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HARVARD | BUSINESS | SCHOOL  
SUMMER VENTURE IN MANAGEMENT PROGRAM  
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

# ALUMNI BEAT



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## Our Mission and Purpose

The Summer Venture in Management Program Alumni Association (SVMP AA) is a network of talented professionals who are the global leaders of tomorrow. These individuals attended the Harvard Business School Summer Venture in Management Program which is a highly competitive program the Harvard Business School hosts each summer. In this program, students from across the country simulate the experience of a typical HBS student by reviewing case studies with world renowned HBS professors. The students graduate the rigorous program at the end of the week and then become official SVMP Alumni Association members.



The SVMP AA organization's purpose is to facilitate the continued success and development of the leaders of tomorrow. We strive to promote graduate level education, career and professional development and community service. Our network of professionals consists of over 600 members who aspire to pursue professional degrees and enhance society through value-based leadership. Companies and recruiters can access our strong talented network of individuals via a resume bank that allows them to pursue our leadership talent.

# Letter From The President



Distinguished SVMP Alumni,

Welcome to another year with the Summer Venture in Management Program Alumni Association (SVMP AA). There is a lot going on so stay tuned to the website and newsletter. We have a fantastic team returning – Ashtane Jordan is leading recruiting, Chelsea Seabron is in charge of events and alumni relations, Kevin Ko is heading corporate relations and the newsletter, and I am happy to say that Joe Seydl and Haytham Zohny are returning as Treasurer and Vice President.

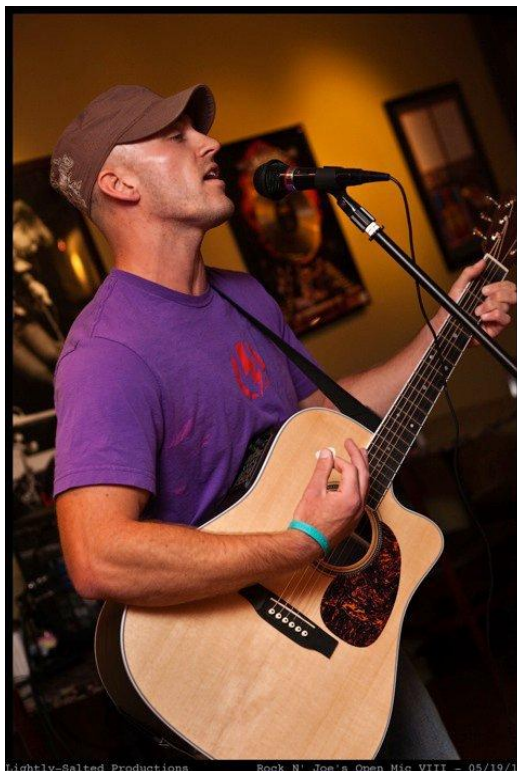
After making so much progress last year in our respective areas, this year we are taking it to another level. We want all of you to be as involved as your time will allow. You can help plan regional events, or even just make sure people from your class know about the events. We are developing a mentor program this year as well, providing you with another opportunity to get involved.

SVMP AA is a network that will help you meet/stay-in-touch with people as motivated as yourself. Use this to your advantage. Never hesitate to start a conversation with a fellow member.

I hope to hear from you soon.

Warm regards,

Bridgette Adams  
President  
SVMP Alumni Association



## Alumni Spotlight Joe Seydl

*An SVMP '09 Alumnus reflects on his experience with SVMP, the working world, politics, and life in general.*

If you were to ask a randomly selected group of SVMP alumni what they remember most about SVMP, my hunch is that you would hear a range of different responses. Some alums might cite the quality of the cases that were covered at SVMP, others might mention the relationships that were formed throughout the program, and a few would likely reminisce about the fine-dining experience offered at the HBS cafeteria. For me, though, it was witnessing a diversity of opinions and viewpoints clash inside the classroom.

Indeed, when I attended SVMP in 2009, I was blown away by the level of heated debate that quickly unfolded during each case study discussion. My SVMP peers had wildly different views about, for example, what constitutes proper business ethics, how important free trade is for economic growth, and, of course, whether Maria Sharapova should focus on playing tennis or becoming a beauty queen. Moreover, these differing viewpoints evoked a lot of emotional tension in the classroom at SVMP — tension that, often times, lasted long after

the formal classroom discussion ended.

