

Working to Provide Hope

KENNETH PANETO

Community Engagement Supervisor



Born in Ventura County, Calif., Kenneth Paneto grew up in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. The 28-year-old speaks English and Spanish and has a degree in health science, which led to his desire to work for a public health system. While working at the Brooklyn Sports Club, he learned of the new contact tracer role through the Citizen App. As Community Engagement Supervisor, Paneto meets with New Yorkers who do not have access to phones. If a contact tracer is unable to reach someone after multiple tries, the community engagement team steps in. Paneto shows up at the person's residence - with an NYC Health + Hospitals ID - and asks the same questions a contact tracer would ask over the phone. Challenges include the language barrier and navigating large apartment buildings throughout the city.

"We have to put ourselves in not necessarily desirable situations to be able to effectively gain the correct information," he said. "I have an EMS background, so I don't care where I'm thrown into. It feels awesome to make a difference and also to be able to provide a certain level of hope, especially with all the dismay from the quarantine. Hopefully this will provide something good out of the bad."

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