

ACLU Internship Program 2012

June-August 2012

By J. Moroney

Education & Development

The curriculum for the summer was intense, with every week correlating to a different civil rights issue. The interns delved into the material and learned from a multitude of resources. Each week they went on a field trip that culminated that week's lesson and highlighted the focus of the topic.

Coordination & Planning

The interns coordinated the "Brown Bag" lecture series this summer. Every week, a speaker talked about different civil liberties issues. The topics ranged from employees' rights to juvenile justice. The interns organized the event, gave introductory and closing speeches, and analyzed evaluations.

Research & Presentation

Throughout the summer, the interns researched civil liberty issues. Each week, they presented a newspaper article about a current event. In addition, each intern picked one topic to research and designed and presented a final project.



Know Your Rights.

This summer, eight high school students from around the Cleveland area were chosen as Junior Summer Activism Interns at the ACLU of Ohio. They spent the summer learning about key civil rights issues, and how to become an activist at their school and in their community.

Meet the Interns



Elizabeth Anderson is our **Internship Coordinator**. She hails from a small town in Pennsylvania. She attended the University of Pittsburgh for her Bachelor's degree, the Indiana University of Pennsylvania for her Masters in Education, and is currently a PhD candidate at Kent State University. The civil liberty issue that interests her the most is inequities in education. Outside of the ACLU, she loves the outdoors, reading, theatre, and family. One thing she learned from this internship is that nonprofits are amazing, and her favorite part about the internship was the interns!! In her words, "they are all beautiful and have helped me to grow as an individual."

Brian Siggers first joined the ACLU as a Junior Activism Intern and returned as one of the **Undergraduate Interns** because he saw it as a "great opportunity to help high schoolers grow as young activists." He graduated from Shaker High School, and is now a sophomore at Ohio University. He is on a pre-law track, as he may want to be a judge or lawyer. He is most interested in Education & Youth. Outside of the ACLU, he enjoys baseball, basketball, drawing, and debate. One thing he learned from this internship was how to appreciate different perspectives. His favorite part was being exposed to new and different things.



Julie Moroney also started off as a Junior Activism Intern and returned this summer as the other **Undergraduate Intern**. She loves the "energy and camaraderie at the ACLU." She graduated from Westlake High School, but now attends the University of North Carolina, where she studies Business and Journalism. She sees herself in a career related to law or communications. She is most interested in immigration and juvenile justice. In her free time, she enjoys soccer, rollerblading, and fashion. One thing she learned from this internship was how to be a mentor, and her favorite part was watching the interns give speeches at the Brown Bag. "They all overcame their nerves to do great. They made me so proud!"

Angel Thornton is a senior at Garrett Morgan School of Science and one of the **Junior Activism Interns**. She is most interested in the issues of abortion, LGBT rights, and juvenile justice. She has a passion for science and medicine, and would like to become an anesthesiologist or psychologist some day. She is interested in Ohio University and Miami University. Her other interests include volleyball, shopping, and friends. The greatest thing she learned from this program was how to "agree to disagree." The highlight of the internship for Angel was meeting new friends and intelligent speakers.



Mahogany Jackson is a **Junior Activism Intern** at the ACLU and a rising senior at John F. Kennedy. The civil liberty issue that interests her the most is the death penalty. Mahogany has many career interests, ranging from a homicide detective to a neurologist. She is looking at Cleveland State, BGSU, and Fort Valley State. Boxing and debate are two of her extracurricular interests. From this internship, Mahogany was educated about her rights as a youth. Her favorite part about the summer program was debating about various issues with the other interns and hearing their points of view.



Quincy Smith is another one of the **Junior Activism Interns** and a senior at John Hay School of Science and Math. Women's rights, LGBT rights, and juvenile rights are the civil rights issues in which Quincy is most interested. He has a strong passion for law and would like to become an attorney or judge. He is interested in attending UNC, Morehouse, or Ohio University. At John Hay, he is involved in Student Senate, golf, and tennis. Although initially quiet, Quincy learned from this internship that it is okay to challenge another individual's opinion to defend your beliefs. His favorite part about this program was definitely the formal debate!

Justin White is a **Junior Activism Intern** at the ACLU and also a senior at Shaw High School. Prisoners' rights is the civil liberties issue that interests Justin the most, and accordingly, he is interested in a career in criminal justice. Toledo University, Ohio University, and Clark Atlanta University are the colleges Justin is interested in attending. His outside interests include football and criminal justice. Justin learned how to collaborate with others from this internship and his favorite part was getting to know his co-workers.



Lovely Smith is a senior at Shaker Heights High School and one of the **Junior Activism Interns** at the ACLU. She enjoys shopping, volunteering, and eating. She is interested in attending Kent State University and wants to become an attorney or a nurse. When asked for the civil liberty issue that interested her the most, Lovely responded "all of them." She learned that youth have a lot of rights that they do not know about. Her favorite memory of this summer was the first lunch at Tower City when the interns were all getting to know each other.



