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# Alumni Fund Social Justice Internships

Nov. 3, 2016

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— While searching for internship possibilities, Evan Mok-Lamme '17 found the perfect opportunity at Karis Community, a transitional nonprofit for individuals recovering from serious and persistent mental illness. Mok-Lamme believed he'd be able to work throughout the Denver-based organization, learning all aspects of running a nonprofit.

The only problem? The 10-week internship was unpaid.

But thanks to support from members of the Illinois Wesleyan University Class of 1970, Mok-Lamme accepted the internship, where he gained experience in areas ranging from grant writing to using outreach assessment tools at a homeless youth drop-in center.

"I was astonished how much I was able to do in just one summer," Mok-Lamme said. "If I had taken an internship with another organization, I am confident I would not have been able to work in such a variety of environments."

Mok-Lamme received a \$2,500 stipend from the [Fund for Human Rights, Environmental Sustainability and Social Justice](#) at Illinois Wesleyan. Administered by the [Center for Human Rights and Social Justice](#), the fund was established to support relevant student internships and campus programming in human rights, environmental sustainability and social justice.

A native of Grand Junction, Colo., Mok-Lamme was already familiar with Karis before applying for an internship with the organization. He was hopeful an internship would provide him with the opportunity to work in several different areas of the organization. One of his most significant tasks included work on a grant proposal. Mok-Lamme's contributions included writing the program narratives of several Karis facilities for the proposal, which was successfully granted.

He also planned two special events, including a grand opening for a dairy. Seventy-five percent of the dairy's workers are Karis youth. Mok-Lamme also received training in motivational interviewing, trauma-informed care, de-escalation techniques and conflict resolution for his work at the nonprofit's 12-bed emergency teen shelter and downtown Grand Junction drop-in center.

"My internship experience would not have been possible without the funding I received from the Fund for Human Rights, Environmental Sustainability and Social Justice," said Mok-Lamme, an International Studies major.



Evan Mok-Lamme '17



Landon Piccato '17

Landon Piccato '17 also received a stipend for his internship closer to home. He spent the summer working on development of a Social Justice and Diversity room at The Ames Library. Piccato said the room will provide a space to showcase the history of social justice and diversity at Illinois Wesleyan. A [history](#) major, Piccato spent his summer combing through Illinois Wesleyan's University Archives and digging through online newspaper sources. He produced a timeline that matched key Illinois Wesleyan people and occurrences with national or state events relating to social justice. In the process, he discovered some of the people who walked the grounds of Illinois Wesleyan before him – people like Sigmund Livingston, School of Law Class of 1883, who founded the Anti-Defamation League in 1913; Arnold Diggs, who was an early member of the NAACP; and Phill Wilson '77, founder of the Black AIDS Institute.

"I think people will see there is a lot of history at Illinois Wesleyan in this field," Piccato said of IWU student and alumni contributions to social justice.

He said the internship provided an opportunity for hands-on archival research. In addition to several Illinois Wesleyan faculty and staff, he also tapped the expertise of McLean County Museum of History Archivist Bill Kemp. "All of these people taught me to be a better researcher," said Piccato. "This networking was really crucial to my success, and also helped me to better understand what I want to do in the future."

Because of the \$1,500 stipend, he chose The Ames Library internship because "it was something I wanted to do and something I ended up really enjoying," he said. "I didn't have to take a different internship just to have a resume builder."

Throughout this academic year the Center for Human Rights and Social Justice will offer up to \$5,000 in individual stipends to qualified students who complete internships in the appropriate thematic areas. Internships are just one example of experiential learning opportunities for students at Illinois Wesleyan — 66 percent of recent graduates report completing at least one internship experience during their time as students.

