

Department of Environmental Protection

By Margot Schloss

Most New Yorkers never think twice about filling up a glass of water, flushing the toilet, or washing our dishes and hands. However easy it is to turn the tap, all of these little uses add up to a whopping total of 1 billion gallons of water a day. The New York City Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) job is to make sure that our water system—from protecting the source watersheds upstate to treating the water that goes down the toilet and drain—is safe, reliable, sustainable, and secure. DEP's commitment to the environment and to New Yorkers includes an extensive capital construction program, infrastructure security, hazardous materials filings and emergency response, water main and sewer maintenance, environmental engineering and construction (including sustainability initiatives), wastewater treatment, and community outreach. DEP also handles certain quality of life issues for the City including noise complaints reported through 311.

Since arriving at the Lefrak City headquarters just under a month ago, I have written several stories for our internal newsletter *The Weekly Pipeline*, worn a hardhat at site visits to the Croton Water Filtration Plant and Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant, met over 450 members of the public at an Open House New York event, and spent many hours lit by the familiar green glow of Microsoft Excel. This variety of activities accurately reflects the complexities DEP faces in managing a system that integrates relatively low-tech street swales and enhanced tree pits with a legacy system of "grey infrastructure" pipes and energy-intensive plants. In other words, no single aspect of DEP's mission to oversee NYC water from start to finish exists in isolation from the others. In this way, the Agency's operations reflect the history of NYC's development—in the ingenious gravity-fed aqueduct from upstate, for example—and a fresh commitment to sustainability and the health of our coastal ecosystems.

In addition to my brief yet thorough introduction to the Agency's work, my projects as an Urban Fellow have included a study of the pilot season of Water-On-the-Go, our portable tap water fountains that refresh and educate the public about the virtues of NYC water. So far over 75,000 New Yorkers have chosen to save green by drinking green. I am also planning for next summer's intern program with a specific focus on targeting the most qualified students to learn from DEP's senior staff and project leaders. I look forward to the opportunity to help DEP recruit the talent that will translate into the next generation of workers dedicated to public utilities. And in the process of understanding the Agency's needs and priorities, that might even include me.

Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services

By Jennifer Kanyamibwa

The Office of the Deputy Mayor For Health and Human Services oversees and coordinates the operations of the Department for the Aging, Administration for Children’s Services, Center for Economic Opportunity, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Department of Homeless Services, Human Resources Administration/ Department of Social Services, Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Correction and Department of Probation. Deputy Mayor Linda Gibbs is not only charged with overseeing the aforementioned agencies, she also maintains a liaison with the Health and Hospitals Corporations and the HIV Health and Human Services Planning Council.

As the Urban Fellow working directly for Deputy Mayor Gibbs and her Chief of Staff Kristin Misner in City Hall, my work involves attending meetings with Deputy Mayor Gibbs and her senior staff, drafting up presentations and accompanying Deputy Mayor Gibbs to various meeting throughout New York City, sending out a daily compilation of news articles to every senior staff member in the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, tracking federal stimulus money that our agencies receive from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), and working to form initiatives to strengthen the City’s connections to non-profit organizations.

I recently had the opportunity to accompany Chief of Staff Kristin Misner as she held meetings to explain age-friendly initiatives to a city government representative from Sydney, Australia, as well as a meeting where we highlighted NYC initiatives to address homelessness to the Deputy Manager from Vancouver, Canada. So far my experience working for Deputy Mayor Gibbs and her Chief of Staff Kristin Misner has been challenging, fascinating, thought-provoking, and exciting. As the year progresses, I look forward to doing even more exciting and meaningful work with the various agencies under the Health and Human Services umbrella.