

## Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee in Nashville Summer 2016 Internship Report

This summer I was offered the opportunity to work alongside The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, a Nashville based non-profit. The CFMT serves 40 counties in Middle Tennessee along with 3 in Southern Kentucky, and provides monetary donors with access to a safe channel to give to those in need. In other words, The Community Foundation collects and distributes charitable funds to make giving back to communities easier. Employees of The Community Foundation internally refer to themselves as bees. As their website depicts, “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.” I was very fortunate to join the bees this summer and grew to learn very much while among their hive.

My exact role as the Community Initiatives and Communications Intern was to provide, regulate, and create content for [NowPlayingNashville.com](http://NowPlayingNashville.com), [Giving Matters.com](http://GivingMatters.com), and the CFMT Communications Team. [NowPlayingNashville.com](http://NowPlayingNashville.com) is an online events calendar that lists over 1,500 events going on in Nashville at any time. It serves as a one-stop source for information about performances, venues, festivals, sports, fundraisers, and community events in Middle Tennessee. The goals of the site include audience development for arts and entertainment venues, promoting tourism, and encouraging the residents of Middle Tennessee to take advantage of the region's arts and entertainment offerings. As an intern, I was given the responsibility to help maintain the website's content whether that be updating the online listings, writing for the site blog [HowToPlayNashville](http://HowToPlayNashville), or updating the site with new photos. I additionally attended community events with the Street Team to enhance grassroots marketing efforts for the initiative.

While entering site listings might sometimes grow to be a repetitive and tedious task, it was especially exciting to hunker down in the office every Monday with the NowPlayingNashville team and brainstorm new ideas and directions for the site, as well as contemplate where the site should go next or what the future of NowPlayingNashville could be. I guess you could say I enjoyed the strategy behind crafting an incredible arts and entertainment site. I was also very pleased to sharpen my writing skills with the site's blog, and one of the big successes of the summer was cracking the top 4 most viewed list for my [Bonnaroo piece](#). My work with How To Play Nashville has given me much confidence in my abilities as a writer and has motivated me to keep pursuing writing moving forward.

However, much of my work for NowPlayingNashville.com also took place outside of the office as I worked with the Street Team to promote and advertise our brand at events like the CMA Music Festival, Frist Fridays and Ice Day at the Zoo. Not only were these activities a fun way to work, but they also provided moments to reflect on how best to promote a brand and what sort of creative advertising is best for motivating visitors to the site.

The other website I worked closely with as a member of the Community Initiatives Team is GivingMatters.com. GivingMatters.com is an online database providing comprehensive information of more than 1,400 Middle Tennessee nonprofits, which allows users to find a nonprofit fitting their interests, learn about issues affecting Middle Tennessee, and securely give to one's organization of choice. I helped in supporting the GivingMatters.com staff by assisting with the research and writing of Issue Overviews posted to the "Learn" section of the website, which addresses areas of community needs. This was certainly the part of the internship that mostly resembled research for a class, however I think it was motivational to know that my work

could help someone realize what a problem [hunger and food security](#) is in Middle Tennessee and possibly influence someone to give to the cause.

Finally, I worked closely with the Community Foundation's Communications Team to help promote a third website, ChildcareNashville.com. ChildcareNashville.com is a completely free service that helps to both increase childcare enrollment in Middle Tennessee as well as serve families that are searching for the right childcare provider. The site acts as a search engine, helping families browse through childcare providers in their area based on ages served, availability, location, fees, accreditation, and TN Star-Quality rating. Parents can then read a description of the provider, browse contact information, and schedule a tour through the website. Childcare Nashville also provides users with resources to help in their search for the right provider, plan financially, and maintain a successful childcare experience once enrolled. I used my tools with the Communications team to help reach out to the most prominent employers in Nashville and Middle Tennessee to help them become aware of this brand and what it is able to provide. My work included contacting many different Nashville and Middle Tennessee based business and HR departments to garner interest for Childcare Nashville among their employees.

Working at the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee was my first choice for a summer internship, and now that my work is complete I can confidently say I'm glad I took advantage of the opportunity. During my time with the Bees, I not only grew to learn about the world of nonprofits and community foundations, but also about my own strengths and weaknesses as an employee as well as how those fit into my future career aspirations. Everyone I met this summer acted as an encouraging and resourceful mentor and I am so grateful to have worked and grown with the Community Foundation.