But, despite the strong tension, my SVMP peers always seemed to find some common ground on the issues that were presented in the cases we examined. For example, if there were disagreements about the precise causes of the 2008 financial crisis, there were agreements about the apparent need for more regulatory oversight to ensure that a similar crisis does not happen again in the future. Or, if there were disagreements about whether Airbus' A380 would be a profitable business investment, there were agreements about the future demand for larger aircraft and the viability of hub-and-spoke transportation schemes. In essence, during SVMP I watched smart, young individuals with diverse opinions and beliefs come together and reach a compromise. It was an encouraging sight.

What is less encouraging, however, is that our nation's leaders do not seem to be coming together and reaching a similar compromise. My job — for better or for worse — forces me to follow the political

discussion closely, and I continue to witness stalemate among policymakers in terms of addressing our nation's most pressing challenges, such as the current teenage unemployment crisis or the unsustainable growth trajectory of federal entitlement spending. If 64 rising college seniors were able reach a compromise inside a classroom at HBS, why can't government policymakers do the same on Capitol Hill?

I have been grappling with this question for some time, and I think a crucial part of the problem is that too many young people's beliefs and ideas are being neglected in the realm of policy discourse. And this is not just a U.S.





centric phenomenon; suppression of the youth voice was a main factor that led to the uprisings in Egypt and Libya earlier this year. Of course, violence is never the answer to any problem. But young people deserve a right to be heard, if for no other reason than because many of the policies currently being discussed by leaders in government and in business are likely to affect younger people the most.



All of this brings me back to those intense debates I witnessed during SVMP. It is critically important that those debates do not end when SVMP ends each year. Rather, recent SVMP alumni – as well as the broader youth population – should be continuously urging policymakers and business leaders to make progress on the

difficult decisions that lie ahead for our country. After all, young people tend to have the most creative and thought-provoking solutions when it comes to tackling complex problems, and those solutions need to be expressed through whatever means possible – including through social media platforms, blogs, and public dialog.

So my advice to those who recently graduated from SVMP is to speak up. Question what you read in the newspaper and what you hear on television with the same ambition that you used to question the cases that were covered in the classroom at SVMP. And don't be afraid to leverage off of your peers – and especially your SVMP network – for advice about how to make your voice more widely heard.

I am hopeful that more prosperous times are ahead for not only the U.S. economy, but for the global economy as well. To secure that fate, however, requires effective leadership today. But that effective leadership need not be solely from today's leaders in business and in government. Indeed, to tackle tomorrow's challenges, a concerted

*"If 64 rising college seniors were able reach a compromise inside a classroom at HBS, why can't government policymakers do the same on Capitol Hill?"*

effort from tomorrow's leaders is required. And if there is one thing I know for sure, it is that our SVMP alumni are the leaders of tomorrow.



*Joe Seydl is currently an Economic Analyst at Wells Fargo in Charlotte, NC. He is a 2010 graduate of Lehigh University and Participated in SVMP in 2009. He can be reached for questions at [joe.seydl@gmail.com](mailto:joe.seydl@gmail.com)*

# Alumni Spotlight Andre White

*SVMP '99 Alumnus, and current Harvard Graduate Student Andre White sat down for an interview with Alumni Beat to answer a few questions on his path to Harvard, and life a decade after SVMP.*



## **1: Can you share your background: Where you grew up, your undergraduate experience, and your interests?**

I grew up on Hilton Head Island, SC and was raised by my grandparents and great-grandparents. I did my undergraduate studies at South Carolina State University where I graduated with a B.S. in Marketing. Originally my interests were in investment banking, bond/stock trading, and entrepreneurship but they have evolved into large scale real estate development and investment and the redevelopment of underserved rural,



Association. This position required that I report on the state of Hilton Head's Native Community and formulate strategies for its continued preservation and development. While interviewing landowners, attending property owner association meetings, and participating in municipality meetings, I observed a vast disconnect between the Native's vision for Hilton Head's future and the Town's. I was informally introduced to the transforming power of real estate developers and public infrastructure projects. I ultimately hypothesized in order for the Native Community to protect and improve itself, it must understand how to develop itself. During this period I revised my career goals to focus on leading and assisting communities using development as the tool for its improvement.

