



FALL SPOTLIGHT

September 2026

The latest news and updates from the Center for Ethics & Public Service



Celebrating an Unforgettable Summer

As the 2026 Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church Summer Freedom School came to a close, we celebrated a season filled with learning, laughter, discovery, and growth. Over the course of six weeks, our students embraced every opportunity to expand their minds, strengthen their character, and build lasting friendships. From literacy building activities, engaging history lessons, and thought-provoking discussions, to exciting field trips, and hands-on enrichment experiences, the summer truly reflected education, community, and joy.

As we reflect on an incredible summer, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the many community partners who helped make the experience so meaningful. A special thank-you to the University of Miami's Wellness Center for introducing our scholars to the benefits of yoga and mindfulness, the Abess Center for Ecosystem Science and Policy for immersing students in a marine science simulation, and the UM Police Department, along with the City of Miami Police Department, for investing their time in building positive relationships and engaging with our students. We also thank nurses Ashley Kotei and Brandi Charlot for sharing their knowledge and promoting healthy living; Athena Atkins for inspiring creativity through a memorable candle-making experience; Christopher Norwood and the Historic Ward Rooming House for providing an unforgettable art and history lesson connecting our campers to Miami's rich cultural heritage; and Dr. Marvin Dunn for guiding our students through Miami's history and bringing the stories of our community to life.

Their generosity, expertise, and commitment enriched the summer in countless ways, and we were deeply grateful for their partnership in helping our students learn, grow, and thrive. Together, they helped create an impactful and unforgettable summer that our students will remember for years to come.

Meet the Fall 2026 Fellows



Laura Bea, 3L
Lee Family Fellow
Legal Profession Program

Laura received her Bachelor's degree in political science and English from the University of Miami before going to law school. Laura serves as the Lee Family Fellow for the Legal Profession Program at CEPS. She has been a part of CEPS since her 1L year. Laura is also the president of the Yvette Ostolaza Trial Team, writing competition editor for the Race and Social Justice Law Review, and is a member of the Charles C. Papy Jr. Moot Court Board. After law school, Laura will be joining Berger Singerman as a full-time associate.

Aleah DeSanto, 3L
Chaykin Fellow
Community Equity Lab

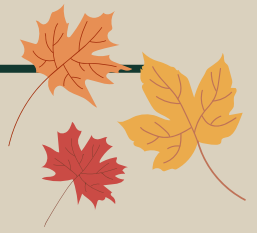
Aleah was born and raised in Erie, Pennsylvania, and earned her degree in criminal justice from Edinboro University. She joined CEPS as a 1L and has continued with the program throughout law school. During law school, Aleah has been involved with the Trial Team and Moot Court and currently serves as a Fellow with the Children & Youth Law Clinic. This summer, she interned with the U.S. Army JAG Corps in El Paso, Texas, where she worked with Trial Defense Services. Outside of law school, Aleah enjoys spending time with friends and family, sharing a good laugh, and eating spicy food.



Paris Foy, 3L
Lee Family Fellow
Legal Profession Program

Paris is from Atlanta, Georgia, and a summa cum laude graduate of Howard University. At the University of Miami School of Law, she advocates for children's rights and civil rights through her work in public service. Her legal interests span entertainment law, civil rights, and public interest advocacy, with a passion for using the law to serve and empower others.





**Joseph Golden, 3L
Haggard Law Fellow
Black Church Program**

Joe is a J.D./LL.M. (Entertainment, Arts, and Sports Law) candidate from Woodbridge, New Jersey. He is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame, where he studied Biological Sciences and Film, Television, and Theatre. He was drawn to law school because of his love for public service and is excited to work with the CEPS team again this year! Joe will return to Jones Day in its New York office after graduation.

**Juliana Gorina, 3L
Palermo Fellow
Community Equity Lab**

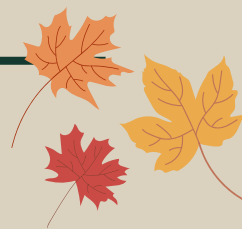
Juliana has worked with CEPS as a member of the Community Equity Lab since her 1L spring. She returns to CEPS to continue advancing fair housing and community-centered advocacy in Miami. Her work with CEPS, the Environmental Justice Clinic, and public interest legal internships has strengthened her research, writing, and litigation skills. Juliana also serves as Editor-in-Chief of the University of Miami Race and Social Justice Law Review, where her student Note will be published in spring 2027.