Aniliss Rodriguez, known around the office as Lily, is a senior at MC²STEM High School and one of the **Junior Activism Interns**. Her interest in science leads her to want to be an architect, interior designer, or electric engineer. Ohio State University and Miami University interest her. Privacy and juvenile justice are the issues she is the most passionate about. Outside of this internship, Lily enjoys sports, arts, and shopping. Her takeaway lesson from this internship is that youth need to speak up for what they believe in. Her favorite memory from this internship was running in the rain to Mi Pueblo after the first field trip!



Patrick Payne is a **Junior Activism Intern** and a senior at NewTech at EastTech. He is extremely passionate about juvenile justice and would like to have a career related to this civil rights topic. He is interested in Ohio University, Ohio State, and Harvard. He loves track and field, and is also involved in UMOJA in his community. This internship taught him more about himself and his interests, and as a result he changed his mind about possible career paths. His favorite part about the internship program was the diverse group of people with which he was able to work.



Joshua Abraham is a senior at Orange High School and one of the **Junior Activism Interns** at the ACLU. Josh is interested in attending Lehigh University, Ohio State, or UNC. Business or engineering are possible two career paths. National security and government secrecy are topics Joshua is interested in. Outside of the ACLU, he enjoys track, piano, and volunteering. A man of few words, when asked what he learned from this internship, Josh responded with "progress wasn't made without struggle." Meeting new people and learning from their backgrounds and experiences were the best parts about this internship for Josh.



Having Fun With the Interns



The Summer: At a Glance



Week 1- Orientation

The interns practiced setting up for the Brown Bags and surveyed people in Public Square.

Week 2- Student Activism

The interns researched current events, hosted the first Brown Bag on Black Activism, and volunteered at the Lakeside Men's Shelter.

Week 3- Youth Rights

The interns learned about their rights as students and visited the Free Medical Clinic of Greater Cleveland.

Week 4- Educational Inequities

The interns toured Cleveland State University, hosted a Brown Bag on Finding Equity in Education, and interviewed program associates about college life.

Week 5: Juvenile Justice

The interns researched cases dealing with juveniles, hosted a Brown Bag on Juvenile Justice, and visited the Juvenile Detention Center.

Week 6: Student Choice

The interns participated in formal debates, visited the LGBT Center, and listened to the stories of four Cleveland schools graduates.

Week 7: Social Media

The interns gave feedback on the ACLU's social media programs, hosted a Brown Bag on Employee Privacy, and visited the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections.

Week 8: Religious Liberty

The interns researched religious liberty court cases, hosted a Brown Bag on Race and Religion, and visited the Preterm Abortion Clinic.

Week 9: Current Issues

The interns attended a resume workshop, hosted the last Brown Bag on Taking Liberties, and presented their final projects.





Letters to the Editor

What's Going on Behind School Doors

The faculty in the schools are getting out of hand! I'm a student and I know this behavior first hand. Not only are some of them verbally, physically, and mentally abusing the students, but some teachers and counselors are tampering with students grades. There is faculty dishonesty and disrespect, and even the school's big bosses (principals and superintendents) are discriminating against students who are not star athletes. The principals are refusing to see, talk to or help the students and parents. Yet, these administrators and faculty continue to put on a PHONY image of being the best role model for students and try to act like they are there for us and when we need help. I know my rights and how there needs to be some rules and boundaries for this behavior. For a long time students' and their parents' rights have been violated. Back in the 1900s African Americans and the disabled were refused equal opportunities and education. But even after Brown vs. Board of Education and the IDEA Act we still continue to move backwards. In 1974 the Equal Opportunity of Education Law was passed. But yet the schools and "The System" are making their own rules. Now in 2012, all students' rights are being violated. This needs to stop and as a student I'm here to say that it needs to stop NOW!

-Lovely

School to Prison Pipeline

Everyday at school I have to walk through metal detectors. I understand this is for my safety but it also makes feel like a criminal. I could be spending this time studying for a test or preparing for class. For the cost of the metal detector, we could pay an entry-level teacher's salary for the entire year.

The schools are becoming more like a prison. Having a policeman patrol the hallways in school is like a warden patrolling in maximum security prisons. This is a key example of the school to prison pipeline. Most of my textbooks are out of date, yet the security guards have the best equipment available? In addition, as Cleveland Municipal School District (CMSD) closes multiple schools, the county just built a \$189 million juvenile center.

If, the county can find the money to open the juvenile facility, they can find the money to open our schools back up. As a rising senior in the CMSD, I ask authorities to pour more money into our schools then our prisons.

-Patrick

Gay Marriage in the Ballots

Section 1 of the 14th amendment states that "U.S citizens will not be deprived of any privileges. Nor deprive any person of life, liberty, or property." The Constitution also states, "All men are created equal." If this is so, why are the LGBT community not allowed to legally get married? Are they not U.S citizens? Thy pay taxes, they protect our country, yet they are treated like second-class citizens. In school, we learn that we have rights that are protected by the constitution , yet the laws that are in place show either wise. As a current student, learning about my "granted rights" it is very disheartening to learn that the rights that are given to others are not equally given to the LGBT community. I will be graduating form High School in the spring of 2013 hopefully Ohio will graduate it's laws and join the ranks of Connecticut , Iowa , New York , New Hampshire , Vermont , and Mass who show there students that the constitution will allow them to do whatever they set their minds to!

