



SCHUBERT CENTER
FOR CHILD STUDIES

Mann Child Policy Externship

spotlight on our students

Experiential Learning with the Schubert Center for Child Studies,
College of Arts and Sciences, Case Western Reserve University

Designed to provide hands-on experiential learning, the Mann Child Policy Externship gives selected undergraduate students a unique, practical opportunity to focus on child policy in the community context. The Schubert Center for Child Studies at Case Western Reserve University partners with Greater Cleveland public and non-profit community organizations to create a rigorous educational and civic experience. Working directly with professionals who design and implement policies that impact the lives of children and families, students engage in various planning, research, analysis, and advocacy activities for policy related to children and childhood. **Spotlight on Our Students** features the students who were selected as Mann Externs and placed in community agencies during the 2011 Spring and Summer semesters.

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For more information about the Schubert Center for Child Studies, the Mann Externship, and how to become an extern host agency, please visit schubert.case.edu.





Molly Clifford (right) with Starting Point's Michelle Bledsoe

Loveth Adengua, Spring 2011

A 2011 psychology graduate, Loveth developed an interest in child health policy at a young age after she traveled abroad and witnessed children living in substandard conditions. Upon learning about the Mann Child Policy Externship, she jumped at the chance to work for a non-profit child policy organization and establish roots to pursue a career focused on the betterment of children.

Loveth was placed at **Voices for Ohio's Children**, under the supervision of Sandy Erb Oxley. While at Voices, Loveth gained professional experience and conducted research on numerous topics. Her primary research focused on express lane eligibility for children in need of health coverage through Medicaid. She also participated in planning "Lobby for Ohio's Kids Day," Voices' biennial child advocacy event. Her externship also involved contributing to newsletter articles, media advisories, and policy briefs.

"My most memorable part of the experience was when I had the chance to meet and talk with several senators and representatives during the week of 'Lobby For Ohio's Kids Day,'" says Loveth. "That is an experience I will never forget."

Voices for Ohio's Children is a statewide organization with a vision to ensure that every child is safe, educated, healthy, connected and employable. With hundreds of collaborative partners, Voices seeks to impact the systemic and public policy changes that improve the lives of Ohio's children and their families.



Loveth Adenuga (left) with Sandy Erb Oxley of Voices for Ohio's Children

"I love the Mann externship program. Loveth was a pleasure to work with and an asset to the Voices team," shares Sandy Erb Oxley, Loveth's supervisor. "Her most valuable contributions were her problem solving skills and positive attitude. Additionally, her independence to get her tasks completed with minimal supervision was tremendous."

Molly Clifford, Spring 2011

Molly graduated in 2011 with a major in psychology and minor in music. She has a long-standing passion for early childhood education and developed an interest in early childhood policy after taking the child policy course at CWRU. With her background experience in special education, Molly plans to pursue a career in speech language pathology.

Molly was placed with **Starting Point**, a child care resource and referral agency, under the supervision of Michelle Bledsoe, Early Childhood Project Coordinator. As an extern, Molly attended meetings with the Lake and Geauga County Starting Point teams, including several coalition and advocacy planning meetings, and participated in several child care site visits. She also contributed to the agency's National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies Quality Assurance Accreditation process with family engagement research and social media recommendations. Finally, she researched diversity in early childhood settings and prepared a policy brief on cultural education for early education providers.

"This externship was amazing and a perfect capstone experience because I was able to combine my interest in early childhood with child policy," says Molly. "Starting Point has prepared me well for a professional career working with children. One of my favorite experiences was attending a Cuyahoga County Council meeting where I saw policy in action on the county budget and contracting process. Even the little lessons such as always being prepared for meetings and networking with organizations will



Elizabeth Eastman (center) with Elizabeth Cornachione and Joan Englund at the Mental Health Advocacy Coalition

stay with me for the rest of my career. The Mann externship was one of the best and most lasting experiences I have had at CWRU."

Starting Point is Northeast Ohio's child care and early education resource and referral agency, serving families, early childhood professionals, and the community in Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, and Lake counties. Formed in 1990, Starting Point works to link families with child care services, increase the supply of child care, improve the quality of child care, stimulate early education alternatives, plan child care and early education initiatives, and address child care and early education issues.

"This has been a fantastic experience for our agency," reports Ms. Bledsoe. "Even though we set the expectations high for completing tasks, understanding multiple levels of policy at the local, state, and national levels during a unique budget process and changing county governing system, Molly was able to conceptualize how these changes can and will impact service delivery for the early care and education community. Molly exceeded expectations and we would be honored to host another Mann extern in the future."

