



Growing Community Relations as a Community Day Services Intern at Misericordia

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Social Justice Internship

The Social Justice Internship Program is an initiative under the Center for Engaged Learning, Teaching, and Scholarship. In this program, students have the opportunity to engage in one of Chicago's premier non-profits: Misericordia, Catholic Charities, ONE Northside, GirlForward, and Forging Opportunities for Refugees in America. As one of the 13 students in the 2023-2024 cohort, I was paired with Misericordia as a Community Day Services (CDS) Intern.



Misericordia

Misericordia was initially a maternity hospital for women in the 1920s, however, today they support children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Misericordia has a multitude of programs such as occupational and speech therapy, state of the art facilities such as their Moore Aquatic and Fitness Center, and recreational activities. Their mission is to provide a continuum of care designed to meet each person's changing needs and maximize their independence. In doing so, they are also serving families who want the best for them, yet cannot provide it at home.

Learning Objectives

As a result of participating in the Social Justice Internship Program:

1. I plan to engage in policy work to understand the social influences that impact residents and see how policies need to be changed in order to advocate for their needs.
2. I plan to utilize my active listening skills to cultivate meaningful relationships with the residents, and amplify their voices by presenting what I have learned from them.
3. I plan to practice cultural humility to learn from the residents what their interests are to create intentional programming that they can engage in.
4. I plan to journal after every visit so I can compare past and current records to observe if there are any patterns that may be useful as I connect it to concepts I have learned in the classroom.

Responsibilities in CDS

Through my role, I am involved with helping residents grow in their relations to the community through volunteering and participation in community-based resources. Through Misericordia's Engage Chicago program, which emphasizes community connections and employment readiness, I help participants to both identify their goals and develop a plan to reach it.



Engage Chicago Outings



Reflection

I am so grateful to have been part of the Social Justice Internship program and to have been paired with Misericordia. Through this experience, I have learned so much about how to support individuals with a range of developmental disabilities, and the importance of meeting individual's where they are at as their unique experiences warrant developmentally appropriate care. Additionally, through the engaging in the EXPL 390 course, it has helped me to reflect on the connections between organizations and civic engagement while developing my own community leadership skills. Overall, it has been a pleasure interning for Misericordia, and I am excited to apply what I have learned outside of the classroom.