

July 2020

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## Welcome

The Voorhees Center is excited to welcome:

- Nadia Mian, PhD, Senior Program Director
- Five new Ralph W. Voorhees Public Service Fellows: Rohit Aita, Lily Chang, Josie Libero, Kinnary Shah, and Wamia Siddiqui.
- Three new research associates: Ooha Uppalapati and Meg Cavanaugh, students in the master's program in urban planning and policy development; and Lauren Nolan, a doctoral candidate in planning and public policy.
- Three faculty affiliates: long-time research partner to the Center, Cara Cuite, Assistant Extension Specialist at the Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Studies; Mi Shih, Associate Professor and Eric Seymour, Assistant Professor, both of whom are faculty at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy.

## ABOUT THE CENTER

*The Ralph W. Voorhees Center for Civic Engagement at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy seeks to enhance educational opportunities and facilitate innovative research through community based research and discussion. The Center is a collaborative effort of faculty, staff, and students and community development actors. The center conducts community based research and facilitates discussions about urban problems and innovative policy and practice solutions.*

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## 2020-2021 RALPH W. VOORHEES PUBLIC SERVICE FELLOWS

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### ROHIT AITA



Rohit Aita, Presidential Scholar of the Honors College in the School of Arts and Sciences majoring in Genetics, is pursuing a Certificate in Computational Genetics. After being diagnosed with Crohn's disease, Rohit has been inspired to pursue a career in medicine. Rohit received the New Jersey Governor's STEM Scholars (NJGSS) Fellowship, was an Aresty Research fellow and Peer Instructor, and Human Genetics Institute of New Jersey MacMillan Cancer Genetics Summer Undergraduate Research Fellow. He works with the Improve Care Now (ICN) Network, a non-profit that seeks to standardize pediatric patient care for those with Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. As a member of the Patient Advisory Council (PAC), he is co-leading the creation of a patient informational toolkit on "IBD and Lifestyle". As a Lloyd C. Gardner research fellow, Rohit conducted a literature review on the current state of affairs and ethical implications of IBD genetic testing. Rohit is President of the Rutgers IBD and IBS Association, volunteers at the Zarephath Health Center, and remotely interns under Dr. Jariwala, Director of Clinical & Research Innovation, at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and Montefiore Medical Center.

### LILY CHANG



Lily Chang is a Public Health major and Urban Planning and Design minor. She is a proud Douglass woman, Treasurer of the Bloustein Public Service Association, and Managing Editor of the Rutgers Journal of Bioethics. Through a Spring 2021 study abroad program, with the public health-focused Khon Kaen University program in Thailand, she will participate in an internship geared towards research and work using community partnerships. After graduation, she plans to work in the healthcare field and later enter medical school. With an interest in Urban Planning, she wants to bridge the gap between the interrelated fields of Public Health and Urban Planning. Her ultimate goal is to work on global public health issues.

## **KINNARY SHAH**



Kinnary Shah is a senior in the Honors College and Douglass Residential College pursuing a double major in Public Health and Biomathematics. She has tutored with Youth Empowerment Services after-school program. She has interned at Artists Mentoring Against Racism, Drugs, and Violence (AMARD&V), and is a research assistant in the Ellison Lab in the Rutgers University Department of Genetics. She mentors first-time women in STEM researchers through the Douglass Research Advisory Board. She interned at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health through the Summer Program in Epidemiology and Biostatistics. This summer, she is interning at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center through the Quantitative Sciences Undergraduate Research Experience (QSURE). She will be an Aresty Peer Instructor, and teaching a First-Year Interest Group Seminar. She is President of Kier's Kidz at Rutgers, which is affiliated with a local non-profit advocating for and financially supporting children and families battling pediatric cancer.

## **JOSIE LIBERO**

Josie Libero is majoring in Public Health. Her focus is in violence prevention and sexual education. She has dedicated much of her college experience to advocacy. She is a Crisis Response Advocate for the Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance where she provides advocacy to all victims of interpersonal violence. She works as the Interim Coordinator for SCREAM Theater and helps to put on New Student Orientation programming about sexual violence for Rutgers University as well as other institutions in states along the East Coast. She is a Peer Educator at Hope for the Mental Health Programming and the Sexual Health Programming. Preventative education is at the intersection of her passion for public health and social justice as education is one of the great tools to curing the world of ignorance and hate.

## **WAMIA SIDDIQUI**



Wamia Siddiqui is a senior at the Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences studying Biology and Public Health with certificates in Civic Scholarship and Women's Leadership. She has been a long term human rights advocate with Amnesty International and co-founded the Rutgers University student chapter. She has been a clinical intern at the Libertas Center for Human Rights, which connects

survivors of human rights violations with medical, social, and legal services. Wamia is involved in community service to promote educational equity, as a volunteer for the Advance Via Individual Determination (AVID) college readiness program at New Brunswick Middle School, and as an intern at BioBus, which seeks to drive science education in under-resourced communities. She hopes to pursue a career combating health disparities where she can combine her interests in medicine, education, and public service.

