



Office of Somerville Commission

Application to the Somerville Commission for Women

October 26, 2015

200343

Cassandra Fradera, Applicant to the Commission for Women

Applicant Contact Information

Name: Cassandra Fradera

Address: 17 Caldwell Ave. #3 Somerville, MA 02143

Day time phone: 857-293-3988 Work Phone: 617-496-5528

Cell phone: 857-293-3988 Email: cassandra.fradera@gmail.com

Ward: I-8 How long have you lived in Somerville? 2 years

Applicant Responses for Interest in the Commission

Cassandra Fradera
17 Caldwell Ave. #3
Somerville, MA 02143

Re: Somerville Commission for Women Application

To the Somerville Commission Selection Committee,

I am applying to become a Commissioner for the Somerville Commission for Women to promote public awareness on women's issues through community initiative. I want to serve on the Commission to contribute my academic and administrative skill set in addition to life experience as a survivor of domestic and sexual violence.

I now work full time at the Harvard Physics Department and I am a Master's Candidate at the Harvard Extension School. Before Harvard, I was on food stamps and understand the issues that many Somerville residents are struggling with. Now that I have established safety and learned to thrive after trauma, I would like to serve my community.

Since high school I have been an active LGBTQ ally, volunteered for sexual assault hotlines and currently serve as the Latino Graduation Chair for the Harvard wide Student Latino Association. I participate in the Boston Area Rape and Crisis Center Walk each year and I am also a Senior Digital Editor for the Harvard Journalism for Latino Public Policy. I am engaged citizen and professional seeking to create change on a local level.

I have survived violence and poverty. I am constantly translating between cultures, which is a skill that can bring value to the Somerville Commission for Women (SCW). I am a professional with a diverse background, working at Harvard while my Mother lives on a Section 8. I have a diverse perspective with a unique understanding and experience of various systems I have studied and participated in.

I want to become a Commissioner for Somerville's Commission for Women (SWC) to serve as a role model and help to the goals of the SWC to life. I see myself contributing to increasing awareness, planning and fundraising and communicating between generations of women within the SCW and Somerville. I currently work in a predominately female administration with four generations of women. I would like to apply those professional skills I have gained to the SWC.

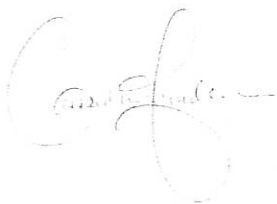
I would like to work on domestic violence, sexual violence, and multicultural initiatives for the city of Somerville. After considering the current focuses of the commission, I am most interested in contributing my communication skills to strengthening the visibility of the commission through media and publicizing events. I will focus my efforts on finding ways to reach out to the diverse communities within the city and making events accessible to citizens.

I would like to organize an intergenerational antiviolenace event to release the guilt and shame of witness and experiencing violence. There are fantastic resources that the community provides to help families in crisis, but there also needs to be a community space where survivors can come together to release the stigma.

The SCW has an existing public speaker series and candle light vigil. I propose an art project that will engage survivors of all ages to tell their story through a piece of artwork without compromising their identity. This can be an art exhibit in a public space coupled with music that would invite families to come and share their experiences through art but also celebrate their lives with multicultural music.

Thank for your consideration and I invite you to email me at cassandra.fradera@gmail.com or contact me at 857-293-3988 with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Cassandra Fradera", written in dark ink.

Cassandra Fradera

CASSANDRA FRADERA

cassandra.fradera@gmail.com 857-293-3988

EDUCATION

- Harvard Extension School**, Cambridge, MA October 2014-Present
ALM Journalism Candidate
- Latino Graduation Chair**, Harvard Student Alliance 2015-Present
- Senior Digital Media Editor**, Harvard Journal for Hispanic Policy 2015-Present
- Babson College**, Babson Park, MA 2004-2007
B.S. Business Management, Entrepreneurship and Legal Studies

