

2013 Community Links Summer Internship Program

The Community Links, summer internship program, completed a successful first year in 2013 with much praise and appreciation from both the host sites and interns. The program was started with the goal of introducing college students to working in the non-profit and public sectors in Erie County build capacity of local public organizations and hopefully have these same students remain in Erie County.

This program was made possible as the result of grants from the Randolph J. and Estelle M. Dorn Foundation, the Sam S. and Rose Stein Foundation, the Wightman-Wieber Foundation, the Frost-Parker Foundation, the Murray and Murray Charitable Foundation, and The Sandusky/Erie County Community Foundation.

Three Erie County organizations were selected as host sites. The Erie County Health Department, the Humane Society of Erie County, and Goodwill Industries. The host sites were each provided with two applicants for their internship position. The host sites then interviewed the students and made their final selection. All three interns selected were from Sandusky and students at BGSU Firelands.

The Erie County Health Department selected Michelle Gaytan from Sandusky as their intern. Michelle's duties were 1) collecting water samples from the 25 Erie County beached and analyzing the data for the presence of E. Coli bacteria 2) walking along designated watersheds and take an inventory of pipes and other pollution sources discharging into the watershed 3) analyzing water samples for harmful algal bloom to determine the existence of any toxins that can be dangerous to humans and wildlife.

The Humane Society of Erie County selected Kristi Lovekin of Sandusky. Kristi's duties were 1) educating Erie County residents on the proper care and support needed for adoptive animals 2) updating their website and preparation of newsletters 3) learning the software to record transactions with new pet owners and services provided by veterinarians.

Goodwill Industries selected Ariel Miller whose duties included 1) substantially upgrade the organization's social networking including Facebook, twitter and blog posts 2) develop and schedule e-mail campaigns 3) develop a social media plan that will provide deeper relationships and engagement with their constituents.

The host sites were so happy with their interns that two of the three students have since been hired on a permanent basis. Community Links has big hopes for the 2014 interns. The internship initiative will continue to assist local organization and continue to turn Erie County's 'brain drain' into a 'brain gain'.