



Melissa Dzedzic

B.A. in Human Services

Graduate: May 2010

Internship at Mercy Neighborhood Ministries –Child Care (Summer 2009) & Access Services-
Therapeutic Foster Care (Spring 2010)

Why did you choose to do this experience?

After my first internship experience at Mercy Neighborhood Ministries in North Philadelphia during the summer of 2009, I was inspired to learn more about the children I worked with. At Mercy Neighborhood Ministries, I worked with a number of children with special needs such as; behavioral challenges, learning disabilities, children with ADHD, and children who may have been neglected or abused. After I got to know many of the children, I found out that some of them were foster children.

After this internship experience, I felt very fulfilled and accomplished, but was still interested in discovering the foster care system. Therefore, I contacted Access Services in Fort Washington and was offered an intern position in Therapeutic Foster Care. I chose to intern with Access Services and provide for the children in foster care because I was determined to broaden my experiences within the Human Services field. I always had the passion to work with children, but I was still overwhelmed by the countless career opportunities that I can choose from with my degree.

What are the benefits of doing this experience?

There are an incredible amount of benefits that come from internships during your college career. I was able to gain real-life experience working with the children, practice what I learned in the classroom and apply it to a real-life situation, learn how to work with a variety of group of people, and practice being in a professional career. Being in the classroom to learn and practice was beneficial, but I feel that the real learning was outside the classroom. Actually living what you learned in the classroom is a whole new experience and filled with opportunities.

Describe any exciting project or responsibility you've worked on during your experience?

At Access Services, I worked on presenting a training session on “Effective Communication Skills” for foster parents who provide a home environment for the children we serve. My leadership experiences and trainings at Gwynedd-Mercy College prepared me to present effective communication skills for the provider families of Access Services. Another project that I am very excited for is working more

directly with two children who are newly placed in foster care with Access Services. I will be taking a larger role in at-home visits with the children and making sure they are receiving the care they deserve.

What advice would you give to other students who may be considering a similar experience?

Always try to go into an internship experience with an open-mind and be willing to accept many challenges. Each challenge is an open door to a new learning experience. There could be a few times where you may say to yourself, “Why am I going into this field, can I really handle this?”, but remember that the people you are working with need you to be their positive influence and role model. Believe in yourself and be confident in what you do.

Is there anything else you would like to share? Life lessons?

Things you wished you would have known?

When looking for an internship, it is okay to go outside of your “comfort zone” and to expose yourself to something you have never experienced before. For example, I never saw myself working in foster care; however, I have had a change of heart and can see myself working in the foster care environment in the future. You never know, you may develop a new passion and find another direction you may want to follow. Internships are an excellent learning experience, take advantage of them while you still have the chance!