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Faculty of the Arts and Sciences, Harvard University**, Cambridge, MA 2015 – Present
Coordinator, High Energy Theory Group at Department of Physics
- Faculty support for group of four faculty
 - Website design and communications coordinator for High Energy Theory Group
 - Coordinates day to day function and purchases for group
 - Processes financial reimbursements for visiting scholars, post-docs, and a graduate students
 - Lead liaison for Particle and String Seminar Series and in-house lunches
 - Creates announcements and completes catering for series
- Faculty of the Arts and Sciences, Harvard University**, Cambridge, MA 2012 – 2015
Staff Assistant III, Department of African and African American Studies
- Supported Faculty and Department Administrator with operational needs
 - Designed lecture flyers and invitations, typed correspondences and academic-related materials.
 - Processed Travel Web Vouchers and made lodging arrangements as needed for Faculty and lecture guests.
 - Updates events on Department website and prepares Jpegs for overhead Department monitor.
 - Event planning, caters for Department events, and serves as back up to Financial Assistant.
 - Employer Mentor to Cambridge Housing Authority Workforce Program Intern Program.
 - Oversees Department media equipment, website maintenance, and updates for Social Engagement Initiative.
- Spherion/Randstad Temp Agency, Harvard University**, Cambridge, MA 2011-2012
Temp Staff Assistant and Meeting and Event Coordinator
- High level administrative support for Harvard Alumni Association Vice President and Deputy Director, African and African American Studies Chair, Radcliffe Institute for Advance Study Development Director, and Harvard Office for Sustainability Green Carpet Awards.
 - Created presentations transcribed and proofread correspondences, assembled briefings, and mailings.
 - Coordinated use of conference space and A/V equipment, processed scheduling requests.
 - Scheduled travel and processed web vouchers for financial reimbursements.
 - Updated Department website and authored articles for green.harvard.edu.
- So Cassandra**, New York, NY/Framingham, MA 2006-2011
Freelance Artist, Managerial Consultant
- Illustrated Spanish children's book, and registered copyright with the Library of Congress
 - Sold paintings exhibited in homes in Massachusetts, New York, Colorado, California, Turkey and the UK.
- IWWF/FIMI**, New York, NY 2009
International Indigenous Women's Forum Bilingual Programmatic Intern
- Bilingual collaboration with international staff, and provided programmatic support in four program

areas: Political Participation, Capacity Building, Indigenous Women's Fund, and Institutional Strengthening.

- Event planning and implementation of sessions for the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.
- Researched international indigenous women's issues and assisted in grant writing and international travel.

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Somerville's Commission for Women, Somerville, MA 2015-Present
Member

Barker Center Green Team, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 2013-2015
Founding Member, Communications/Graphics

Association for Latino Faculty and Staff, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 2013-Present
Member

Cambridge Community Television, Cambridge, MA 2013-Present

Reference #1: Adrienne Landau

From: Adrienne Landau
To: Sonja Darai
Subject: Cassandra Fradera for Women's Commission
Date: Thursday, October 01, 2015 10:10:39 AM

Dear Sonja,

I am writing to you today to express my support for Cassandra Fradera becoming a member of the Somerville Commission for Women.

Cassandra and I became friends over a shared interest in Buddhism and what Buddhist Humanism has to offer the troubled world in which we live. Though she and I have very different life experiences and struggles and I am twice her age, we have engaged in deep dialogue about turning the difficult into growth and advancement and supporting others in finding hope, courage and strength to overcome challenges and achieve their dreams.

As a staff organizer of the Harvard Union of Clerical & Technical Workers (HUCTW), I enjoy the privilege of talking with Cassandra, a union member, and hundreds of women about the challenges of women workers in an environment where excellence is the minimum standard. To fulfill demanding expectations at work, strive towards personal enrichment and professional advancement, and live a creative and contributive life outside of work: these are the things that drive Cassandra and make her one of my favorite women!

Cassandra is an engaged and dedicated advocate for women's rights and will be an asset to the Women's Commission. She has my wholehearted endorsement!

Warmly,

Adrienne Rae Landau
Organizer & Past President, HUCTW;
LGBTQ Coordinator for North Zone, Soka Gakkai International-USA Buddhist Association

Reference #2: Emily Beliveau

Senja Darai
Office of Somerville Commissions

September 30, 2015

Dear Senja,

I am writing to recommend Cassandra Fradera to Somerville's Commission for Women. I have known Cassandra since 2001; we met at high school. Coming from a Puerto Rican background, she was not your typical student at Wellesley High School. Yet her experience as a sole voice of the Latina experience in a sea of affluent Wellesley teenagers formed the foundation of her ability to communicate with diverse listeners from all socio-economic classes.

Cassandra at every stage in life has dedicated her commitment to making female voices heard. After college, she worked for the International Indigenous Women's forum to provide voice for indigenous women at the UN. Here she learned the value of women coming together to share information and raise awareness on many issues specific to the gender.

This passion is also demonstrated through her commitment to raise female voices through elevating their voices on public access television. As an advocacy nonprofit leader in Colorado, I had the pleasure of being interviewed by her twice – once on her Women's Voices program at the Framingham public access station and another time as part of Café Con Cass. Although she did not have enough support or community commitment to continue with Women's Voices, her vision did not waiver. She followed through on this larger vision and implemented a successful live weekly show with an active digital media presence through Café Con Cass.

On a personal note, Cassandra's support in planning my wedding was invaluable. As a DIY gal, most everything was done by hand and by friends. Cassandra stepped up to help from miles away, not only following through on a tight timeline but with a strong attention to detail and the larger vision. For example, she designed custom beer glasses for wedding participants to enjoy, and she took time out of her busy life to come to Colorado extra early to be a support in last minute preparations.

