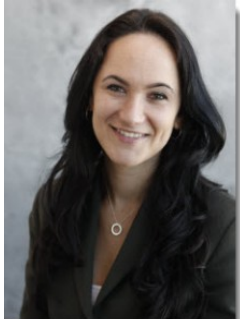


Pinkerton Community Fellowship Reflection

By Sabrina Pestel



My passion for public service started early in my life. My mother always taught me that although people are born with different abilities and in different circumstances, we are all entitled to the same fundamental rights. I believe that this nation's laws were made to protect and sustain those rights, but the legal system and its implementation are both imperfect. It is for that reason that I believe in protecting people who are taken advantage of, and giving a voice to those who cannot speak up for themselves. This interest encouraged me to pursue a career in law, but my passion for public service really developed during my sophomore year at John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

As a sophomore at John Jay, I sought out opportunities where I could volunteer my time wisely and make my experience at John Jay College really count. I was working and going to school full time and had limited financial resources, so I researched internships that would benefit me both academically and financially. I came across an email announcement about a new John Jay fellowship. The Pinkerton Fellowship Initiative was a paid opportunity with a concentration on juvenile justice, and it would allow me to really make a difference in the lives of children and young adults. I was initially intimidated by the application, but I was pleasantly surprised that my submission yielded an interview.

The decision to apply became one of the best of my life. As a member of the Pinkerton Fellowship, I interned for the Children and Youth Services division of the Osborne Association and enrolled in an undergraduate research class focused on juvenile justice. Becoming a Pinkerton Fellow was a mind-opening experience for me; I learned how to analyze and evaluate our social structure and justice system more acutely. Improving my understanding about the criminal justice system and its many failures made me realize the value and importance of education, leadership, mentorship, and community. For this reason, I developed and helped create diverse programs at Osborne to help youths from the ages of 14 to 21 whose parents are currently or formerly incarcerated.

The Fellowship lectures, guest speakers, homework, and internship placement helped me grow as a professional and as a person. I became part of a group of individuals who share a genuine interest in changing the world for the better. I also came to understand during the Fellowship that public service entails much more than just doing a job well. My coworkers provided absolutely vital daily services to clients at Osborne. Their work requires complete dedication to the people and to the nation, with full recognition that every human being is entitled to the same

fundamental rights. Working every day along my Osborne colleagues and observing their impact on the lives of the clients they served made me develop great pride in my work. I am glad to be part of a group of people who are working to make our communities stronger, and give them a chance of a brighter future.

After completing my Pinkerton Fellowship placement at the Osborne Association, I became a Presidential Intern at John Jay College. This position allows me to take part in diverse and meaningful policy and research projects that aim to increase students' awareness and cultural competency, and to improve our criminal justice system. My experience as a Pinkerton Fellow, particularly in working directly with families through the Osborne Association, has vastly improved my understanding of our criminal justice system and shaped my professional goals and skills.