Blackman Stroud, was a union leader for United University Professions where she served at Chapter President for over three decades as well as serving as its Statewide Treasurer.

"I believe representation matters," he said.

A lot has changed in the City from when Terrance first embarked on his wide-ranging career in civil service, including his perspective.

"Now whenever I get an assignment, I think about how this affects other groups in the agency as well as the public," he said.

"I'm thinking about things in a far more complex way than when I originally started."