

**Summer Internship Report 2017**

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Hometown: Beaumont, Texas



**Episcopal Diocese of West Texas:  
Camp Capers  
Waring, Texas**

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

This summer my internship was with Camp Capers in Waring, TX, located within the Texas Hill Country about an hour outside of San Antonio. As a Sewanee land management intern partnered with the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas, my job was to serve as an environmental educator to the weekly campers, tend the garden and take on any projects related to the camp and land as I saw fit. As environmental educator I worked in the garden for 45 minutes each morning with three to four cabins of campers. After that time I usually returned to the garden to water, weed and prune the plants. At the end of each week Jessah, the other Sewanee intern, and I, set up a farmer's market from the produce in the garden. Our most popular product with the parents was fresh pesto made from the garden basil. My job was also integrated into camp life as a member of program staff. As program staff my job was to participate and lead camp activities including high and low ropes, lifeguarding and other duties as needed. An additional responsibility was to work with the ropes course director and Jessah to plan campouts for the senior high age group. These campouts were set up on the 108 acre property and happened twice in the summer. Jessah and I also undertook two large projects. The first was a recycling plan for the camp that included purchasing recycling bins for certain key areas around camp and assembling them. We travelled to the Kerrville city landfill, which accepts mixed recycling and paper, and chose it to function as the camp's new recycling center. Our final project was to landscape the chapel. We began by power washing the outside walkway and walls and then the inside. We rebuilt the wall of one of the three garden beds and filled them in with soil and mulch. After visiting the local wildflower and plant nurseries we were able to buy and plant the appropriate native plants and wildflower seeds. We also created compost information posters and pamphlets that we placed in the dining hall and the staff lounge kitchen.

**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 believe the greatest difference I made was each morning during the 45 minutes allotted to the Sewanee interns to teach the campers about the garden and the environment. This time allowed me to develop my public speaking skills to address each age group and communicate the importance of the Texas Hill Country environment and of the garden. In order to do this Jessah and I split the time between teaching and hands on activities to create a memorable experience for the campers. I also believe that the projects we undertook may have a lasting impact on camp life. The recycling project will ensure that campers and staff consider their personal choices when throwing away and consuming products. We created an easier way to recycle by finding a facility that accepts mixed recycling for free. Finally, our chapel landscaping plan ensured the beautification of the chapel, which is one of the longest standing structures at the camp and the one that holds great value to campers and staff.

**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 that I helped solve was creating new lessons for the campers each week so that the counselors would not get bored or restless and so that repeat campers could have a new experience. To do that I used my researching skills to locate educational Teaching Trunks that were found throughout the area in order to teach the campers about different subjects. One of these trunks was located at the San Antonio Zoo and Jessah and I used it to teach about animals in the area using its animal skulls and pelts.

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

My teamwork abilities were strengthened while working with Jessah on Land Management projects and while teaching in the garden. Every morning we led activities in the garden together which worked a lot better than rotating out each day. Jessah and I switched back and forth talking, so that if one of us needed a break the other could take over. The land management projects required the most teamwork and entailed a long process of research and planning. Landscaping the chapel flower beds was the activity that strengthened my teamwork the most. In order to landscape Jessah and I first had to mortar rocks for the bed. This involved lots of rock laying and heavy lifting. This was definitely a job that required more than one person. Taking care of the garden itself was a difficult task that one person could never have done alone. As a program staff, I also had to be a team player and work with other staff to facilitate activities properly when needed. High ropes course activities required lots of communication and effort between program staff and the counselors who were assisting us.

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

The internship solidified my interest in pursuing a career in environmental law. Working on the land was a deeply fulfilling experience for me and very necessary to determine if the environmental systems field was the right fit for me as I pursue a degree in law.

**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?**

The internship allowed me to interact with campers from different backgrounds. One session at camp was the Good Samaritan week. Many of these children are inner city Latina/Latino kids with unfortunate backgrounds. Another partnership with Camp Capers was St. Jude's Ranch which harbors troubled children with abusive parents. I was able to learn from their enthusiasm for camp and new opportunities and it enriched my experience to be able to work with and educate them. The

best way to communicate with campers that come from these backgrounds is to be aware of your actions but treat them like any other camper.

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

Housing is provided for Sewanee interns. If you live out of state make sure you tell the camp directors and they can make arrangements for staff to pick you up from the airport, etc. It is a lot more convenient if at least one of the Sewanee interns has a car at camp at all times especially if you do not live close by. There will be some amount of time on the weekend between ropes training and staff week to leave camp. Interns will also be needing transportation to buy internship related materials. There is a camp truck that can be made available for internship trips upon request.

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

I would like to thank the ACE internship donor(s), the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas and the University of the South for this incredible opportunity. I am grateful to have been a part of this program for its positive reputation with the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas and for the connections and relationships I was able to build through it. This internship gave me the skills and ability to work as part of a team and gave me the confidence to take on many differing responsibilities and projects that seemed impossible before this summer.