

2018 Surge Fellow

Andrew Rayner believes in the power of building bridges and bringing people together as a means to make impactful change in the world. He also believes in empowering young people and the individuals who work with them. In his personal and professional life, he has positioned himself to make a difference for the communities that have given so much to him.

A graduate of Dartmouth College and the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Andrew has had opportunities to work across the country and internationally as an educator. His career started as an English teacher in the Marshall Islands where he lived for a year. Subsequently, he traveled with Youth Bridge Global to Bosnia and Herzegovina where he used theater to help facilitate conversations between young people from various ethnic groups. Andrew's domestic career began at the Alliance for Inclusion and Prevention where he worked as a behavioral specialist providing classroom management support and counseling for young people who had mental and behavioral health problems. Afterward, he was asked to be part of the founding team of the first KIPP middle school in Boston. There he taught music, math, and special education for three years.

Andrew was a volunteer and community manager for The Welcoming Committee, a queer organization that creates inclusive spaces through the use of critical mass. He is also the founder of The Men of Melanin Magic, a social group for queer men of color in Boston. In Chicago, he is the Director of Camaraderie for Stonewall Dodgeball, a queer sports league. He leads their social and philanthropic endeavors.

Andrew currently serves on the Ambassadors Board of the Chicago Children's Choir, which he sang in as a child, and is heavily involved in alumni affairs of his high school, college, and graduate school. Andrew is passionate about the arts. In his spare time he arranges acapella music and sings whenever he can. He enjoys museums, photography, dance, and tennis.