With a new professional focus, I spent the next six years working as a developer, consultant, and project manager throughout South Carolina. As developer and consultant, I worked with Native families to negotiate land sales and leases, master planned parcels, prepared feasibility studies, obtained entitlements, secured bank financing,

and managed the construction of vertical and horizontal site improvements. As project manager for public and private entities, I managed residential and mixed-use projects from pre-planning through construction completion. I also created and operated an affordable housing program for the Town of Bluffton and managed its partnership with Hilton Head Regional Habitat for Humanity to build affordable "green" cottages.

About a year before enrolling at Harvard, I came to a point in my career where I feel the expansion into urban environments would give me the ability to navigate between rural, suburban, and urban settings. In September 2010, I left South Carolina for Boston, Massachusetts to work as Project Manager for The Community Builders. My work focused on the new construction and renovation of mixed-income, multi-family urban properties.

## **3: Since you're just starting your Masters at Harvard, how have you viewed the experience thus far?**



The experience has been phenomenal. I was nervous about being on an academic stage with Harvard's reputation but I realized that I fit in intellectually and my thoughts and opinions are valued. This has been evidenced by my classmates and professors coming up to me after class to learn more about my experiences or just discuss a variety of real estate topics.

**4: As an SVMP alum, what prompted you to pursue your Master's degree in Real Estate rather than a traditional MBA?**

The main reason I did not go the Harvard MBA route was that I really wanted to build an academic foundation more focused on real estate versus a general business education. Also, my program has a more flexible curriculum versus the HBS curriculum. As a first year student, I am currently taking a 2<sup>nd</sup> year Real Estate Investment Strategy class at HBS which is not possible for first year HBS students.

**5: What Advice can you share with alumni who would like to follow a similar path as yours?**

I would encourage alumni to follow your passion and not the money. At the beginning of my career, I was more impressed with the cache and earnings potential of being an investment banker or trader instead of aligning myself with my interests. If you are great at what you do, the money will come in time. Really focus on building the necessary skills and gaining experiences that will help you to evolve into the professional you see yourself becoming. This is really important in real estate development because at the top of the food chain of the world's leading firms, there are

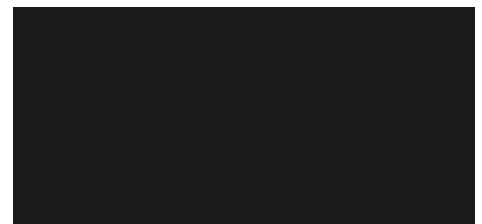
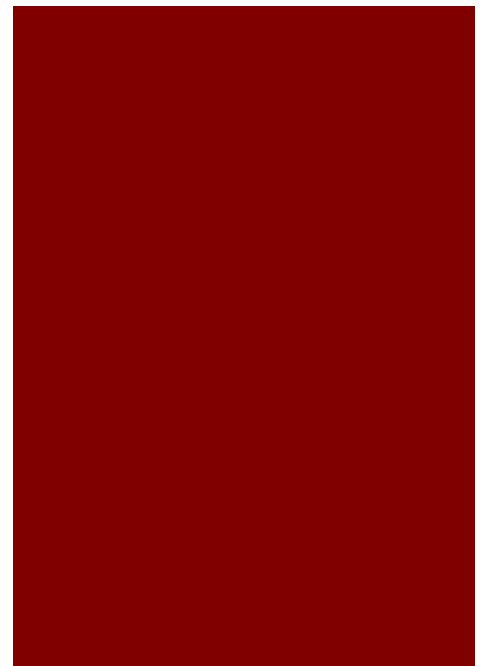
virtually no minorities so you have to be ready for the rare opportunity to operate on that level.

**6: How did your experience at SVMP serve you in your professional endeavors? Do you feel the overall experience really affected your path?**

SVMP introduced me to the Harvard experience and the value of being at an institution with vast global resources. The accomplishments of students, professors, and alumni I met during the week were all impressive. I was also inspired by the SVMPers who were highly motivated and wanted to achieve a lot professionally. For me, it was the first time in my life that I was ever in that type of environment and I left SVMP knowing that I was going attend HBS at some point in life. Ultimately, the SVMP experience is why I chose to pursue my real estate studies at Harvard. I wanted to be a part of the culture and network and have the Harvard legacy to pass on to my two kids, other family members, friends, and the small Native Community back on Hilton Head.

**7: Anything additional you would like to add?**

I thank you for the opportunity to share my story and potentially inspire someone else.



