

Student makes difference while interning

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Most college students find internships with well-known companies to get a taste of what their respective field is like. However, Journalism major Courtney McDonald found an internship that not only gives her experience in the field but provides her with an opportunity to make a difference in the life of hospitalized children.

"I love kids and I love making a difference in a kid's life. It's a gratifying experience," McDonald said.

For the past several months, McDonald has been interning with the Ryan Seacrest Foundation's *The Voice*. *The Voice* was launched this past November by Seacrest, and is a program that created a broadcast media center at the Children's Healthcare of Atlanta to uplift the spirits of the children at the selected hospitals. The radio and TV programs are interactive and allow the children to request songs and play games. The studio is physically located in the lobby of Children's at Egleston, but transmissions go to the other two Children's locations at Scottish Rite and Hughes Spalding.

McDonald first found out about the program through Georgia State's Career Services. She attended an informational about the program and was given an interview on the spot. A few days later, she found out she had been accepted.

McDonald goes to the studio one Tuesday every month to host a show on air with a group of three other Georgia State students. Her job includes playing the songs requested by the children, playing trivia games and giving out prizes. McDonald and her fellow employees are given the freedom to decide the theme and format of the programs they host. This month, McDonald discussed New Year's plans and resolutions with the children.

"The structure is totally up to us. We get to come up with the program. It's a good opportunity to work in the field and be creative. And I'm appreciative that they trust us," McDonald said.

Though they are given a lot of freedom with the structure of the program, McDonald says they have to be careful to stay clear of sensitive topics for the children at the hospital.

"We stay away from topics like playing outside, because many of the children can't do that," McDonald said.

Since the studio is located in the lobby of the hospital, McDonald also gets a chance to interact with the children personally. Not only does McDonald get to make a positive difference in a child's life, but she is getting an opportunity to figure out what she might like to do later on.

"It's a stepping stone for things to do in the future. I've been given an opportunity to test the waters. I didn't know radio was this easy and laid back," McDonald said.



Angel R. White

Courtney McDonald interns with the Ryan Seacrest Foundation as a radio personality for *The Voice*.