

Cassie Walston

Somerville, MA

February 25, 2023

Paul Goldstein | Staff Liaison & Housing Programs Coordinator

Somerville Affordable Housing Trust Fund

Somerville, MA

(617) 625-6600

pgoldstein@somervillema.gov

Dear Paul Goldstein and the Somerville Affordable Housing Trust Fund,

I am a proud Somerville resident and housing justice activist who is excited to bring my determination and expertise to the SAHTF. My current studies in public health, health equity, social justice, and racial justice will bring an important perspective to this team. I am writing today with great enthusiasm and hope that I will be selected for the open membership position.

This is an income-eligible, unpaid position for a Somerville resident interested in addressing and advocating for affordable housing in our city. As a single, low-income mother I qualify for state and federal housing programs, and I am a blessed Section 8 Voucher recipient. My experience navigating the system of public safety nets has provided me with nuanced knowledge in this area, making me a valuable asset to your team.

In addition to my lived experience with housing insecurity and homelessness, I am a Master of Public Health candidate at Simmons University. Currently, I am completing my practicum and capstone project with the Somerville Office of Housing Stability (OHS). I am deeply embedded in community work around housing justice in our city. I had the honor to share my story of housing insecurity with Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley at a Somerville Renters Meeting last year. More recently, I joined my comrades on the Somerville Renters Committee (SRC) to meet with Mayor Ballantyne's Chief of Staff, Nikki Spencer, and Director of OHS, Ellen Shachter. During this meeting, the SRC advocated for 30% of the city budget's "free cash" to go to short- and long-term housing programs.

As a single mother of a Winter Hill Community Innovation School student, an ally to my neighbors, and a person with lived experience, I would be honored to be chosen to serve this two-year term. For more information about my academic and professional backgrounds, please see my attached resume. Thank you for your time and consideration!

In solidarity,

Cassie

Cassie Walston

Somerville, MA | Ward 1 | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED]

WORK EXPERIENCE

Nanny | Boston Metro Area | June 2010 - October 2020

- Tailored curricula for each child's needs, resulting in improved learning outcomes.
- Modeled prosocial behaviors and assisted in meeting developmental milestones.

EDUCATION

BA Psychology | Southern New Hampshire University | April 2018

- Acquired knowledge in human development, human services, and cultural anthropology
- Developed superior research, synthesis, and writing skills

MPH Health Equity and Social Justice | Simmons University | July 2023

- Building understanding of social determinants of health, community-based participatory research, healthcare policy, leadership and management, and health communications
- Analyzing issues of public health from lenses of racial and social justice
- Utilizing epidemiological measures to understand the impacts of oppressive systems
- Completing capstone project on impacts of housing insecurity on Somerville immigrants

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING EXPERIENCE

Somerville Renters Committee | CAAS | July 2022 - Present

- Renters Meeting Team
 - Plan and facilitate monthly Renters Meetings
- Anti-Displacement Research Team

Mothers Out Front | Somerville chapter | January 2022 - Present

- Environmental Justice Leadership Team
- Plan and facilitate meetings with city leaders

People's Health Movement | North American Branch | January 2023 - Present

- Volunteer with local and global movement-building around the right to health
- Hold the World Health Organization accountable for international laws regarding health

Director of Campaigns | HERE4Justice | January 2022 - Present

- Lead campaign development for student-based social justice group at Simmons
- Research campaign and fundraising ideas, present them to general body, and seek input
- Develop and operationalize campaign action plans, assign roles and responsibilities, and monitor logistics.
- Coordinate with community partners to align with local, national, or global campaigns.
- Monitor campaign progress and report status and outcomes in collaboration with other Directors.

OTHER EXPERIENCE

- Boston University Mini MPH | October 2020
- NICABM | Neurobiology of Trauma | March 2021
- Manhattan Birth | Trans and Queer Inclusive Birthworker | March 2021
- Yoga Ed | Trauma Informed Yoga for Youth Educator | April 2021
- International Doula Institute | Certified Breastfeeding Counselor | July 2021
- International Doula Institute | Certified Childbirth Educator | July 2021

REFERENCES

Ellen Shachter, Director of Somerville Office of Housing Stability: [REDACTED]

Nicole Eigbrett, Director of Organizing at CAAS: [REDACTED]

Samantha Wolfe, Community Organizer at CAAS: [REDACTED]

Denise Lauers, Somerville Renters Committee: [REDACTED]

Leigh Haynes, Professor at Simmons University: [REDACTED]

Stephanie Gomez, Salvation Army: [REDACTED]

Kayla, former employer (nanny): [REDACTED]