



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jen Metzger

Senator Metzger's Summer Interns Get First-Hand Government Experience

JEN METZGER September 7, 2019

| ISSUE: **METZGER SUMMER '19 INTERNS**



Middletown, NY... This summer, five high school and college students have been interning in the offices of Senator Jen Metzger, learning about state government from the inside. **Vidar Hageman, N'Senga Kinzonzi, Treasure Welle, Leif Johansen, and Caroline Burnham** began interning in Metzger's office in June of this year and finished up the first week of September.

"These young people have been a great asset to our office and to the district," **said Senator Metzger.** "We have benefited from their tremendous energy, enthusiasm, and ideas, and were

delighted to give them hands-on experience in state government and public service. I feel very fortunate that these five outstanding students chose to spend part of their summer contributing to our office and the constituents of the 42nd district."

Caroline Burnham, a member of the Goshen High School Young Progressives, has spent her time this summer helping with constituent services and doing research for the Senator. She said she first became interested in Metzger because of the issues that are important to her, like the environment.

Vidar Hageman, a high school senior at Warwick Valley High School where he plays football, has also been interning with Metzger this summer. "It's exciting to have volunteered on the campaign and now have the opportunity to work with the Senator and help to represent her office," said Hageman who is in the process of starting an **Orange County Young Democrats chapter**. "I've been on 'Team Jen' since the beginning because she really cares about issues like education that greatly impact people my age."

N'Senga Kinzonzi first became aware of Metzger when she received a letter from the Senator after being the target of racism and bullying by a classmate at **Minisink Valley High School**. Metzger, impressed with the high honor roll student's response of turning the incident into a teachable moment, invited N'Senga, a Junior and varsity soccer player, to apply to the summer internship program. N'Senga is **a member of youth and government, key club, philosophy club, and study buddies, as well as a volunteer at Middletown Thrall Library where she tutors elementary students and at Orange Regional Hospital**. She plans to pursue a career in pediatric neurology and robotics.

Goshen Senior Treasure Welle heard Metzger speak at her school and immediately knew that she wanted to work with the Senator. Like Burnham and Hageman, she was particularly

drawn to Metzger's long history as an environmental activist. Welle is also involved with a school political magazine and has helped organize student involvement and advocacy on issues, like common-sense gun safety and ending mass incarceration.

Leif Johansen will be entering his senior year at the University of Rochester where he studies economics and political science. He also organized the first TEDx event at his university and spent the last year as the Speaker of the Senate of the Students' Association. "I've interned and worked on a handful of state, congressional and national campaigns," **said Johansen, who works out of Metzger's Liberty office.** "This was a great opportunity to continue to learn more about state government and make a difference in people's lives." Johansen, who previously interned for Assembly Member Aileen Gunther, is headed to London for the coming semester to study at the University of Westminster where he will intern in the British House of Parliament.

One of the projects that Metzger had the interns working on is a survey to bring back to their peers to find out about the issues that are most important to young people in the region. The survey will be used to inform legislation and its impact on the next generation.

"While we will all be sad to see them go at the end of the summer, I know that these five young people are going to continue to make a difference in their communities," **Metzger continued.** "They are all so impressive, and I can't wait to see what they do next!"

Jen Metzger represents the 42nd Senate District, which includes all of Sullivan County and parts of Delaware, Orange, and Ulster Counties. Senator Metzger serves as Chair of the Agriculture Committee and sits on the Environmental Conservation, Education, Health, Energy and Telecommunications, Local Government, Women's Issues, Domestic Animal Welfare, and Legislative Commission on Rural Resources Committees.

###