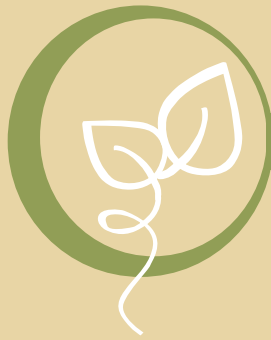


GVSU WOMEN'S
COMMUNITY
COLLABORATIVE



WINTER 2008



GVSU Faculty/Staff

Julia Mason - Women and Gender Studies
Kathleen Underwood - Women and Gender Studies
Marlene Kowalski-Braun - Women's Center
Jo Ann Wassenaar - Women's Center

GVSU Students and Agencies

Klotilda Abazi - Nokomis Foundation
Rachel Ahee - Girl Scouts of Michigan Trails
Elizabeth Bishop - Grand Rapids Opportunities for Women
Sarah Bosman - Safe Haven Ministries
Rachael Hamilton - Arbor Circle
Aimee Heniser - Grand Rapids Parks & Recreation Program
Patricia Kregg - YWCA / West Central Michigan
Sarah Pott - Center for Women in Transition
Megan Roach - GVSU Children's Center

This internship experience was made possible through a generous grant from the Nokomis Foundation in collaboration with the College of Interdisciplinary Studies, Women and Gender Studies, and the Women's Center.



INTRODUCTION

GVSU's mission, vision, and values clearly highlight the University's role in educating students for social responsibility. This is done by utilizing the best of teaching, both inside and outside the classroom. The "Women's Community Collaborative" highlights the benefits of bridging the gap between the curricular and co-curricular with the goal of helping create a more seamless educational process for students.

Through collaboration, the GVSU Women's Center has established a service learning and career exploration course for students who express an interest in working in non-profit organizations that service girls and women. This unique experience incorporates faculty and staff talent from Women and Gender Studies, the Women's Center, the Office of Interdisciplinary Studies, and the School of Public and Non-Profit Administration.

Purpose:

To provide opportunities for GVSU students to intersect personal, academic, and career goals through an inter-disciplinary course and a non-profit internship placement.

Program Goals:

Integration:

Integrate the theory and practice of women's community activism.

Advocacy:

Provide an opportunity for students to read, write, and speak about women's issues and non-profit organizations more effectively.

Analyze:

Perform and analyze a feminist organizational assessment for community agencies.

Strategize:

Coordinate and execute a project that benefits participating non-profit agencies and their clients.



STUDENT REFLECTIONS



KLOTILDA ABAZI

Major: Marketing/International Business

Graduation Date: April 2009

If we want a love message to be heard,
it has got to be sent out. To keep a lamp
burning, we have to keep putting oil in it.
Mother Teresa

WHAT I DID...

I did my internship at the Nokomis Foundation. My main project was to compile and update a report on prostitution and trafficking in the Grand Rapids area, as well as in the regional and international arena. This was a follow up to the Prostitution Round Table (PRT) report published in 2001. In order to get updated information, I was able to interview key people in the Grand Rapids area who were well informed or worked directly with prostituted women.

Additionally, I was able to take a look at some grants and become familiar with them. I also attended some board meetings, which allowed me to get a wider perspective on how foundations work.

A highlight of this internship was talking with survivors of prostitution and substance abuse who are now active and productive members in the community. It was amazing to see how much passion these women put into helping other women involved in prostitution and substance abuse.

HOW IT IMPACTED MY LIFE...

Working for the Nokomis Foundation and being part of the Women's Community Collaborative was a wonderful eye opening experience. Prostitution was an issue that has always intrigued and touched me at the same time. While doing the research, I learned that prostitution touches more areas of our community than is realized. I also learned that prostitution is not a choice for most of the people but rather a necessity, which made me more aware of the struggles that the prostituted women face.

My internship at the Nokomis Foundation was an opportunity to grow professionally and individually. Since I am interested in working abroad, the Nokomis Foundation helped me make connections with international women's organizations, such as Women to Women International. I intend to use my experience and knowledge gained at my internship in my profession as well as in my everyday life.



RACHEL AHEE

Major: Social Work
Graduation Date: April 2009

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful
committed citizens can change the world;
indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.
Margaret Mead

WHAT I DID...

I was the Indoor Program Intern for Girl Scouts of Michigan Trails. I worked the closest with “Face It”, a program where 10th to 12th grade females and adult advisors educate younger girls on various social issues through interactive workshops. I created a new workshop for each age group of girl scouts that was geared towards increasing environmental awareness and respect for ones surroundings. As a “Face It” advisor I mentored teens and helped them become good mentors for the younger girls. I also worked within the “Our Community’s Children Department” at Grand Rapids City Hall to help update the Youth Development Network Database to better coordinate and organize out-of-school programs serving youth within the Grand Rapids area.

HOW IT IMPACTED MY LIFE...

While at Girl Scouts I had the opportunity to hone skills I can use through all aspects of my life. Being involved in “Face It” helped me to realize the importance of mentoring and presenting myself as a good role model for those around me. My work with the city and the Girl Scouts exposed me to diverse work environments. Through this experience I gained insight that has helped me to better understand non-profit organizations, youth programs, feminist perspectives, the city of Grand Rapids, and my position within these systems.