Elizabeth Eastman, Spring 2011

Elizabeth is a 2011 medical anthropology and Spanish graduate with an interest in international public health. She first found an interest in child policy through the child policy course, where her interests in public policy and child health intersected. Elizabeth hopes to serve in the Peace Corps and eventually plans to pursue a career in international public health, using the lessons and skills she gained during the Mann externship in her future endeavors.

Elizabeth was placed at the **Mental Health Advocacy Coalition (MHAC)** in Cuyahoga County and worked extensively with both of her supervisors, Joan Englund, Executive Director, and Elizabeth Cornachione, Program and Policy Director. Elizabeth pursued her interests in child health policy in a variety of settings. Her

largest project was the creation of an advocacy toolkit, which entailed background research, compiling resources, and writing multiple sections. She attended the MHAC training to distribute the toolkit and present her work to the audience. Other projects included creating a bill-tracking document, reviewing legislation, and conducting research on a variety of policy issues that affect children with mental health issues.

"My experience as an extern with the MHAC was one of the most valuable educational experiences of my college career. This was the best option for me because I learned everything first-hand in the real world of public policy," says Elizabeth. "Lessons that I learned in the classroom were reinforced by my experiences in the Ohio Statehouse and MHAC meetings made up of representatives from around the state. In my short time I was exposed to the many social issues that policy works to impact and the wealth of opportunities for individuals to affect change in the future."

The **Mental Health Advocacy Coalition** has over 80 members and fosters education and awareness of mental health issues while advocating for public policies and strategies that provide an effective, well-funded mental health system that serves those in need, resulting in a stronger community.

"Elizabeth was a vital member of the MHAC this spring. She not only helped the MHAC by researching several children's mental health policy issues, but she played an essential role in educating our membership," says Ms. Englund. "Our membership had requested an advocacy training, and without Elizabeth this advocacy training would not have been successful. She not only developed and researched the advocacy toolkit we distributed, but she provided a new and fresh perspective to how the MHAC thinks and talks about advocacy. The MHAC staff and its membership greatly benefited from Elizabeth's involvement with the MHAC."



Allison Zeedrich



Kara Monnin (left) and groundWorks' Susan Blasko

Allyson Zeedrich, Spring 2011

Allyson is a 2011 graduate with a major in medical anthropology and a minor in Italian. While she has long had an interest in improving quality of and access to healthcare in low-resource areas, she credits the child policy course for introducing her to the public policy aspect of such social issues. Understanding how public health and policy are entwined, she pursued the externship to gain hands-on experience with child health policy research and analysis. She is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Health Policy and Administration with a concentration on global health at the University of Illinois-Chicago School of Public Health.

Allison was placed at **Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry (LMM)**, under the supervision of Beth Baron, Outreach and Advocacy Associate, to focus on their child lead poisoning initiative. This experience deepened her understanding of public policy and advocacy, while also subjecting her to real work experience and expectations for interns and new employees. Her responsibilities included researching childhood lead poisoning in the greater Cleveland area and investigating "best practice" approaches for lead remediation programs. She also attended meetings, constructed a training manual for future interns, prepared tool-kits for local lead prevention educators, and drafted sample advocacy letters.

"This externship opened my eyes to social services and issues with access to basic human rights, such as quality health care," says Ally. "I now find myself focusing on the implications of societal change on children and families more than ever. I will certainly remain a child advocate and apply this experience to my career in public health."

Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry is a nonprofit social service agency that serves and advocates for more than 10,000 people every year, working with youth at-risk, people involved in the criminal justice system, adults at-risk, people with disabilities, and people who are homeless. Its mission is to promote peace, well-being, and justice through a Christian ministry of service and advocacy for those who are oppressed, forgotten, or hurting.

"We had a great experience with Allyson," says Ms. Baron. "Her development of a training manual and her public policy interviews on child lead poisoning prevention strategies were very valuable. Much of what this office does is education. Her work can be used to educate new coalition members as well as future interns, and her interviews will greatly add to our advocacy/policy strategy and goal attainment."

Kara Monnin, Summer 2011

Kara is a junior majoring in psychology and sociology, with minors in childhood studies and communication sciences. For years, she has maintained a passion for children and has spent much of her time at CWRU focused on early childhood development and policy. Kara pursued the externship in order to gain a better understanding of the interaction between advocacy and psychology, and hopes to use this knowledge to help children in her future career as a clinical psychologist.

Kara was placed at **groundWork** with supervisor Susan Blasko, Operations Manager, who helped Kara focus on early childhood research and policies. Kara contributed to the groundWork team by researching and writing about evidence-based interventions for children with autism, the economic return on investment in early childhood programs, best practices for early childhood programs in other states, and a glossary of common early childhood acronyms. Throughout her externship, Kara also organized, managed, and updated the groundWork Facebook page, creating a topical posting schedule, and informing followers about early childhood research and news. She also attended meetings, took part in research based out of the Center for Community Solutions, participated in community events, updated the groundWork database and website, learned about the state budget and its early childhood implications, interviewed groundWork partners, and assisted the Starting Point team with their activities. Kara wrote a policy brief exploring prenatal maternal stress and its association with autism.