*Andre is currently pursuing his MDesS at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. He was a 1999 SVMP participant. He can be reached at: [andrewhite@mitchelville.com](mailto:andrewhite@mitchelville.com).*





-picture taken by Jasmine Knowles. Bo-Kaap, Cape Town, South Africa

## Alumni Spotlight Jasmine Knowles

*SVMP '11 Alumnus Jasmine Speaks on her SVMP experience, life in college, and her time in Cape Town, South Africa*

Throughout college, balancing various activities, my social life, and rigorous academic requirements not only stressed me out, but often made me lose sight of who I was. Studying abroad in Cape Town, South Africa this past semester provided me with daily lessons that have helped to reaffirm not only who I was, but also the person that I wanted to become.

During the semester, I toured the Bo-Kaap, an area of Cape Town which used to be known as the Malay Quarter, but is now home to the descendants of the city's first Muslim inhabitants. While walking the streets, it became clear to me that the brightly colored buildings, the mosques dotting the community, and the street vendors selling meat alongside the cobblestone roads each echoed a different piece of this area's unique and culturally rich history.

Even though they were surrounded by this rich culture, I couldn't help but wonder if these Cape Malay people

dreamt of home. They were living out the dreams of the first Muslim settlers that came to Signal Hill, but did they ever dream of *home*? The place from which their ancestors came and that they never knew?

*Home-* I think we take this phrase lightly. Many people can point to a beginning, or a place where their relatives came from, but the Cape Malay people came to Cape Town as slaves from India, Malaysia, and other parts of Asia. Their identity was lost,



continually in a state of homesickness for a *home* that we've never lived in?

One week after returning to the US, I arrived on the campus of HBS. During the alumni panel on the first night, they all stated that SVMP was a "transformational" experience for them, but I was skeptical that I would be changed during one week.

During the week, I found that I would have conversations with people and suddenly we would realize that it was 1AM and we still had to read and analyze two cases. Our class, I feel, became exceptionally close due to the fact that every night we came together without Pauline or Angie forcing us to, and just sat and listened to each other speak about the situations in our lives that helped to shape us and the struggles that we faced every day.

When I look at pictures of our class, I do not just connect faces with a name. I know each person by name and story and



we truly became a family. It is remarkable to me that such strong bonds were formed over the course of seven days, but I think that speaks to the spirit of SVMP.

On Thursday of that week, Professor Frances Frei gave a lecture that I will remember for the rest of my life. She



encouraged us to “go towards what energizes you and to go towards that unapologetically.” Entering into senior year, many of us needed that reminder that we are not obligated to do what our parents or family members expect of us, but rather, what we are passionate about. As I looked around the room and saw tears in so many of our eyes, I understood that Profess Frei was able to see in our class, what we

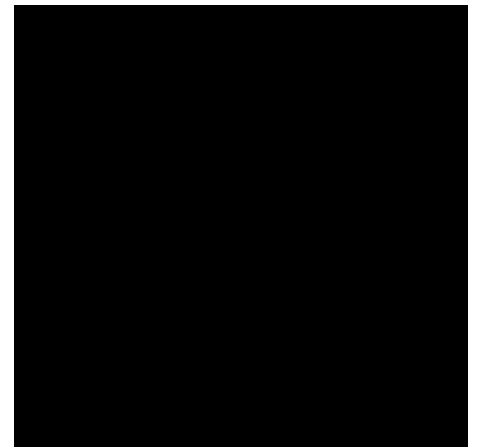
had only dared to imagine was there.

Reflecting on the week later that night, I realized that I had undergone a true transformation, like the alumni had mentioned the Saturday before. Like the Cape Malay people, although I was on this quest to find belonging, as Professor Frei pointed out- my only obligation was to do what was worthy of my energy. Coming back to the United States did not mean that I had to settle back into my normal school routine; but rather, I should use my experiences from the past six months as a guide for where I want to start my career.

I am grateful that SVMP served as a path of re- entry for me back to the United States. It truly showed me that self-discovery can come from anywhere: your immediate surroundings, your friends and family, or even interactions you have with 74 strangers in a classroom.

I am thankful for my SVMP family, who showed me that enlightening experiences do not always come from travels to exotic places. There are ways in which we can discover things about ourselves no matter where we are.