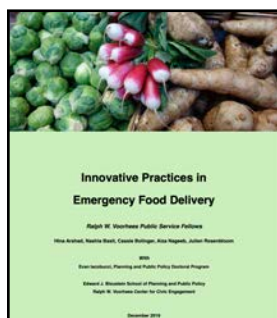
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## RESEARCH CORNER

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### VOORHEES FELLOWS RESEARCH

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### Innovative Practices in Emergency Food Delivery

The Coronavirus crisis has revealed just how critical the emergency food system is to communities, especially during times of crisis. During the Fall of 2019, five undergraduate Ralph W. Voorhees Public Service Fellows: Hina Arshad, Nashia Basit, Cassie Bolinger, Aiza Nageeb, and Julien Rosenbloom, along with doctoral student Evan Jacobucci, worked in partnership with MCFOODS, the Middlesex County Food Bank, to research innovative food pantry practices. MCFOODS asked the Fellows to study food pantries in the US with a focus on practices that incorporate technology to improve operations and approaches that enable food pantry guests to select their own products (called client choice). The Fellows presented their findings to MCFOODS and produced a report.

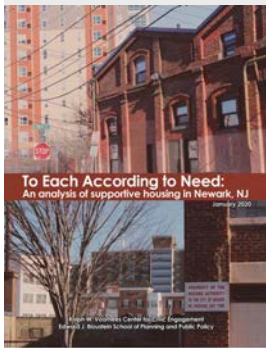
### CENTER RESEARCH

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### Housing Insecurity and Health in Orange, NJ

How do we think about the intersection of housing insecurity and health? The Center's latest research study is exploring this question through a research project in the City of Orange, New Jersey. The research team of Professors Eric Seymour and Kathe Newman along with doctoral candidate Lauren Nolan and with assistance from undergraduate student Mariam Elsaker are exploring how we understand housing insecurity, the processes that shape it, and the myriad of ways that it affects human health. They are especially

interested in how historical and spatial patterns of disinvestment and segregation, reinvestment and rising housing costs, and labor markets and the geography of work impact health through housing insecurity in specific communities. Lauren is analyzing data that shows where people in Orange, NJ work and is currently analyzing Home Mortgage Disclosure Act data to better understand mortgage lending patterns in Orange since 2004. Mariam conducted a literature review. The team has received support from the Edward J. Bloustein School of Public Policy's Advisory Board and the Rutgers Research Council. The study intends to contribute to and complicate the way we think about the social determinants of health to begin to more clearly reveal the complex relations between housing and health.



## Supportive Housing in Newark

Supportive housing is housing that incorporates services for vulnerable populations. Research Associate and masters student, Michael Hipson used publicly available data to explore the supportive housing infrastructure landscape in Newark, New Jersey. His work reveals many challenges involved with gathering information about the stock of supportive housing as well as in estimating demand for these services.

## Affordable Housing in Newark

Research Associate and master's student Ooha Uppalapati, with support from researchers and master's students Noura Von Briesen and Guanfang Cai, has been exploring affordable housing in Newark with a focus on understanding the landscape of affordable housing with federal assistance (public housing, Federal Housing Administration multifamily assistance, and housing vouchers). Ooha is analyzing administrative data from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and American Community Survey along with Newark Housing Authority public reports. The objective is to understand the location and size of the city's federally assisted housing stock including current, proposed, and future changes (especially to time-delimited forms of assistance) and to better understand the population of residents who call those units home.

## Foreclosure and Eviction Brief

Masters student and Research Associate Margaret Cavanaugh is researching public and private programs to address Coronavirus crisis-related home mortgage and rental challenges in New Jersey. She is producing a brief that outlines her findings.

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# INTERSECTIONS

## (A Focus on Affiliated Faculty Researchers)

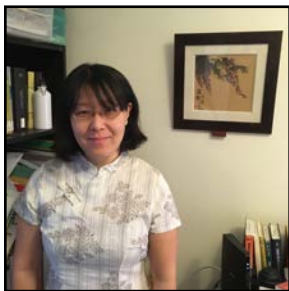
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**CARA CUI TE**, Assistant Extension Specialist



Cara Cuite works with Elijah's Promise, the New Brunswick Community Farmers Market, and faculty and students at the Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School on a Veggie Rx project, where low-income patients of the Promise Clinic are given "prescriptions" for free fruits and vegetables. She works closely with Rutgers Student Affairs on multiple student food insecurity projects, including leading surveys of Rutgers students and collaborating on a new food insecurity screen and intervene project within Rutgers Student Health. Cara is an investigator on a USDA-funded Farmers Market Promotion Program grant to work with market ambassadors to help facilitate community connections to the New Brunswick Community Farmers Market. She is collaborating on a new project, funded by NJ Sea Grant, to create connections between a community-supported fishery and restaurants in Philadelphia.

