

Catherine MacLean 2014

Summer 2013: The Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare and Aplastic anemia & MDS International Foundation

I had the distinct honor this summer of being one of the recipients of the EQV summer internship award. My internships were both personally and professionally meaningful and provided me with a valuable summer experience that would not have otherwise been possible.

My internship at the Schwartz Center was fast-paced and educational. As a member of the Programs team at a rapidly expanding non-profit, I was given some important and unique responsibilities. My favorite project was a study of the evaluations submitted for the center's grants from 2008-2011. I extracted information from these evaluations and compiled a set of metrics that demonstrated what a deep and valuable impact the programs had at the institutions where they were implemented. This included the finding that over 75% of the programs continued beyond the grant funding period.

I was also given responsibility for the incoming evaluations from the center's ongoing Schwartz Rounds program. I analyzed these for problems any of the more than 300 participating institutions might be having and saved inspiring quotes demonstrating the impact of the Rounds for the development and programs teams to use.

In the midst of a busy time for the organization, I also took on many important record keeping tasks, helping to schedule conference calls with existing and new Rounds sites and to ensure that the interdisciplinary Rounds teams received regular communication from the Schwartz Center.

Through my work at the Schwartz Center, I learned just how much of an impact programs aimed at increasing compassion in medicine can have. This was an encouraging realization, as I read over and over about care providers who wanted to provide high-level care, but who faced external pressures to the contrary. It confirmed for me that I can thrive in a fast-paced non-profit environment and that I am deeply committed to working to improve the state of our healthcare system for both patients and practitioners.

My supervisors at the Schwartz Center were very generous with their time and the attention and guidance they gave me. They were thankful for my initiative and work ethic during a busy time at the Center. I am planning to return on a volunteer basis during winter break, and hope to continue the professional relationships I built.

I was also given the incredible opportunity to direct the early stages of young adult programming initiatives for the Aplastic anemia & MDS International Foundation. My interest

and experience in this area meshed with the organization's desire to bring these types of programs. Through a survey and set of interviews I designed and implemented, 25 patients, 30 family caregivers, and 7 health care providers were surveyed on the topic of pediatric to adult health care transitions. These surveys led to the creation of a Transition Checklist, and a facebook group for Young Adults, both of which will be launched this fall. We also assembled a Young Adult Advisory Panel, and I had the opportunity to communicate online and by phone with several young adults who have experienced bone marrow failure disease. Having survived this same ordeal as a child, I was able to make deep, instant connections with them and it was a joy to be able to talk to them, and to hear how deeply they desired these types of programs. Most of them had never talked to another young adult facing bone marrow failure disease. I am so glad to be able to bring these programs to young adults and to have this summer's project be just the beginning of what I hope will be a vibrant young adult community.

Thanks to the internship award, I was able to travel to Rockville, MD to visit the AA&MDSIF headquarters in person, and to meet the wonderful people I had worked with all summer. I made a presentation on my project which was exceptionally well received. I was also lucky enough to be able to travel to the Foundation's regional Boston-area conference in early September. There, I was able to spend more time with young adults and children facing bone marrow failure, and to provide hope and my experience to these young men and women. It was an incredible opportunity to see in person the community and organization that buoyed my family when I was ill, and to be able to give back to them.

My summer experience was everything I could have asked for and more. I have gained skills and made connections that I know will serve me well for the rest of my life. I have a clearer image of my goals after Wesleyan than ever before, and all of this is thanks to the brothers of EQV. I cannot express my thanks enough.