

Summer Internship Report 2017

Audrey Kennedy, C'18

Hometown: St. Louis, MO



**Planned Parenthood
St. Louis, MO**

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

Planned Parenthood provides vital healthcare to St. Louis citizens and the greater Missouri region. I worked on various campaigns for Planned Parenthood by canvassing and phone banking. Some of my other responsibilities included organizing events such as rallies, data entry, writing copy, and writing letters to the editors to various Missouri newspapers.

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 successfully got a letter to the editor published in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, I wrote copy for an information booth at a rally, I lead and participated in weekly phone banks that connected hundreds of Missourians to their legislators, and I organized and participated in various events across St. Louis and in our capitol, Jefferson City.

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 difficult situation was when the interns were assigned early on in our time at Planned Parenthood to organize a large rally that the staff didn't have time to work on. We had to organize entertainment,

write copy for information booths, organize legislators to come and speak, and make sure plenty of people from the community would be there. I think my experience with my sorority, Phi Kappa Epsilon, helped me with knowing how to organize a successful large-scale event.

In what way were your teamwork skills strengthened?

My teamwork skills were strengthened because the interns had to work together constantly to make sure all of our events were covered and that when we were canvassing we were being as efficient as possible to get the most signatures for our petitions.

How did your internship affect your career plans?

My internship solidified my passion for reproductive justice and social justice issues in general. Even if I don't work in reproductive justice, it will be a passion in my life for the rest of my life.

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?

Working for Planned Parenthood exposes one to a level of public controversy I was unfamiliar with. The Planned Parenthood location I worked at is the only provider of abortion in the state of Missouri. Because of this, every day, rain or shine, angry protesters gather outside of the gates of the building. They carry huge poster boards with graphic pictures of fetuses, they harass Planned Parenthood staff and patients even if they are not there for an abortion, and they block cars from passing through the gates which can cause dangerous traffic situations quickly. I even saw protesters hang baby clothes smeared with red paint in the trees outside our building. Planned Parenthood has a zero interaction policy with these protesters for the safety of the staff. Dealing with this extremely charged situation every day has taught me how to maintain absolute composure no matter what I am surrounded with. In other situations, such as when we would go out and canvass, I would interact with people who did not support Planned Parenthood but were not being threatening. I was able to have discussions with these people and part respectfully. This reinforced my belief that nothing can be accomplished when one becomes fanatical or threatening.

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

Keep a journal! I used mine for to-do lists, daily notes, meeting notes, and reflections about my days.

Words of thanks to your internship funding donors:

Thank you endlessly for helping me do something meaningful and that I am passionate about for my summer. I was not in a financial situation where I could do an unfunded internship so to hear I had received funding was a huge weight off my shoulders. Thank you for all that you do for Sewanee and all that you've done for me personally.