

# RWVC NEWS

## Winter 2021

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### 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.*

*The Voorhees Center would like to wish you a very happy and healthy holiday season, and all the best for the New Year!*

# Welcome

The Voorhees Center is excited to welcome:

Faculty affiliate **James DeFilippis** whose work focuses on community development theory and practice, urban political economy, immigration and the informal economy.

**Jonathan Francisco Bonilla**, a Master's student in Urban and Regional Planning who has been researching affordable housing.

**Lily Chang**, an undergraduate Public Health and Urban Planning and Design student who has been exploring where college student-aged residents of New Brunswick, New Jersey live over time.

**William Downie**, an MCRP student who is interested in helping disadvantaged communities develop in an equitable and sustainable way. He has been researching municipal regulatory tools in New Jersey.

**Andrea He**, an MCRP student, developed graphics for the Negotiating Social Futures conference, and is working with Professor Mi Shih on urban development in Taiwan, as well as affordable housing in New Jersey.

**Smriti Singh**, an MCRP student, is interested in land and housing rights, and is researching affordable housing.

**John Fidel Klarke Smith**, an MCRP student, is studying community development issues and researching affordable housing in New Jersey.

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# RESEARCH CORNER

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## VOORHEES FELLOWS RESEARCH

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### Middlesex County Food Pantry Product Dating Label Education Project

The Ralph W. Voorhees Public Service Fellows worked with REPLENISH, the Middlesex County Food bank, to learn how pantry staff and volunteers understand food dating labels.

The project had two main objectives: (1) understanding what practices food pantries in Middlesex County currently have in place regarding food waste and past date items, and (2) exploring ways in which to increase education around date labels and reduce food waste.

These objectives were guided by the following overarching research questions: 1) What knowledge do pantry staff and volunteers have surrounding food waste and food date labels, and how do they incorporate this into their work? 2) How have clients interacted with food date labels? 3) What systems do pantries have to address food waste? And 4) How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted food handling, date labels, and food waste?

The Fellows found that decisions made around product date labels were affected by fears of maintaining client trust, and that adopting a client choice model may lead to pantries removing or refusing food that has gone past the date label, as supermarkets do. The Fellows also found that pantry leadership and long-term volunteers are key sources of information for new pantry volunteers. The food date label knowledge these individuals possess typically stems from their own personal beliefs, their pantry operation, and/or materials from REPLENISH. Some pantries provided more formal training. Language barriers were also integral to imparting information about food product date labels.

The Fellows provided several recommendations to the County on food product date labels including implementing food distribution systems based on safety, using existing resources to determine what food is safe to distribute, and implementing a food date management and waste tracking system, among others.

## CENTER RESEARCH

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SEPTEMBER 2021

### MIDDLESEX COUNTY EMERGENCY FOOD ORGANIZATIONS AND NON-FOOD SERVICES DURING THE COVID PANDEMIC

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## Middlesex County Emergency Food Organizations and Non-Food Services during the Covid Pandemic

In partnership with the Rutgers University Collaborative Center for Community-Engaged Research and Learning, and REPLENISH, the Middlesex County Food Bank, this report offers some insight about the non-food challenges that pantries confronted during the pandemic, how pantry staff navigated the demand for these services during the pandemic through July of 2021, and it provides some idea about the type of information that might be useful to pantries moving forward.

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## EVENTS

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## Negotiating Social Futures Conference

The Negotiating Social Futures seminar series kicked off with a two-day virtual paper conference held on September 23-24 with an international group of panelists and discussants as well as early career training for new scholars.

Professors Mi Shih and Kathe Newman hosted the conference

which was supported by funding from the Urban Studies Foundation. The conference focused on the politics of land development and value capture. Professor Robert Lake delivered the keynote address. Paper topics ranged from air rights in Taipei to urban development in Toronto. This project is supported by an Urban Studies Foundation Seminar Series Award grant (USF-SSA-210213).



Did you know food pantries continued serving during the pandemic?

Learn about community resilience and connect with organizations!

## Pantries and Pandemics: Let's Rise to the Challenge of Food Insecurity

Friday, October 1, 2021  
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Virtual event - Join with Zoom

Register now at [getInvolved](#) to receive a link!

In partnership with Scarlet Knight Challenge & Rutgers Ralph W. Voorhees Center for Civic Engagement

Rutgers Collaborative Center is a part of the Division of Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement



Featuring...