ELIZABETH BISHOP

Major: Social Work
Graduation Date: April 2010

Live as if you were to die tomorrow.
Learn as if you were to live forever.
Gandhi

WHAT I DID...

I interned at Grand Rapids Opportunities for Women (GROW). I was involved in business class preparation, volunteer coordination, programming and preparing reports for the Small Business Administration. To aid future interns in their endeavors, I am working on creating an intern manual outlining the responsibilities of the intern position. I worked with staff members in programming and planning. I also contacted GROW class graduates who owned businesses and updated the agency’s online business directory.

HOW IT IMPACTED MY LIFE...

I learned a lot about funding, business ownership and the dynamics of non profit work environments. I enjoyed working with a smaller staff and getting to know employees, as well as clients on a more personal level. Interning at GROW will continue to impact my life, as I will continue volunteering my time throughout the summer months, after my required hours are completed. The professional relationships I have formed through my interactions with the staff at GROW have acted as an encouragement to go into non-profit work following graduation. Interning at this particular agency was a great fit for me since I am a former business owner myself. From what I experienced as a young woman in the business world, there are gender-biased setbacks many women must struggle through in order to succeed. The work I did for the clients at GROW reminded me of the importance of gender equality in the workplace. Luckily, organizations like GROW exist to aid in lessening these oppressive set backs.



SARAH BOSMAN

Major: Sociology
Graduation Date: April 2009

The good we secure for ourselves is precarious and uncertain until it is secured for all of us and incorporated into our common life.
Jane Addams

WHAT I DID...

My internship was at Safe Haven Ministries in the development department. I spent a lot of time working on fundraising, as well as grant research. I also sat on two different fundraiser committees for the Women's Breakfast and Annual Dinner. I helped plan and organize each, as well as worked at the different events. Additionally, I gathered donations and later compiled invoices. Throughout the internship I researched new grants to apply for, and gathered statistics for the ones being written. The "development department" at Safe Haven gave me a task each day, and I worked on it. It's hard to say exactly all that I did, when Susan herself is the entire development department. Her pile is high, as it is for so many others working in non-profits. I viewed my role as simply assisting with lessening the workload.

HOW IT IMPACTED MY LIFE...

I never thought about working in the development department of a non-profit. I viewed it as administrative, and therefore far from a hands on rewarding experience. However, this was not the case. Working at Safe Haven Ministries, opened my eyes to a rewarding, demanding, and challenging role within the non-profit sector that I can now see myself doing in the future. The connection between fund development and the work being done for clients is necessary and vital. The services Safe Haven provides could not be done without the funds, and simply put, the funds need a place to go. My internship opened a whole new way to see development as a rewarding career goal.



RACHAEL HAMILTON

Major: Sociology
Minor: Women and Gender Studies
Graduation Date: December 2008

To admit that large numbers of people are systematically held back is hard because it means upward mobility is not an option for everybody.
Barbara Ehrenreich

WHAT I DID...

I interned with the KSSP (Knowledge Skills Service Power) program at Arbor Circle in Grand Rapids. KSSP works with middle and high school age students who are at risk for drug use and delinquency; providing a safe space for students to talk about their problems in a group setting, and learn valuable life skills to help them realize and maximize their full strengths and potentials. This includes specific groups for young women who face issues of substance abuse, peer pressure, aggression, and poverty.

I gained experience in data entry, program development, and grant preparation, as well as assisting with screening students entering groups and the groups themselves.

I also did day care for the Cedar Springs Mother's Club. This program allows for mothers to gather and discuss issues regarding children and parenting skills. I was able to work one on one with the young children in this program.

HOW IT IMPACTED MY LIFE...

Through this internship I have learned first hand how non-profit agencies function. I have worked both in the macro and micro spheres, seeing how they interact with each other, which is a very valuable experience for my future work with non-profit agencies.

I additionally witnessed how non-profits get the short end of the stick with resources, specifically in the financial realm, which is truly unacceptable. Seeing these issues for myself, coupled with the readings we did in class, has prepared me to dedicate myself to making the non-profit sector stronger and higher functioning.



AIMEE HENISER

Major: Behavioral Science
Graduation Date: April 2008

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.
Margaret Mead

WHAT I DID...

I interned at Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation's "Recreation Reaps Rewards Program." The RRR Program provides free after school programming for youth in the Grand Rapids Public School District. It includes recreational games, cultural enrichment, academics, life skills, and much, much more. They also provide educational field trips for the participants, and rewards for good participation and behavior. I had the opportunity to work with the administrative team in providing the best services for their program. The program also provides a safe place for children to be after school. The RRR Program provides participants with the opportunity to be themselves, and it gives young people a chance to discover and learn new things. It provides a setting and experience for students to strive for their future in more meaningful ways.

HOW IT IMPACTED MY LIFE...