**Sara Howard, 3L
Hoeveler Fellow
Legal Profession Program**



Sara is from New York. She is a double Cane, holding a master's in international administration and a Bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Miami. In addition to being a Hoeveler Fellow with CEPS, Sara is currently interning with the University of Miami Innocence Clinic and is an active member of the Mock Trial Team. Since coming to law school, Sara has focused on public interest work, having interned at the Miami-Dade Public Defender's Office, the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida, and the Eleventh Judicial Circuit Court of Florida. She is thrilled to continue working with CEPS in the Legal Profession Program.



**Eliza Kirk, 3L
Palermo Fellow
Community Equity Lab**

Eliza graduated from Pitzer College with a Bachelor's degree in Sustainability and the Built Environment in 2023. Building on a long-standing commitment to community-based advocacy developed through her work in environmental and immigrant rights organizations, Eliza is honored to serve as a fellow with both CEPS and the Environmental Justice Clinic.

**Emma Eckenhausen, 2L
Catsman Fellow
Black Church Program**

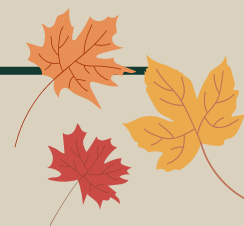
Emma serves as a junior staff editor of the Inter-American Law Review and a Catsman Fellow with CEPS. During the summer of 2026, Emma served as a judicial intern with the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida in Tampa. Before law school, she worked in government relations in Denver and Washington, D.C. Emma earned a Bachelor's degree in political science with a minor in economics from the University of Colorado Boulder.



**Jackqueline Goggins, 2L
Hoeveler Fellow
Legal Profession Program**

Jackqueline is from Miami, Florida, and received her Bachelor of Science from the University of Miami and was a public school teacher before going to law school. This past summer, she worked as a judicial intern with the Honorable Peter D. Russin in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court. As a 2L, Jackqueline is the president of Miami Law Women and a junior staff editor on the International and Comparative Law Review. She is excited to return to CEPS as a Hoeveler Fellow in the Legal Profession Program. In her free time, Jackqueline likes to bake bread, go for walks, and scuba dive!





**Ian Hughes, 2L
Catsman Fellow
Black Church Program**

Ian earned his Bachelor's in Political Science and Literature, magna cum laude, from Florida State University in 2023. He then spent two years working in educational advocacy at The Children's Movement of Florida in Miami. He is excited to return to CEPS as a fellow in the Black Church Program and continue its election and civic projects after working as an intern last spring. He will also serve as a Junior Staff Editor for the Race and Social Justice Law Review and participate in the Environmental Justice Clinic, advancing the public interest work he would like to pursue after law school.

**Sophie Lakin, 2L
Chaykin Fellow
Community Equity Lab**

Sophie is from Atlanta, Georgia. She graduated magna cum laude from Tulane University, where she studied political science, Spanish, and Latin American Studies. As a 1L, Sophie interned with the CEPS Community Equity Lab, was a HOPE Summer Public Interest Fellow, and was selected to receive the Sarah Lilly Fellowship. This past summer, Sophie interned at the Community Justice Project, gaining experience in movement/community lawyering. She is excited to continue her involvement with CEPS as a fellow this year.



**Kelsey Mira, 2L
Chaykin Fellow
Black Church Program**

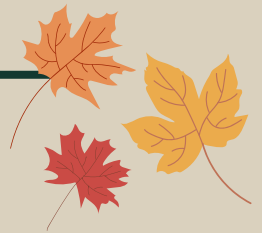
Kelsey is a native of Miami, Florida, who graduated from Florida State University in May 2023 with dual B.S. degrees in Biochemistry and Secondary STEM Education. She was commissioned into the U.S. Navy in May 2023 and served aboard the USS New York until July 2025. She was deployed to the Eastern Mediterranean, qualified as a Surface Warfare Officer, and transferred to the U.S. Navy Judge Advocate General's Corps (JAGC). Kelsey is currently on active duty and attending law school through the Navy's Law Education Program (LEP). She is interested in environmental and maritime law. This year, she is involved in the Military and Veteran Law Student Association, Honor Council, Environmental Law Society, Environmental Justice Clinic, Prison Legal Writing Program, and the 2026 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP31).





