

Katie Kenerly
August 1, 2015

Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee in Nashville

Summer 2015 Internship Report

This summer, I was fortunate enough to be awarded an internship with the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee. The Community Foundation is a nonprofit organization that “connects generosity with need” by collecting and distributing charitable funds to support local nonprofits and creating grants to make giving easier. The Community Foundation serves 40 counties in Middle Tennessee and represents over 1450 nonprofit organizations—in short, the mission of the Community Foundation is to enrich the quality of life in Middle Tennessee by helping civic-minded individuals make a difference in their community. The wonderful people who work for this organization call themselves “bees,” because, as the Community Foundation’s website explains, “The bee is industrious. It can change direction easily to address the needs of its community. It flourishes in the midst of a hive of activity and intrinsically understands that the contributions of each enrich all.”

During my time at the Community Foundation, I worked with the Community Initiatives team on two of the organization’s main initiatives: NowPlayingNashville.com and GivingMatters.com. NowPlayingNashville is an online events calendar that includes everything from music, to theatre, to family-friendly events in the Nashville area and beyond. For this initiative, my primary duties included adding events to the calendar, helping the team sort through and edit events submitted by other organizations or venues, and writing blog posts for the other end of this site, HowToPlayNashville.com.

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In my first week at the Community Foundation, I had the incredible opportunity to attend a media preview at the Frist Center for the Visual Arts and write a blog post about an extraordinarily beautiful exhibit that was not yet open to the public. I also had the opportunity to write several “Things to Do in Nashville This Week” blog posts, which helped to both hone my writing skills and familiarize me with this fun and unique city. While I was with the Community Foundation, the NowPlayingNashville team attended several events outside of the office, such as CMA Fest, Frist Friday at the Frist Center, and the Full Moon Pickin’ Party, the purpose of which was to spread information about both the Community Foundation and NowPlayingNashville.com, as well as serve the community in a hands-on way. Through these events, as well as working with the online calendar, I learned the importance of branding, as well as how to effectively market your organization.

The second initiative I was heavily involved with, GivingMatters.com, is an online database with comprehensive information about all 1450+ nonprofit organizations that work with The Community Foundation. The GivingMatters site also allows visitors to browse local issue areas that interest them and give to organizations that support these issues. Because The Community Foundation is currently in the process of hiring a full GivingMatters staff, the majority of my internship involved working with this initiative; although it was often a significant workload, I felt as if the GivingMatters staff truly valued my help, and that what I was doing was making a difference within The Community Foundation as a whole. My duties with GivingMatters primarily included adding new nonprofits to the online database and breaking down each organization’s

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financial information for donors. Through this somewhat tedious process, I learned about different financial Form 990s and often worked closely with the Secretary of State's Department of Charitable Solicitations. I also had the opportunity to communicate directly with the executive directors of numerous nonprofits in the Nashville area and beyond, which helped me to feel as if the work I was doing for their organizations was necessary and appreciated. Working with GivingMatters taught me about the financial side of the nonprofit sector, which I feel will be very helpful, as I hope to pursue a nonprofit career in the future.

My experience with The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee was a resoundingly positive and invaluable one. Everyone I worked with, or simply came into contact with, was extremely kind and welcoming, and this internship helped me to expand my understanding of the inner-workings of the nonprofit arena. As an English major, I never dreamed that I would be able to understand and effectively break down financial information, but I truly learned a lot from working with my fellow bees at The Community Foundation. I have come out of this internship assured that I wish to continue to work for nonprofit organizations in the future and feeling much more confident in my ability to do so effectively.