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Kara Monnin *continued from page 4*

"When I started this experience, I just wanted to open my eyes to the world of advocacy and research, but I have taken away much more than that," Kara remembers. "I am now aware of a whole new early childhood network ranging from referral agencies to early care centers and educators. I take away a better understanding of the intersection between advocacy and psychology and understand that through testimonies, policy briefs, webinars, etc. that advocates can influence policy and can help make the lives of children better."

groundWork is a child advocacy campaign started by community leaders, business leaders, and citizens alike working together to increase access to early high-quality care and education. In order to support children and families throughout Ohio and to create a healthy and safe environment for children, this campaign works to promote good parenting, improved access to health care, quality environments, and early care and education experiences.

"Through our experience with the Mann externs we have gotten to know incredibly bright young students with strong work ethics and great passion for children," shares Kara's supervisor Susan Blasko. "Kara's activities were fairly diverse in nature and she became a strong member of our team."

To learn more about the Mann Child Policy Externship program, please visit schubert.case.edu or contact Director of Child Policy Gabriella Celeste at gabriella.celeste@case.edu. Applications are accepted through October 15 for Spring and Summer placements and April 15 for Fall placements.

Support the Schubert Center for Child Studies

Please consider supporting the Schubert Center for Child Studies. Your gift of any size will help ensure the sustainability of the many programs, academic courses, and experiential opportunities we offer students, which has a lasting impact on policy, research, and practice related to children and families. You can make your gift online at giving.cwru.edu (note "Schubert Center Friends" in the special instructions box) or by calling 216.368.0540.

The Schubert Center for Child Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences at Case Western Reserve University bridges research, practice, policy and education for the well-being of children and adolescents.

Jill E. Korbin, PhD DIRECTOR

Gabriella Celeste, JD DIRECTOR, CHILD POLICY

Sarah Robinson ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Donald Freedheim, PhD FOUNDING DIRECTOR

Michelle McTygue GRAPHIC DESIGNER



Rachel Wilson and Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson



CDPH's Pamela Brackett and Rachel Wilson

Rachel Wilson, Summer 2011

Rachel is a junior majoring in nutrition and cognitive science, with a minor in childhood studies. She applied for the Mann Child Policy Externship hoping to explore the effect of policy on children and community health, and learn more about factors that affect policy formation.

Rachel was placed at the **Cleveland Department of Public Health (CDPH)** in the Department of Health Promotion, under the supervision of Program Manager Pamela Brackett. At CDPH, Rachel enjoyed contributing to the "Cleveland Flu and You" media campaign, which promoted healthy habits and prevention to slow the spread of pandemic influenza. She also presented on childhood obesity in urban Cleveland to local families. In addition, Rachel conducted independent research on the availability of dietary calcium and vitamin D for lactose intolerant children in Cleveland, Ohio. She had the opportunity to present her findings to nutrition and policy professionals at a Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition meeting. Rachel also composed a health and nutrition newsletter for City of Cleveland employees and attended meetings on topics ranging from health literacy to community nutrition to emergency preparedness. In the future, Ms. Wilson wants to pursue titles as a registered/licensed dietician and, work as a child health and nutrition advocate.

"I loved working at CDPH because my coworkers taught me innumerable lessons about life, politics, research, and presentation – many of which I still apply in my everyday life," Rachel says. "Some of my most memorable experiences include touring grocery stores in low-income neighborhoods, going to a recording studio to record 'Cleveland Flu and You' eCards, and meeting Mayor Jackson at the City's intern luncheon, but the whole externship experience was truly phenomenal. "

Cleveland Department of Public Health (CDPH) is the local public health agency for the City of Cleveland. Formally established in 1910, the department is charged with improving the quality of life in the City of Cleveland by promoting healthy behavior, protecting the environment, preventing disease, and making the City a healthy place to live, work, and play. The Division of Health is designed to promote community health. Community health represents the intersection of public health, preventative medicine, school health, and self care.

"Rachel took the projects assigned and made them her own," reflects Ms. Brackett. "She was very instrumental, for example, in the Phase 2 portion of the Pandemic Influenza campaign contributing great ideas, conducting research and translating documents from English to Spanish. We would love to have Rachel continue as an intern with us! Our partnership with Schubert has been quite valuable."



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schubertcenter.case.edu | schubertcenter@case.edu | phone 216.368.0540 | fax 216.368.1196
Crawford Hall 615 | 10900 Euclid Avenue | Cleveland, OH 44106-7179

