

The Experience of an Outsider: An Intern's Thoughts on the World of Non-profit

Growing up in Williamstown, I fancied myself as fairly familiar with the little community across the river known as Marietta; but there is a stark contrast between being “familiar” with a place and being actively involved within a community. I came upon the opportunity to be somewhat actively involved when placed at the Marietta Community Foundation as an intern via the Parkersburg Area Community Foundation’s Fellowship program. When I was first told that I had been placed at the Foundation, I was slightly confused and—I’ll admit—slightly disappointed because I had hoped to be placed within my field of interest. What could I ever be doing at a community foundation? My major at Bethany College, where I will be a junior, is Political Science along with a minor in Spanish. Upon graduation, my plan is to go directly into law school and hopefully go into the field of international law. Subsequently, my plans for my career had me assuming I would be placed either in an attorney’s office or somewhere in the court system. I now see it as a stroke of luck that I was not placed in either of these places, but rather was involved in something that—although brand new and rather uncomfortable—would turn out to be a most rewarding experience.

Working in the nonprofit world is a completely different experience than working for a company or individual whose goal is to make a profit. Simply walking into the Foundation’s office, you can immediately feel the atmosphere of good intentions—let alone seeing it in action. Throughout my internship, I was fortunate enough to be able to meet with most of the directors of the nonprofits the Foundation works closely with. I got personal tours of places like the Ely Chapman Education Center, the YMCA, WASCO, and Caring Connection. With these visits, I got acquainted with a world whose aura was that of philanthropy, caring, and genuine love. I do not think it is possible to find people who have such passion in all their endeavors as those I have met in the nonprofit world. Being exposed to these kinds of people has most definitely left a mark on my soul, and has even opened up another world of paths for my career to travel—in addition to teaching me the importance of community involvement. At the beginning of my internship, regardless of my initial misgivings, I had made it my goal to have a positive impact and make a difference for the people and situations I would encounter; but the reality is that those people and situations have had a greater impact on my life than I had ever imagined.



—Nici Rea
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