**Julia Montejo, 2L
Catsman Fellow
Black Church Program**

Julia is a formerly undocumented immigrant from Guatemala committed to immigrant rights and racial justice. A Cornell University alumna and former community organizer, she has supported organizations advancing marginalized communities and managed early-career programs for Fortune 500 clients at Extern. At Miami Law, Julia is a HOPE Fellow, Ms. JD Public Interest Scholar, Immigration Clinic student, and Jotwell.com student editor. She also holds leadership positions in three student organizations and received the Dean's Certificate of Achievement in Professional Responsibility.



**Hanna Murphy, 2L
Hunton Fellow
Community Equity Lab**

Hanna previously interned with CEPS, where she contributed to the H.T. Smith Symposium and subsequent law review article. One of the most rewarding aspects of her experience with CEPS has been the opportunity to engage with and contribute to the Miami community, and she looks forward to continuing to support CEPS and its important work this year. Before attending law school, Hanna graduated magna cum laude from Colgate University in 2022 and worked as a litigation paralegal at Cravath, Swaine & Moore in New York City.



**Andrew Navarro, 2L
Hoeveler Fellow
Black Church Program**

Andrew graduated summa cum laude from Kansas State University with a Bachelor's in Political Science and International Studies. Born in Miami and raised in Kansas, Andrew has worked with immigration nonprofits, including Catholic Charities and the International Refugee Assistance Program (IRAP). This past summer, he also assisted indigent clients with criminal and family-law matters at the Office of Criminal Conflict and Civil Regional Counsel. As a 2L, Andrew will serve as co-director of IRAP at Miami Law, junior staff editor for the Race and Social Justice Law Review, and intern with the Environmental Justice Clinic. He also volunteers with the Prison Legal Writing Program and will represent Miami Law at the 2026 United Nations Climate Change Conference. Andrew served as an intern with the Black Church Program as a 1L and is excited to return this semester as a Hoeveler Fellow.



Meet the Fall 2026 Interns



Gabriela Alvarez, 2L
Black Church Program



Ryan Bathras, 2L
Community Equity Lab



Amalia Garcia, 2L
Black Church Program



Arnelle Naissant, 2L
Legal Profession Program



Karina Robinson, 2L
Legal Profession Program



Eva Watson, 2L
Legal Profession Program

2026 Brown University Interns: Ben and Nainika



This summer, Benjamin Hader and Nainika Sompallie, undergraduate interns from Brown University, conducted in-depth research under the supervision of the Center for Ethics and Public Service to plan and develop meaningful, community-based conversations around voting rights and to prepare for the upcoming midterm elections. Their research spanned topics ranging from logistical details to substantive content for a nonpartisan series of Know Your Rights voting chats. The interns met directly with church leaders, voting rights organizers, experts, and community members to ground their research and planning in community relationships, shared priorities, and critical information. With the goal of equipping community members with clear, accessible information about voting rights, election procedures, and the practical steps required to cast their ballots, the interns prepared a series of informational presentations designed to create robust space for nonpartisan civic dialogue. The interns prepared flyers and marketing materials to ensure these critical conversations reached and resonated with the broader community. It was a pleasure to work with the Brown University interns, whose enthusiasm and diligence positioned the Black Church Program's Good Government Project for a successful fall semester.

In addition to conducting legal research and supporting the voting rights initiative, the interns devoted time each week to the Freedom School program. They worked directly with students to strengthen their literacy and mathematics skills and played an essential role in delivering engaging history lessons. Their dedication, passion, and willingness to serve made them valuable members of the Freedom School community and contributed greatly to our students' summer learning experience.



