

Public Service at the Y Camp of Greater Des Moines and Public Administration for the CofC, Centerville, IA

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In my time doing the EEE Internship, I worked in two different weeklong internships. The first one I worked involved volunteering at the Y Camp of Greater Des Moines in Boone, Iowa. Y Camp is a children's summer camp that usually would host kids ages 6-14 at an overnight camp for weekly intervals; however, things were much different for the summer of 2020, with COVID-19 being an inhibiting factor. Instead of hosting the regular children's camp, with staff leading/chaperoning cabins of children each week, the program was changed this year to invite parents in addition to their children with campers organizing as individual families, where they lodged in the cabins that previously housed large groups of kids and a few staff. My second internship involved working at the Chamber of Commerce for the town of Centerville, Iowa. The Chamber of Commerce in Centerville (like many chambers in cities and towns in America) are local establishments of public administration focused on overseeing the economic development of its designated municipality. While the work I was assigned as an intern did not involve being directly involved in any of those things, I was immersed in said work as it was happening around me, while simultaneously assigned with menial tasks meant to organize and speed things up around the office.

In terms of work I did at each site, in my time at the camp, jobs varied greatly as opposed to what I did at the Chamber. With the exception of a morning constant

of working at the horse barn, staining wood was a daily job I took part in for usually up to 6 hours a day at differing locations around camp. We started with re-staining the entirety of the wooden stage in the center of the camp, where previously a weekly talent show would occur for campers during the normal summers, but its lack of use this summer allowed for such a project as the re-staining to happen. After this was done, we moved on to staining a wooden structure roofing a water spout, and towards the end of the week, staining was still done here and there but mostly phased out in comparison to the other work that was done alongside at this point, such as moving junk to the scrapyard, or sanitizing the campgrounds after families left for the week. All of those jobs comprised of what I spent time working on during my week at Y Camp. My time at the Chamber provided me with something to do all the time; often much of what I did when I wasn't engrossed in busywork consisted of simply attending and listening in on various meetings, made up of both chamber members and other organizations around the town, which is what gave me much of the actual learning experience I had at this internship. The content of the meetings I went to while not scanning bills consisted mainly of planning on a collaboration between the Chamber, City, and local associations in funding a wave of renovations on the former historical Ritz building. Those meetings and busywork consisted of what I did while interning at the Chamber.



Centerville Ritz-Carlton

I learned much about the camping industry and small-town public administration from the respective internships that involved them. The labor I did at Y Camp led me to learn just how much hard work is involved in the camping industry, while from a camper's perspective it seems like a smooth endeavor. The reason I took on the internship in the first place was to learn about jobs in the industry, so I could make a more educated decision in choosing to potentially pursue them as side jobs in the summer while I attend college, and my experience has given

me the idea that it wouldn't be bad as a choice. The work itself was varied enough that it didn't get boring, and most importantly, it was fulfilling, and I didn't mind its occasional difficulty in the aspect of physical demand. As for the internship at the chamber, while I did not enjoy the busy work I was given, the actual goings-on of public administration I was able to see did interest me. It was fascinating to hear the talks between people over making decisions that, as opposed to those made by larger levels of government, have a very real effect on those around them, and the potential of being involved in such decisions (or in this case simply watching them) I found exhilarating. By the end of my internship, my question of if I should pursue a career in public administration like my father did was answered: maybe. Overall, both internships provided me with very useful experiences that will help me in considering potential career options, both close ahead and further down the line in my life.