I believe this internship impacted my life because I was given the chance to see how many children's lives are impacted by poverty, and how this After School Program provides a safe and secure place for them to go. I am glad I had the chance to be around people that are passionate about what they do and really care for children's well being. Through my internship the students had a chance to collect money for the YWCA Women's Shelter, which showed them the positive side of giving and how they can make an impact in their community. I really believe through this internship I have made a difference in a child's life.



TRICIA KREGG

Major: Communication Studies,
Women and Gender Studies
Graduation Date: April 2009

The average life is full of near misses and absolute hits, of great love and small disasters. It's made up of banana milkshakes, loft insulation, and random shoes. It's dead ordinary, and truly, truly amazing. What you've got to realize is, it's all here, now. So breathe deep and swallow it whole.
Torchwood

WHAT I DID...

My internship took place at the YWCA Domestic Crisis Center in downtown Grand Rapids. In addition to my work on the collaboration piece, I was also in charge of the Wednesday night children's group, which took place while the residents were attending their support group. Additionally, I worked on starting an online resource sharing board for excess donations and goods, and attempted to establish a recycling initiative at the shelter.

HOW IT IMPACTED MY LIFE...

While at the shelter, I witnessed the good nature of people and how women, even women who have been through hell and back, can come together for the betterment of each other. We had an older woman residing at the shelter. She only understood a few words of English, and generally pointed to things to indicate a want or need. The younger women at the shelter took on the role of surrogate mother to this individual, without the urging of the shelter staff. They cooked for her; made sure she ate, and reported to the shelter staff when these things had been done. I am amazed by, thankful for, and elated these women have managed to look past themselves and their immediate circumstances in order to help this woman on a daily basis.

I also have a much greater understanding of what women in domestic violence situations go through after they have decided to leave their abusive mates, and an understanding of their lives inside the abusive relationships. While some would become discouraged working with these women, this experience has only fueled my passion for advocacy in the realm of domestic violence.



SARAH POTT

Major: International Relations
Graduation Date: December 2009

I think the key is for women not to set any limits.
Martina Navratilova

WHAT I DID...

I worked as an intern at the Center for Women in Transition (CWIT) in Holland. My supervisor was a Crisis Intervention Advocate who works with law enforcement to help prevent domestic violence and to make follow up visits with victims of domestic violence. I was able to make home visits with the advocate and meet the women and their families. As a result I had an opportunity to refine and strengthen my crisis intervention skills. I also worked on the Crisis Line answering questions and providing resources for women and girls with a variety of needs.

HOW IT IMPACTED MY LIFE...

My internship opened my eyes to the issues that women may face in dealing with domestic violence. I became aware of the impact that domestic violence has on women and their families' lives. I learned you do not always have to have all the answers; sometimes just being an unbiased listener is the most valuable help you can offer someone when they are facing a life changing decision.

Key to CWIT's success is their on-going professional development. I was able to participate in trainings that further developed my counseling skills. I hope to pursue a career and work for an agency that impacts women on a global level. This opportunity has given me the skills I will need to move forward with my future goals.



MEGAN ROACH

Major: Women and Gender Studies
Graduation Date: December 2009

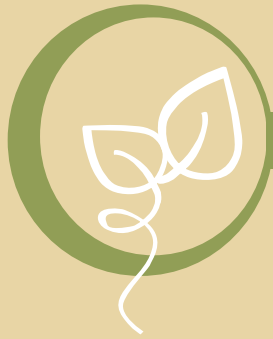
When the power of love overcomes the love of
power the world will know peace.
Jimi Hendrix

WHAT I DID...

This semester I had the opportunity to be the intern at the Grand Valley State University Children's Center. I was mainly in charge of marketing for the Children's Center, as well as doing regular tasks around the center. I improved and refined many of my office skills, such as making brochures and power point presentations, while at the Center. One major project I was involved with was organizing and planning events for the Month of the Young Child. Within this month I designed and implemented a fundraiser and I helped plan the Children's Center's Celebration Dinner. This dinner is seen as a "friendraiser" instead of a "fundraiser". I also participated in designing the new brochure and putting together a display of the Children's Center in the Kirkhof Student Center on campus.

HOW IT IMPACTED MY LIFE...

The knowledge of running a non-profit organization I gained through this internship is priceless. I learned the importance of organization and leadership skills in running a nonprofit organization. The experience of creating fundraisers and other types of marketing media will prove useful in my future careers. The friendly and outgoing dynamic of the Children's Center are another characteristics I wish to replicate in the future. The tools and experiences I have acquired through this internship will stay with me.



CLASS PROJECT

The Women's Community Collaborative is focusing on eliminating barriers to mobility within the local community; to aid the YWCA/West Central Michigan, Safe Haven Ministries, and the Open Door Project in promoting a brighter, safer, and healthier future for women. We hope to provide access to transportation in the form of passes for the Rapid bus system.

Addressing the issue of transportation is vital, as the problem is not currently being addressed properly. Providing various non-profit agencies with transportation passes can assist in matching the needs of clients who cannot afford transportation. Establishing a potentially long-term, sustainable solution to this transportation crisis, as well as creating a connection between the clientele served by these agencies is the end goal of our collaborative efforts.



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