

**Karissa Wheeler**  
**Chicago Sunday Evening Club Intern**  
**Summer 2016**

During my 8 weeks as an intern at the Chicago Sunday Evening Club, I experienced incredible growth. Not only did Chicago serve as a platform for my personal growth, but also for my spiritual, emotional and professional growth. The 5-person shop at CSEC made up of Sewanee alum David Dault, as well as Khiem, Juan Carlos, Terry, and Katy, is a place where stories are shaped into documentaries, ideas into podcasts, and planning into reality. The Chicago Sunday Evening Club, founded in 1908 by Clifford Barnes, was originally established for the good of the greater Chicago area by some of Chicago's most elite families. Today it continues to serve: "For a century. For Chicago. For good."

Over the course of the internship I learned many skills including pre-production work, production work, and post-production work; I learned how to "cut the um's" of an interview using a Cubase system; I learned how to do transcriptions, improving my auditory skills; I learned how to shape an interview; I learned how to design a website. Eventually by the end of my internship I had produced a documentary on the local partnership between Aguijon Theater and Afterschool Matters, helping raise awareness for underserved teen populations in inner city Chicago. A link to the project is below:

<https://youtu.be/xP9tSftJUSU>

The opportunity to go by myself to Chicago at 19 years old was huge for me. I got to know myself and my personality so much better. I discovered my personality type, ENFJ, does a lot better in an environment where I'm nurtured verses torn down. I realized I don't necessarily

like being by myself, but when I must be, I'm able to do it. I learned to lean on my faith more so than I ever had before. I learned I'm stronger than I think I am.

During the time I was away from Nashville, I was accepted into Tisch School of the Arts for musical theatre at NYU. Tisch was my dream as a little girl, and here I was 19, by myself, away from my "normal" in a huge city having to make a decision that would change my future, for better or worse. The support of the CSEC staff during that decision making process was incredible, and I'm forever grateful for it. The decision to stay at Sewanee was based on many things, including my personality, and a lot was based on my experience in Chicago. I realized that for now, the growth I will experience by staying at Sewanee in preparation for a move to a larger city later will be significant as well. I came to this conclusion only by being away from home during this internship.

I also came to find out that my best experiences while exploring Chicago were things I did that were way outside of my comfort zone. I went sailing on Lake Michigan, I toured the art museum alone, I went to church by myself and got plugged into a great community at Willow Creek Community Church, I took public transportation, I even had to go buy groceries every week at Target and carry it almost a mile to my apartment. I learned that I don't have to be ready to be a full-on adult just yet. I still have time to continue to learn and to continue to grow. While I missed the fulfilment I get from doing a show this summer, I ultimately became more "me" than I was before I left. Could I ask for a more productive time off from school?

So thankful I had the opportunity to grow and learn as much as I did this summer. Huge thanks to David and CSEC!