**Dr. Nadia Mian**

Rutgers Ralph W. Voorhees Center for Civic Engagement

**Jennifer Apostol**

Replenish, Nourishing Neighbors

**Mario Vargas**

Suydam Street Reformed Church



## Pantries to Pandemic Lunch Event

In a joint virtual event with the Rutgers Collaborative Center for Community-Engaged Research and Learning, NJ Bonner AmeriCorps member Tiffany Yong hosted a panel focused on community resiliency, food pantries and food insecurity during the Covid-19 pandemic. The panel included Jennifer Apostol, Director of REPLENISH, Mario Vargas from Suydam Street Reformed Church Food Pantry, and Nadia Mian from the Ralph W. Voorhees Center for Civic Engagement.

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## INTERSECTIONS

### (A Focus on Affiliated Faculty Researchers)

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#### **CARA CUIITE**, Assistant Extension Specialist

Dr. Cara Cuite is hosting an online conference February 10-11, 2022 about student food insecurity at New Jersey colleges and universities. The conference will highlight innovative programming at institutions across the state and discuss how to move our campuses toward becoming hunger free. Dr. Rashida Crutchfield will deliver the keynote address on February 10 on student basic needs insecurity as a social and racial justice issue. Dr. Brian Bridges, NJ Secretary of Higher Education, will offer remarks. The NJ Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, through a Hunger Free Campus Grant to Rutgers-New Brunswick, are providing support for this event.

**JAMES DEFILIPPIS**, Professor

Professor DeFilippis has been active with the Western Queens Community Land Trust, an organization he was a founding member of, as well as the New York City-wide coalition "New York City Community Land Initiative." He has also been doing fieldwork for his book on "Urban Social Justice in an Immigrant Society" which is set in Queens County, NY -- the most diverse county in the United States.

**RONALD QUINCY**, Professor of Professional Practice

Professor Quincy recently completed a US State Department "Citizen Diplomacy " funded project related to community-based coalition building in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, a nation that is embroiled in a civil war. He is also working with the City of New Brunswick on a "sister-city" proposal with a West African nation.

**MI SHIH**, Associate Professor

Professor Shih has been working on several research projects and initiatives. She is currently developing and writing two case studies with students at the Bloustein School and collaborators in Taiwan. One case study is about a state-led land readjustment project in New Taipei City, Taiwan. The other is about a squatter settlement called Treasure Hill in Taipei, Taiwan. Together these two case studies help provide a better understanding of the politics of land development and value capture, planning negotiation with multiple publics, and democratic planning. Professor Shih is also completing three journal article manuscripts that collectively examine planners' use of regulatory-technical tools to valorize land's monetary value and the urban challenges that emerge in the process. One of the manuscripts will be part of the special theme issue that she is co-editing with Dr. Kathe Newman. Professor Shih and Professor Newman applied for and received an Urban Studies Foundation Knowledge Mobilization award. They plan to organize a workshop on democratizing spreadsheet models of calculative planning techniques in Taiwan in the summer of 2022 or beyond.

**ERIC SEYMOUR**, Assistant Professor

Professor Seymour has a forthcoming paper in *Urban Geography*, "Decline-induced displacement: The case of Detroit" (coauthored with Joshua Akers at University of Michigan-Dearborn). This paper examines displacement in neighborhoods exhibiting sustained decline since the foreclosure crisis. They attribute this to the intersection of historical patterns of discrimination and segregation; subprime mortgage lending targeting historically underserved inner-city neighborhoods with high Black ownership rates; austerity responses by fiscally constrained local governments, including aggressive collection of fees and fines, and the actions of the predatory investors who purchase foreclosed homes at

substantial discounts. The authors argue that a focus on these varieties of displacement offers a more complete understanding of the ongoing and highly unequal restructuring of US cities following the financial crisis of the last decade.

**WILL PAYNE**, Assistant Professor

Professor Will Payne presented new work on "Using Local Review Data to Analyze Shifting 'Catchment Areas' of Gentrifying and Controversial Businesses" at the annual meeting of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning. Along with collaborator Dr. John Stehlin (University of North Carolina at Greensboro), Dr. Payne published an article entitled "Meso-scale Infrastructures and Uneven Development: Bicycle Sharing Systems in the United States as 'Already-Splintered' Urbanism" in the *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*. He also moderated an expert panel for the American Association of Geographers on the topic of "New Jersey Redistricting with Geographers: Mapping for Equity and Inclusion" in advance of the 2020 redistricting cycle, and presented on the "Equity Impacts of Differential Privacy in the 2020 Census" for the New Jersey-Philadelphia Chapter of Scholars Strategy Network (SSN) presentation to Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman's (NJ-12) legislative and communications staff.

**KATHE NEWMAN**, Professor

Professor Newman collaborated with Mi Shih on the Urban Studies Seminar series and the development of a special journal issue about the politics and land and values. With another set of scholars, she is co-editing a special journal issue about student housing. She is completing a case study that is part of a digital case study project with Mi Shih.