

Katherine Barnes
Summer Internship Summary for Tonya Public Affairs

For 12 weeks this summer I worked as Israel Advocacy Intern for Rabbis for Human Rights-North America in New York, NY. I worked alongside Joshua Bloom to develop campaigns through the website, develop and maintain donor relations (with clergy and non-clergy chaverim), and I had the chance to see for myself how a non-profit organization like this one operates on a regular basis. RHR-NA is not just a human rights organization driven by their belief in Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but they also attempt to engage a greater part of the Jewish community in their efforts by connecting human rights into Judaism and Jewish study. In the past, the majority of RHR-NA's campaigns have been focused on Israel- such as violation of human rights by the Israeli government, and Arab-Israeli relations within and surrounding the state of Israel. They have recently taken on stateside campaigns, like worker's rights in Florida, ending torture and solitary confinement in U.S. prisons, and fighting against Islamophobia.

My duties generally consisted of updating website content, whether it was pictures, articles, organizing material or adding events to the calendar, I was responsible for making and keeping the organization's website up-to-date. I also worked closely with Joshua Bloom, my supervisor, on the development on one of their newest campaigns, working with African refugees in Israel to fight for visibility and rights as asylum seekers once inside the border of Israel. During the summer, RHR-NA was developing this campaign while more events against the African refugees by the government of Israel were unfolding. Since the campaign was launched in July, RHR-NA has written a Rabbinic Petition for a Fair Asylum Policy in Israel, and they are still developing it now and throughout the fall. My work this summer helped me learn about how non-profits organize and begin campaigns, and helped me see where my own interest lie in the non-profit world.