

**Summer Internship Report 2017**

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Hometown: Tracy City, Tennessee



**National Diaper Bank Network**  
**New Haven, Connecticut**

**Provide an overview of the organization/research project and a summary of your responsibilities, tasks, and/or projects.**

One in three U.S. mothers reports experiencing diaper need, the lack of a sufficient supply of diapers to keep an infant or toddler clean, dry, and healthy. NDBN is spearheading the national diaper movement by focusing on this basic need. They work to raise diaper need awareness while building and supporting a network of over 320 community-based diaper banks who distribute diapers to babies suffering from diaper need. My assigned project was focused on NDBN™ Funds for Change grant program for its nonprofit members. Funds for Change offers two kinds of grants: Micro-funding of up \$2500 and Strategic Investment grants of \$10,000. I reviewed Funds for Change 2015 micro-grant recipients to see how effective the organizations were in leveraging their grants to accomplish long-term growth and sustainability. After broadly reviewing over 25 organizations, I chose four to focus on and developed individual case studies for them. I compared annual report data and was able to work closely with the directors of each of my chosen banks to get more detailed information. The case studies highlighted the need, the implementation, and the impact of the 2015 grants. The case studies are going to be useful for NDBN members interested in applying for Funds for Change. They can also be a source to NDBN development in order to help donors and grantors better appreciate the value of investing in community program development. (I would also be happy to share the poster I created for NDBN if you want to see the actual studies!)

**During your internship, what did you accomplish or how did you make a difference? In what ways did you grow in your professional and technical skills?**

I made impact on NDBN grants program by highlighting what made the grants most successful. They can use my method of analyzing the effectiveness as a template for future evaluation. I grew a lot professionally as well. My only office experience prior to this has been my work study position. I was also allowed to present my research to the NDBN staff which is a skill I need to have. I also got to see first hand just how professional nonprofit organizations are behind the scenes. I learned a lot

about Excel sheets and how to use them to make charts for comparison which will be useful in the future.

**Describe a problem that you helped to solve at your internship. What skills or knowledge from your education at Sewanee helped you address the problem?**

One problem with the NDBN Funds for Change was that a lot of research had not been done on their impact. NDBN did not know if they could attribute the success of these diaper banks to the grants. Through my case studies, they realized they could. My Sewanee experience helped me accomplish this a lot. At first, researching something that you know the organization is actually going to use can be frightening when all you've done is write papers for grades. However, Sewanee gave me the confidence in myself to know I could do well and make a difference. I also did know a few things about Excel from prior Sewanee experiences which helped tremendously. Sewanee also gave me the opportunity to participate in CPPI (Community Partnership and Philanthropy Internship). The knowledge from CPPI was very useful in helping me development the questions I should ask to get my project done. Finally, I think my Sewanee Civic Engagement engagement experience was the most useful thing I used in New Haven. It taught me how to interact with people and value what they bring to the table.

**In what way were your teamwork skills strengthened?**

Even though I was the only intern working on my project, I think it strengthened my teamwork skills tremendously. I was in an office with so many inspiring people who I had so much to learn from. I did not realize how much of a team effort my project would really be. The best example I can think of was working daily with my mentor, Susan Van Ness. I was allowed to ask her questions and receive feedback from her daily which made my success possible.

**How did your internship affect your career plans?**

This summer has made me really consider going into nonprofit work. Before I was not quite sure if I would like it. After seeing the professional side of nonprofits it is somewhere I could see myself. I also realized all the moving parts behind a nonprofit. I did not realize how political it could actually be which is something I enjoyed. I did not realize how important the communications department was to a nonprofit either. I found all of this to be exciting because everyone's job was changing daily. Even if I do not work in the nonprofit sector, I now know I would like to choose a career path with a lot of twists and turns!

**In what ways did your internship cause you to encounter people of different backgrounds from your own? What steps did you take to communicate effectively with such persons? What did you learn from such persons' perspectives?**

As a local student, my internship allowed me to live somewhere I was not familiar with for the first time in my life. Therefore, I encountered people with different backgrounds than me daily. I really tried to listen to each person I encountered. I think having them share a little bit about themselves helped me to connect. I learned that hearing someone's story is really meaningful and can teach you a lot about them. I also learned Yale has a town vs. gown divide from many of the locals. Hearing about this from an outsider perspective for once will help me try to further bridge Sewanee's divide!

**Words of thanks to your internship funding donors:**

This internship has really changed my life. Since I had never spent a significant amount of time off the mountain this was the experience of a lifetime! Everything I learned this summer could not even fit in this box. It changed the way I see the world, and how I see myself. I don't know how to even begin putting it into words how grateful I am for this opportunity, so I hope a simple thank you will work!

**Words of advice for future interns (housing, transportation, etc.)?**

Live in East Rock for sure! A bicycle would nice to bring with you but is not necessary. Other than that just follow the survival guide prior students have written and edited! Also they (meaning your mentors) will really take care of you if you are nervous or anything goes wrong!