Freedom School 2026: Celebrating a Summer of Learning, Leadership, and Discovery



The 2026 Freedom School summer program offered K-12 students six enriching weeks of culturally grounded learning, creative exploration, and personal growth. Guided by the theme “Know the Past. Celebrate the Present. Build the Future,” students examined important moments in Black history while discovering how courage, knowledge, creativity, and collective action can strengthen communities.

The summer began with lessons on struggles for freedom and liberation. Campers explored the courage and resilience of individuals and communities that challenged injustice and fought for equality. They then studied sports and activism, learning how athletes have used their voices and public platforms to advance justice, unite communities, and inspire social change.

Students continued their historical journey by examining segregation and transportation. They learned how discriminatory laws and transportation policies affected the daily lives of Black Americans, including the displacement of Black communities caused by interstate highway development. These lessons encouraged campers to consider how decisions about neighborhoods and public resources continue to influence communities today.

Campers then discovered the history of Black Wall Streets and the remarkable legacy of Black entrepreneurship. They learned how thriving Black communities created businesses, supported one another economically, and built opportunities despite segregation and discrimination. The lessons emphasized ownership, resilience, leadership, and the importance of investing in one’s community.

The Harlem Renaissance lessons brought history to life through art, music, literature, and cultural expression. Campers explored how influential artists, writers, musicians, and leaders—including

Langston Hughes, Augusta Savage, and Louis Armstrong—used their talents to celebrate Black identity, challenge stereotypes, and inspire change. Students were also encouraged to recognize their creativity and their voices as powerful tools for expression and leadership.

The curriculum concluded with an exploration of the power of education. Campers examined the important role education has played throughout Black history and learned how generations of Black Americans fought for equal access to learning. Students were reminded that education extends beyond the classroom and provides a lifelong pathway to confidence, independence, opportunity, and positive change.

Daily reading and mathematics instruction, music, swimming, field trips, family conversation starters, and collaborative activities supported the curriculum throughout the summer. Together, these experiences strengthened academic skills while nurturing cultural pride, curiosity, empathy, and civic responsibility.

The 2026 Freedom School summer was more than a collection of lessons—it was a celebration of Black history, identity, achievement, and possibility. Our campers left with a deeper understanding of the past, greater confidence in themselves, and a renewed awareness of their ability to lead, serve, create, and help build a brighter future.



Celebrating the First Year of the LifeLab at Freedom School



This summer, the Young Mind Stimulation (YMS) LifeLab created unforgettable learning experiences that blended academic growth with real-world application. Each LifeLab activity was intentionally designed to help students strengthen critical thinking, communication, creativity, leadership, and problem-solving while discovering that learning extends far beyond the traditional classroom.

Our students began the summer by exploring practical life skills through a hands-on cooking activity, where they reinforced reading, math, teamwork, and independence while preparing recipes together. They then experienced the benefits of yoga and mindfulness, learning techniques to improve focus, emotional regulation, self-discipline, and overall wellness.

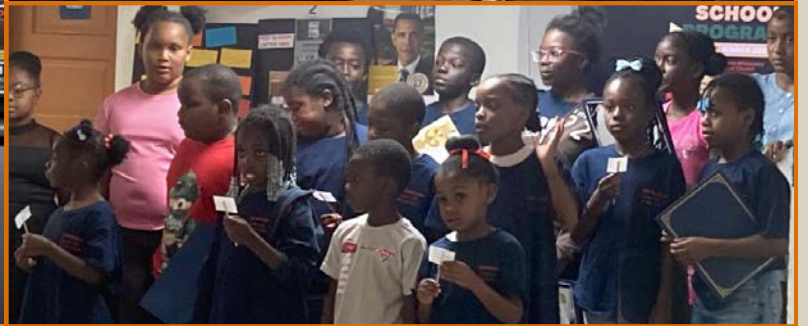
Students continued their journey through exciting experiential learning opportunities, including a STEAM and Citizenship field trip to Miami Roller Rink, where they connected science concepts like motion and balance with teamwork and community responsibility. During Career Day, students met professionals from nursing, law enforcement, and marine science who inspired them to dream big and begin thinking about their own future careers and goals.

Creativity flourished during our hands-on workshops, where students designed their own candles while developing patience, innovation, artistic expression, and confidence. The summer concluded with a Town Hall that encouraged students to respectfully share ideas, listen to different perspectives, and recognize that their voices have the power to create positive change.