Cassandra's life has centered on giving women a voice while also educating women to the many ways women move in the world differently from men. Her biggest strength is her ability to successfully communicate to all types of people and ensure they feel heard. She would bring this and so much more to the Somerville Women's Commission. I am writing this as a former Somerville resident (as a student at Tufts University), as a woman in deep support of civic engagement of women as a nonprofit leader in Colorado.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Emily H. Beliveau', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Emily H. Beliveau

Reference #3: Kyrah Daniels

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Sonja Darai, Director
Office of Somerville Commissions
Women, Human Rights, Multicultural Affairs
LGBTQ Community Liaison and Engagement
City Hall Annex
50 Evergreen Avenue
Somerville, MA 02145

Dear Ms. Sonja Darai,

I would like to submit a letter of reference for Ms. Cassandra Fradera, who is interested in serving as a member of the City of Somerville's Commission for Women. I first met Cassandra in 2012 when she began working as a Staff Assistant in the Department of African and African American Studies at Harvard University. At the time, I was a 3rd year doctoral student in the AAAS Department and on many mornings, Cassandra and I would discuss upcoming university events. Additionally, as new residents to the Cambridge / Somerville areas, the two of us would share news of local events of interest in the realm of culture and the arts. Since then, Cassandra and I have remained close colleagues, even as she has transitioned to a position in the Physics Department. Simply stated, Cassandra is one of the most visionary, ambitious, and driven supporters of local communities, and specifically women's issues, whom I have encountered during my 6 years as a resident of Somerville. I recommend her without reservation for a position as a SCW board member.

Over the past 3 years, Cassandra and I have continued to dialogue about matters of immigration, cultural and religious experience, and our passion for the arts. One of the most meaningful contributions Cassandra has made to social networks here in Somerville has been her hosting of *Fem Jam Circles*, which I had the opportunity to attend in 2013 and 2014. These Fem Jam Circles, designed and implemented by Cassandra herself, serve as a forum and safe space for women to share on-going creative work or new work in front of other like-minded women. Women are encouraged to bring either an artistic piece of their own or a piece that they admire, in any form—written text, visual art, ritual object, musical performance, dance, or story telling. As young women students, professionals, and community members, these occasions have proven incredibly restorative, and have often continued on for several hours after the suggested end time. This yearly commitment proves that not only is Cassandra able to follow through on a task, but can also implement a long-term project and masterfully carry it out with the support of a local network.

In 2013, Cassandra began her studies as a Master's student of Journalism, Media and the Arts at Harvard's Extension School. This course of study seemed like an ideal fit considering her interests in documenting local community narratives and developing more of an online presence as a media specialist. As a natural storyteller and a creative journalist in her own right, she expressed concern to

fellow peers about the often limited scope of news stories which tend to almost exclusively highlight world and local news stories of disaster and devastation. Though many city residents may share these sentiments regarding the lack of inspiring television shows, few will seek out the available resources to change this reality. Impressively committed to changing this narrative of news, Cassandra took matters into her hand and in 2013, she began hosting her own local public access television show entitled *Café con Cass* with BeLive at CCTV. In the past 2 years, her viewership has grown significantly and locally, she has become an even more visible and audible advocate of Somerville citizens, raising public awareness regarding matters that resonate particularly with women and communities of colour.

Café con Cass—which highlights issues pertaining to identity, diversity, healing, and the arts—introduces a wide variety of news stories through the use of youtube clips, visual art, song snippets, and interviews with local community members, all of which demonstrate a thoughtful, rigorous approach to journalism. Especially passionate about issues of mental health, Cassandra begins each episode with an emotional check-in, and will often remind viewers of local resources available for help hotlines for women, children, and those experiencing suicidal thoughts or facing matters of domestic abuse. With humility, creativity, and a refreshing sense of humour, she urges her weekly viewers to think critically about the intersections of identity and the importance of diversity; encourages viewers to broaden our definitions of healing to incorporate mental, physical, and spiritual treatments for self and community; and reminds us of the role of the arts as method of expression as well as form of therapeutic care. On a personal note, Cassandra's irresistible enthusiasm can inspire a room full of people, and she possesses a tireless drive to document and share people's stories and advocate for their rights with integrity and respect.

All in all, Ms. Cassandra Fradera is a stellar citizen, committed to improving the quality of life for all Somerville residents, and deeply passionate about raising awareness about women's and people of colour's issues in the community. I believe she would prove an excellent addition to Somerville's Commission for Women, and I recommend her without reservation as a local resident with incredible vision and purpose in implementing sustainable educational and recreational programs for her local communities. Should the committee have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 805.705.7014 or kcaniels@fas.harvard.edu.

Sincerely,



Kyrah Malika Daniels
Ph.D. Candidate | Department of African & African American Studies
M.A. Religion | Harvard University
kcaniels@fas.harvard.edu