Instead of yearning to belong or seeking my place in the world, SVMP taught me to remember that the person I am becoming is continually shaped by the shared stories and inspirations I have received from my travels, both domestic and abroad and I am a better person because of it.



*Jasmine is currently a senior at Washington University in St. Louis and participated in SVMP during the summer of 2011.*





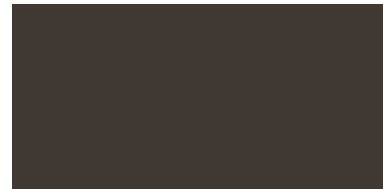
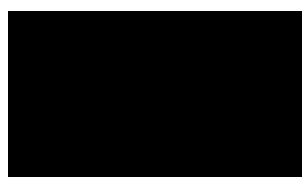
In the spring of this year, I participated in a volunteer trip to Costa Rica with a program called Dream Volunteers. I was one of ten volunteers who spent a week in the Dota region of Costa Rica. Our objectives were to beautify an elementary school in the small village of San Pedro de Dota and to educate the local children on environmental protection practices.

I would highly recommend you consider joining Dream Volunteers on one of their trips. In addition to Costa Rica, they run trips in Guatemala, India and Ghana with Vietnam soon to come. Logistically, they are incredibly buttoned up. The trips are well-organized, meaningful and unlike any other vacation you've ever taken. Don't just travel abroad, experience the people and the culture in the most authentic way possible.



## Volunteering Internationally

- Written by Bridgette Adams



## An Editor's

## Thank You

To My Esteemed Colleagues,

It is with much humility and sincerity that I thank you for reading the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of Alumni Beat. I want to personally thank Joe, Jasmine, and Andre for their submissions and words of wisdom with this particular edition. Needless to say, without their contributions this would have had a lot less substance, and a lot more white space. This has been my first time serving as editor since Roseliny and Chelsea took Alumni Beat to the next level. I fully intend to maintain the momentum they started. Going forward, the intention is to have Alumni Beat come at more frequent intervals. This process, however, requires the involvement of you, the alumni. Without your contributions this newsletter and the SVMPPAA in general would serve little purpose. We all share the feeling that the week we spent at HBS was a life-changing experience. So I ask you all, as alumni that span over two decades, to keep us updated, stay involved, and remember that experience. With that, I bid you all adieu until next time...

- Mike



# The Executive Board SVMPAA 2011

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**Executive Board Members**

Greetings SVMP Alumni! Please join us for one of our regional happy hours on Thursday, November 3, 2011 from 5:30-7:30pm (in your respective time zone). This will be a great opportunity to meet additional alumni in your area. If your city is not included and you would like to add a happy hour in your city please email Chelsea Seabron: [chelsea.seabron@gmail.com](mailto:chelsea.seabron@gmail.com)

## **SVMP Alumni Happy Hour – Los Angeles**

October 20th, 2011 | 6:30pm -8:30pm  
Café Pinot | [www.cafepinot.com](http://www.cafepinot.com)  
POC: Bridgette Adams | [bridgette.adams@svmp.org](mailto:bridgette.adams@svmp.org)

## **SVMP Alumni Happy Hour – DC**

November 3, 2011 | 5:30pm -7:30pm  
Zengo | <http://www.richardsandoval.com/zengodc>  
POC: Chelsea Seabron | [chelsea.seabron@gmail.com](mailto:chelsea.seabron@gmail.com)

## **SVMP Alumni Happy Hour – San Francisco**

November 3, 2011 | 5:30pm -7:30pm  
Credo San Francisco | <http://www.credosf.com>  
POC: Francisco Guzman | [fguzman1@stanford.edu](mailto:fguzman1@stanford.edu)

## **SVMP Alumni Happy Hour – NYC**

November 3, 2011 | 5:30pm -7:30pm  
Murphy and Gonzalez | [www.murphy-gonzalez.com](http://www.murphy-gonzalez.com)  
POC: Haytham Zohny | [zohny.haytham@gmail.com](mailto:zohny.haytham@gmail.com)

## Coming Improvements!

1. New website launched in one week!!!
2. New SVMP AA Logo
3. Mentorship Program
4. Ambassador program for most recent alumni

Question, comments, concerns or suggestions? Shoot an email to [alumnibeat@gmail.com](mailto:alumnibeat@gmail.com)

Let us know what you think of the new look and layout!!!