**MI SHIH**, Associate Professor



Mi Shih's recent research includes two major areas. The first is about the relationship between the regulatory regime on land and the urban public in Taiwan. She examines how planners' use of various kinds of regulatory instruments, such as transfer of development rights, density bonusing, land assembly, and land taking etc., has deepened the financialization of land and housing in Taiwan. She coins "real estate developmentalism" to describe the real estate sector's increasingly prioritized status within the state's market-conforming intervention to promote economic growth. What also interests her is the equally significant sociopolitical processes that engage people in dialogue, deliberation, and debate about the penetration of finance to the urban and human environment. She sees this complex, messy, and, at times, highly contentious relationship between land financialization and public engagement indicative of Taiwan's young yet deepening democracy. She has written a series of journal articles that have been published in *Planning Theory & Practice* (2018), *Journal of Planning Education and Research* (2019), and *Planning Practice and Research* (2020).

Mi's second research area is a comparative study of state-led urban land development and grassroots territorial politics in Shanghai and Guangzhou, China. She tries to examine the different state-society dynamics and relationships during the neighborhood displacement processes that she has observed in Shanghai and Guangzhou, China. This area of work builds on her long-term ethnographic fieldwork research in China. She argues that by juxtaposing Shanghai and Guangzhou together we are able to not only broaden our conceptualization of displacement but also to deepen the understanding of the Chinese state's different strategies of social governance and control. Publications include journal articles in *Environment and Planning A* (2017), *International Development Planning Review* (2019), and two book chapters.

**ERIC SEYMOUR**, Assistant Professor



Eric Seymour is continuing research on housing insecurity in Detroit following the foreclosure crisis, which addresses problems flowing from the abundance of distressed properties purchased by investors in a context of persistent and worsening poverty for long-time residents. Low-income households locked out of the conventional rental market have limited housing options and often rent from landlords owning substandard properties posing health and habitability problems. His work linking properties owned by foreclosure investors with elevated odds of lead poisoning was recently featured in [Michigan Public Radio](#). [Related work linking foreclosure investment with eviction](#) and blight has [prompted Detroit officials to review their practices](#) related to tax foreclosure and tenant protections. His work on insecure land contracts and rent-to-own contracts was featured on [PBS NewsHour](#). His work on these topics has been published in *Cities* (2019), *Urban Affairs Review* (2020), and *Housing Policy Debate* (2020).

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## RALPH W. VOORHEES PUBLIC SERVICE FELLOWS ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENTS

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**A**ntonette (“Toni”) Gingerelli (2016-2017) currently serves as Chief of Staff for New Jersey State Senator Vin Gopal. In this role, Toni oversees operations, communications, and legislation for the Senator. Prior to this position, Toni served as the Deputy Director of Represent Women, a nonprofit organization that researches, educates, and advocates for rules and systems reforms to advance representation and leadership of women in the United States. At the organization, she led outreach efforts and managed the organization's research program. In Fall 2020, Toni will be pursuing a Master of Public Policy at Harvard Kennedy School with the goal of exploring best practices to create inclusive public policy and a more reflective democracy.

**A**iza Nageeb (2019-2020) recently graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Public Health and a Bachelor of Arts in Information Technology Informatics. She will be starting a full-time position with the Department of Defense as a Logistics Management Specialist in New Jersey.

**K**atarina Piasevoli (2015-2016) is a Senior Project Coordinator in the Division of Hematologic Malignancies at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. Katarina is responsible for directly overseeing day-to-day administrative operations for the division head, including direct supervision of the Administrative Assistant team. She manages projects that involve interdepartmental stakeholders, as well as partnering with management and leadership on project strategy development and execution. She leads internal grant

competitions, the junior grant writing course, and designs the divisional annual report. Katarina is passionate about sustainability and volunteers her time on multiple institutional committees, such as SKI Green Labs and the Green Team, focused on reducing MSK’s impact on the environment. She is currently enrolled in the Master of Public Administration program at Columbia University.



**D**aniela Ortega (2015-2016) works with the Guidepoint Insights team as a healthcare associate doing primary research in therapeutics. Prior to this appointment, she worked at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center as a research project associate and completed her Masters in Healthcare Policy and Economics from Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences.



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## WHAT'S NEW?

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### Follow us on Instagram!

Did you know that the Voorhees Center for Civic Engagement is now on Instagram? Follow us @voorheescivicengagement

### Revised Website Coming Soon!

Our website is going through some big changes! Be sure to visit us at [www.rvw.rutgers.edu](http://www.rvw.rutgers.edu) to see our new look this Fall!