

Gracehaven Internship 2020

Rachel Walker

BACKGROUND

MISSION STATEMENT

To eradicate child sex trafficking in Central Ohio and provide rehabilitative, trauma-informed care to survivors.

Gracehaven is a faith-based, 501C3 non-profit organization. We serve any minor under 18 who has been sexually exploited without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation. We provide care for sexually exploited children by providing comprehensive, client-centered services.

ABOUT

The idea of Gracehaven came to Ob/Gyn Jeff Barrows in 2004 when he learned about how the horrors of child sex trafficking was not only in far away places like Cambodia and Thailand, but in the state of Ohio. Moved by compassion he gathered around like-minded individuals to establish Ohio's first specialized rehabilitative facility to service the one to two thousand children that are being trafficked for sex in the state of Ohio.

Gracehaven not only serves girls as a rehabilitative facility but also strives to engage in the community to combat domestic minor sex trafficking. The organization partners with many key entities such as the state and local governments, the court system, law enforcement, and community organizations to bring awareness and justice to all. Gracehaven also works within the community to raise awareness and train people to identify the red flags of sex trafficking with schools, churches, healthcare professionals, foster parents, social workers, teachers, parole officers, and first responders.

To read more visit <https://gracehaven.me/about>

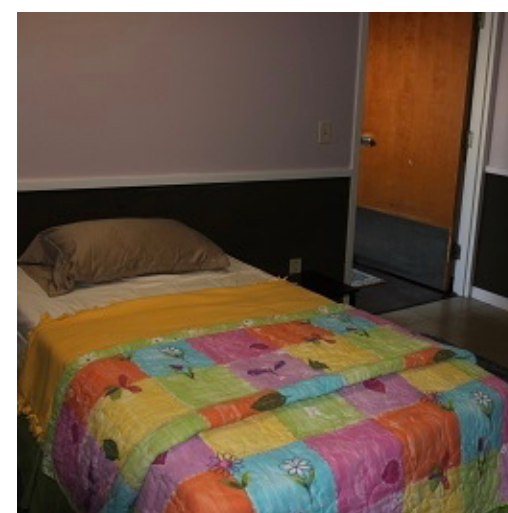
FINDING AN INTERNSHIP IN A PANDEMIC

I had planned to find an internship for the summer of 2020 but the outbreak of COVID-19 closed a lot of job opportunities so I needed to get creative. At the end of the Spring semester 2020 I saw an email from my church stating that emergency residential assistants were needed at Gracehaven. I felt a certain tug and decided to apply. I started working mid June as a residential assistant but not as an intern. Seeing how Gracehaven was a non-profit that engaged heavily with the community, networked with other organizations, and was within the kind of career field that I wanted to be in, I decided that was where I wanted to fulfill my experiential learning requirement to graduate. After speaking with my OSU internship advisor and program coordinator at Gracehaven I was approved for the internship and began when the autumn semester started.

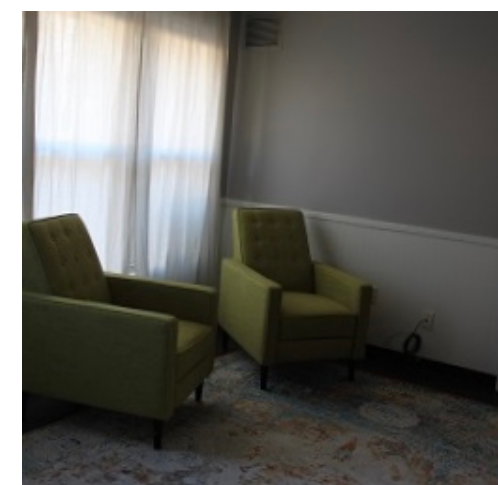
The Kitchen and Bathroom



Above is a photo of one of the house's kitchens. It is important for girls to know they are safe and they can be themselves. Many girls that I got to meet loved to cook and would spend a lot of time here. To the right is a photo of one of their beds. Each girl had their own bedroom and bathroom, a luxury most never had. Sharing photos of the girls, unless with authorized personnel is a HIPPA violation.



Living room, Classroom, and Court



To the left is a photo of one of the living rooms. Plenty of time was spent in the living rooms watching TV, braiding each other's hair, playing games, and chatting. Below is a photo of the school room where girls have online school. The school they are enrolled in is a speed credit program that allows for them to complete a lot of school in a short amount of time. This is also where they would have therapy sessions.



Above is a photo of the courtroom where I saw first hand how the justice system was working both for and against these girls. Most of them have had up to 12 placements before coming to us. The judge decides whether or not they can be in our program. To the right is a little art project that two of the girls and I painted for another staff member as a goodbye gift.

ON THE JOB

Training

As a residential Assistant I needed to complete 30+ hours of training which included:

- HIPPA training
- CPR certification
- Reasonable and prudent parenting
- AEGIS training (de-escalation techniques)
- Trained in Ohio policy and the administrative code
- Trained to do benevolent holds if a life is in danger

Other opportunities

I had the opportunity to go with one of the girls to two of her court appointments in Cleveland. My role was as an emotional supporter but this experience played a key role in teaching me about every player that works for or against her. I also had the opportunity to shadow under Melissa Harvin while Gracehaven was being audited. The audit was an extensive process lasting three days where two representatives from Ohio Department of Job and Family Services came and analyzed the residential facility to make sure that it was compliant with Ohio requirements. I helped Melissa gather files needed for the process as well as write a CAP (corrective administrative policy). She also walked me through what the budget looks like at Gracehaven.



REFLECTION

Gracehaven was just what I was looking for in an internship. My eyes were opened to the operations of the foster care system in the U.S, the court and justice system, what administration looks like in a non-profit, and it helped me realize that I actually really like working in faith-based organization. Working as a residential assistant has been such an exciting, wild experience but I am going to be leaving in December for various reasons. I was offered to work in finance and administration, but the details are still being worked out. If I can I will continue my work at Gracehaven in the administration department. If not I still want to find a job working in sustainable crisis relief and community development. I have a passion to help people that are fleeing from horrible situations whether it be from disaster, oppressive individuals, or groups of people.

Is this internship right for you?

I definitely wouldn't suggest this internship for most EEDS majors. I have a very specific career goal in mind and I know that this internship was right for me. If you are considering make sure you are ready for the following:

- A lot of emotional investment
- Caring for traumatized, at-risk teenagers
- Working for a Christian organization
- Being on a team of almost all women
- Do you have a car?
- Being creative at asking for specific opportunities that would pertain to your career goals

All pictures taken by me or retrieved from the website https://gracehaven.me/programs/residential_house/