-Quincy



Letters to the Editor

Transformation Demolition

Imagine walking into a classroom not knowing who your teacher will be or even if you will have one that day. My classmates and I went two months without a stable English teacher because the one we had was laid off. In the 2010 school year, the Cleveland Municipal School District implanted a new transformation plan that laid off 643 teachers! These transformation plans are supposed to benefit the students, but they are actually failing us. It may have saved money but what about saving intellect? What happened to the “No Child Left Behind” motto? While the national ACT score average is a 20, Cleveland’s is a 16. Cleveland is falling behind the nation’s standards because the transformation plan is making cuts in the wrong places.

There is a new transformation plan coming for the new school year, which consists of more layoffs and school closings. This transformation plan will hurt the students even more because we will either be sitting looking for a teacher or packed in a crowded classroom. How can we become educated productive citizens if they can’t put a teacher in every classroom? Is CMSD’s plan really a transformation—or is it a demolition?

-Angel

Inappropriate Approach to Terrorism

Over the last four years, \$16 billion has magnanimously been donated in an effort to reduce tensions between the United States and Al-Qaeda. As an Ohio youth, the fact that this gargantuan amount of money has been ineffective is absolutely baffling. Note that these donations are provided with intent of reducing tensions, not “fighting” terrorism.

The most powerful way for the US to define our values is to display compassion towards nations facing peril. However, by fighting terrorism we influence children who witness drone strikes and other forms of terrorism firsthand while contemplating whether to strap on the suicide vest. We augment this trend by abusing the right to executive privilege and national security. With these nebulous laws and lack of information surrounding killings, detention, and interrogation, we allow terrorists to formulate and spread their own story.

On the other hand, American youth is at less of a risk due to significantly less lethal surroundings. International peace will be accomplished with more appropriate utilization of this money. Current approaches are counterproductive as they proliferate tension. To achieve international peace, mimic these procedures by surrounding Afghan youth in a positive environment and creating beneficial educational programs.

-Joshua

Letters to the Editor

“Waving” Their Rights Goodbye

When I was eight years old, I couldn't dress myself, let alone defend myself in court. Across the country, two million children pass through the juvenile justice system each year, and too many of them are waiving their right to counsel. Children without counsel are more likely to be charged for a crime and placed in a correctional facility. In addition to being dangerous for the children, who are more vulnerable to assault, suicide, and sexual abuse, it is also more expensive for tax payers, who spend close to \$50,000 on every child in a correctional facility. We could decrease these numbers by simply prohibiting children from waiving counsel. Many states have passed such legislation and it has worked.

As an Ohio youth myself, I know firsthand that many children do not understand the consequences of a waiver, let alone the inner workings of the court system. Children should not be left alone to navigate the complex waters of our justice system. The court—and often parents—are guilty of pressuring juveniles into waiving counsel to “get it over with as fast as possible.” We are not rushed into selecting a college, or signing up for military service, so why should we be rushed into signing away our rights?

-Julie

Teen Privacy

How would you feel if every text and every word you said over your mobile phone was monitored and read by your parent? To me it is a violation of my human right of privacy. Everyone deserves privacy; we are born with it. Although we love our parents, we still need some independence whether we are 35 or 16.

According to Kahn et. Al. (2007), literature suggests that children and adults need some privacy to develop a healthy sense of identity. Furthermore, “privacy” is one of the five major key words that define human beings. I understand the reasons why parents would monitor their children, but I would like for them to put themselves in their children's shoes. How would you feel if your parents monitored everything you said?

Society forces us to be independent and learn as we grow as an adult, but how can teenagers grow and learn when not given the opportunity to make our own choices and mistakes? Parents try to protect us by tapping into our lives, but they don't realize they're inhibiting us from developing into the person they hope for us to be.

-Lily

A Kid Staying in a Kids Place

Children don't stop being children just because they commit a crime.” Imagine going from a freshman or middle school classroom to an adult jail house prison. Housing young criminals inside adult prison puts them at physical and emotional risk. Recently a report was released by the Children's Law Center documenting Ohio's practice of putting more than 300 young people in adult's prison system each year.

Compared to juvenile correctional facilities, the youth in adult prisons are eight times more likely to commit suicide, five times likely to be sexually assaulted and twice as likely to be attacked by inmates or beaten by staff.

Being incarcerated in an adult jail or prison forces juveniles to think and work like an adult. Aside from being in physical danger, juveniles who are kept in adult prisons are also affected emotionally. Their long extended periods of isolation take a toll on their mental health. Keeping them in adult prisons also causes them to lose valuable years of education, family times, jobs and opportunities. As an Ohio youth, I ask authorities: “let kids stay kids!

-Justin