

Summer Internship Report 2017

Mallory Wright, C'18

Hometown: San Antonio, Texas



**Good Samaritan Community Services Center
San Antonio, Texas**

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

This summer I was fortunate enough to intern for the Good Samaritan Community Services Center in San Antonio, Texas for eight weeks. The Good Samaritan is a private, non-profit organization that was started by St. Mark's Episcopal Church. There are currently six locations in South Texas. The Good Samaritan mission is to serve as a place of change, reaching out to support thousands of people working to improve their lives and to overcome the challenges of poverty. The Good Samaritan offers a variety of services and programs for people within the community, including child care, youth development, adult programs, and senior services. I worked as a youth service specialist, where I helped with the Good Samaritan's summer camp, Camp Good Sam. Camp Good Sam aims to reduce summer learning loss in a fun and educational environment. The camp works with about 250 youth in grades 1st - high school. I primarily worked with the 2nd and 3rd grade girls where my main duties included developing positive relationships, delivering age-appropriate lesson plans to engage and teach students, supervising recreational activities, attending field trips, assisting with the service of breakfast and lunch, and tracking students' daily attendance in program activities.

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?

During my internship, I really felt like I was able to make a difference. The Good Samaritan is such an important part of the west side of San Antonio. The Center provides so much good for the surrounding community. The services the Good Samaritan provides families really serve a purpose in helping the children set out on a right path which is something I was fortunate to be a part of. As a youth service specialist, I was able to see the positive influence the Good Samaritan has had on the lives of the high school students who have been a part of the program since they were young. The high schoolers all expressed interest in wanting to improve their lives by attending higher education.

instead of being a part of negative influences that are present in the surrounding community. The youth who have been a part of the program for a while are products of what having a positive influence in your life can do for someone. I was able to grow in my professional and technical skills by adapting my communication skills for the different age groups I would interact with. I would speak with students, parents of students, and other staff differently. I also learned how to work with students in a classroom setting by teaching lesson plans and managing a classroom.

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?

Working with children, nothing is ever going to go exactly as planned, so each day I was challenged with problems. On my first day, I was completely overwhelmed attempting to handle a classroom of girls and felt very outside my comfort zone. I thought back to previous education classes I had taken at Sewanee and something I learned from an environmental education class is a game titled Duck, Duck, Animal. When I did my community engagement at an elementary after school program near Sewanee, the game was a huge success. I used that previous knowledge and played it with the 2nd and 3rd grade girls. They loved it! It was a nice icebreaker and throughout the summer, I used it as a reward for good behavior with my students.

In what way were your teamwork skills strengthened?

As a youth service specialist, I worked alongside 8 other youth service specialists who were each assigned to different grade levels. Camp Good Sam was eligible to win an award from the NSLA, or the National Summer Learning Association. The Good Samaritan was one of 8 finalists for this award and we were going to be visited by the NSLA for them to observe our campus. The youth service specialists worked tirelessly together before and during the visit in order to make everything run smoothly. If something went wrong, I knew I could call someone else for assistance as they could count on me as well. All of our hard work really paid off because we won the award! I also worked with a classroom of 27 2nd and 3rd girls, where we developed mutual respect as a team and I encouraged the girls to work as a team as well.

How did your internship affect your career plans?

This internship affected my career plans by confirming my desire to work with children in the future. I previously was not interested in being a teacher, but now it may be something I consider in the future.

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?

I was working in an area of San Antonio where there is a large Hispanic population in a lower income area. A lot of the kids had emotional and behavioral issues because of the setting in which they were raised. At times this was difficult to deal with, but not something that was unmanageable. I learned to be more sympathetic and how to communicate with students to better understand what was wrong. I also encountered parents who did not speak English, and I speak very minimal Spanish. There was a slight language barrier at times, but by being calm and using the little bit of Spanish I do know, made few problems arise. I would call another staff member to communicate with the parent if I could not answer their questions.

Words of thanks to your internship funding donors:

I would really like to thank my internship funders for an unforgettable summer. Interning for The Good Samaritan was not an easy job but working for a wonderful place full of wonderful people makes me truly grateful for my time spent there. I learned so much and the experience I have gained is valuable. I wish everyone could know about all of the good this place is providing for the city of San Antonio and that a future Sewanee student will consider applying for this internship. I am thankful for a summer where I learned to embrace a competitive side I did not know existed, dance so silly it embarrassed a classroom of girls, and be someone I am glad to have grown to know.