

Blue Monarch is a transitional home for recovering women who have struggled with various types of abuse and/or addiction. The program provides women and their children a safe home with an encouraging staff that aids in the development of a new understanding of a different way of living. Blue Monarch is unique (as far as transitional homes for women), due to their acceptance of children into the program, and thus into the process of recovery.

I spent my summer with the children of Blue Monarch, designing, organizing, facilitating, and executing a summer camp in their own 50-acres of back yard and throughout the surrounding areas. My goal upon entering this challenging yet rewarding internship, was to provide a summer experience unlike one they likely would have experienced otherwise, creating memories of excitement and fun, as well as introducing them to positive role models. Upon the first day of camp, my responsibilities shifted as I realized that the children needed more than simply a camp facilitator and more of a person they can trust, respect, and in turn is loved, affirmed, and unfortunately, disciplined.

Most of the summer was spent outside, exploring the acreage Blue Monarch had to offer, encouraging the kids to work together, to love each other, and to get along as the family they are for the time being. We set up several activities such as shaving cream fights, large slip n' slides, and paint balloons, and each week took them to surrounding areas such as Nashville, Winchester, and Chattanooga.

The work at Blue Monarch was challenging emotionally more than physically for me, as issues with the children seemed to have deeper roots (and more tragic roots) than children I have worked with in the past. It was an exciting, exhausting, and rewarding summer, and I feel fortunate to have had this incredible opportunity.