The LifeLab proved to be much more than a series of activities—it became a space where students discovered new talents, built meaningful life skills, and developed confidence through authentic experiences. By combining literacy, history, STEAM, leadership, wellness, career exploration, and civic engagement, the program better prepared students to meet the challenges of the new school year as thoughtful, compassionate, and empowered leaders in their communities.

Freedom School Moments







Black Church Program and Community Equity Lab Updates

Over the summer, the Community Equity Lab made significant progress in advancing our commitment to fair housing research and equity. We reviewed a substantial body of research while continuing to advocate for the release of public records pertinent to fair housing practices within the City of Miami. This work provides the foundation to holding institutions accountable and ensuring that policy decisions are grounded in accurate and accessible information. Throughout the summer months, we convened weekly with community members dedicated to building a fair housing campaign. These sessions provided a vital space for residents and active community members to share their experiences, deepen our understanding of the current housing crisis, and contribute directly to the direction of our collective advocacy work.

In parallel with the fair housing work, the Black Church Program engaged in strategic, recurring conversations with church leaders and voting rights organizers and conducted in-depth research into successful, nonpartisan voting rights campaigns and voting related legal issues to begin preparations for the upcoming midterm elections. The result of these discussions and findings will be a series of Know Your Rights voting chats this fall in Coconut Grove Village West that are designed to equip community members with the background and mechanics to participate fully and confidently in the democratic process. These efforts recognize the connection between civic participation and equitable outcomes.

As we move into the fall semester, the Community Equity Lab will continue to prioritize fair housing research while expanding our engagement with the community on zoning-related matters that directly affect neighborhood development and access. Additionally, we are committed to renewing our focus on addressing health rights, forging new collaborations with physicians and medical professionals who are similarly committed to advancing equity in this area. We believe that housing, health, and civic participation are deeply interconnected, and our fall programming reflects that interdisciplinary approach. We look forward to sharing more updates as this important work continues to develop and unfold.



Fall 2026 Events

Lunch & Learn:
Behind the Ballot: Redistricting and Access to the Polls
September 10, 2026

Hoeveler Award Ceremony
October 29, 2026

Roundtable Discussion with Florida Judges
November 3, 2026

Register at events.miami.edu



Coming Spring 2027: The Second Annual H.T. Smith Symposium on Civil Rights in Florida

This spring, we will proudly host the second annual H.T. Smith Symposium on Civil Rights in Florida. The symposium will bring together students, scholars, community leaders, and advocates to examine Florida's civil rights history, explore contemporary challenges, and inspire continued civic engagement.

New this year, the symposium will feature a campus-wide student contest designed to encourage students from across the University to engage meaningfully with civil rights issues. Students will have an opportunity to share their knowledge, creativity, and perspectives while competing for special recognition.

Additional information about the symposium, contest guidelines, important dates, and opportunities to participate will be announced soon. For event times, location and registration, visit events.miami.edu. We invite the campus community to join us this spring as we honor the legacy of H.T. Smith and strengthen the next generation's commitment to justice, equality, and civic responsibility.



UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI
SCHOOL OF LAW

CENTER for ETHICS & PUBLIC SERVICE

Mission

Founded in 1996, the Center for Ethics and Public Service is a law school-housed ethics education, experiential skills training, and community engagement program devoted to the values of ethical judgment, professional responsibility, and public service in law and society. The Center's mission is to educate law students to serve their communities as citizen lawyers.

Programs

CEPS operates three programs: the Black Church Program, the Community Equity Lab, and the Legal Profession Program. Program faculty, staff, and students collaborate with the Florida bar and bench; anti-poverty, civil rights, environmental, and public health organizations; civic and faith-based groups, nonprofit corporations, and neighborhood associations; and schools and colleges across the University of Miami.

Community Impact

Since 1996, CEPS faculty and staff have trained more than 1,432 graduate and undergraduate fellows and interns, and collaborated with more than 51,000 civic leaders in ethics and professionalism programs as well as anti-poverty, civil rights, environmental justice, and public health campaigns. CEPS faculty also have been widely cited in law journals and in the media.



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