

SOCIONEWS

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Brooklyn Girls' Rock Camp Combats Stereotypes and Raises Self Esteem

I had the privilege of interviewing Ingrid Dahl, founding member of the Willie Mae Rock Camp for Girls in Brooklyn, New York. Dahl is also the Editor-in-Chief of the Youth Media Reporter, a program officer of youth media at the Academy for Educational Development, and a musician in the bands RadPony! and BoySkout. She told me about her inspiration to start the camp and the effect it has on girls.

As a teenager, Ingrid Dahl noticed that there was a lack of female performers at hardcore punk rock shows. Only later did she learn about and become inspired by the riot grrrl movement. While playing in several bands in her late teens and early twenties, Dahl was forced to confront sexism from male friends and audience members. She came to learn that she could transcend the stereotype of the sexualized female musician and tour with her band in the way male musicians had been accustomed.

In 2001, Dahl visited the Rock N' Roll Camp for Girls in Portland, Oregon as part of a graduate course at Rutgers University. The Portland camp was the first of its kind in the United States. Dahl's experience in Portland inspired her to become a founding member of the Willie Mae Rock Camp for Girls in Brooklyn.

About half of the campers at Willie Mae receive scholarships or are exempt from paying fees. Many come from low-income



Image: HangProud.Org

communities or homes that refuse to accept their sexual preferences. There are two one-week sessions of the camp each summer. Enrollment at the camp runs between 160 and 200 girls, with a long waiting list.

Campers vary in age and level of musical expertise. Band managers and coaches help the girls to create a song, which they perform at a large music venue at the end of their week at camp. Along with instrument class and band practice, campers attend workshops about the music industry and issues such as media literacy and sexism. Most girls are very intimidated when they arrive at camp at the beginning of the week. By Wednesday, there is a major transformation in their attitude, and by Friday, they are confident and ready to rock.

This type of environment is important for girls because it teaches them to express themselves while collaborating with others. The camp boosts girls' confidence, which ultimately helps them at home, in school, and into adolescence and adulthood.

Emily Meltzer

Every Field is Important: Even Sociology

I have learned to love analyzing, researching, and writing about the inner workings of human society. At the same token, all the things I loved to do quickly became frustrating when I figured out society was not as pleasant and peaceful as I once thought it was.

Analyzing and researching journal articles and books shed light on the successes and failures of society. The failures of institutions in society frustrate me the most. For example, the government has failed large groups of people who daily face racism and poverty. Many times, I thought to myself, "Why do issues and problems plague society?" and "How can a sociologist help society become better?"

I quickly realized sociologists are not the problem solvers, but the problem seekers.

This statement probably sounds absurd but it makes much sense to me. Allow me to explain. Sociologists search within human society and whether they find the good or the not so good is left with in society's hands. For example, if something is broken in your house, let us say a washer or dryer, it does not take a long time to figure out it is broken. The same concept can be applied to the field of sociology.

When sociologists study human society they do not purposely look for problems and issues. If something is broken in society, sociologists will soon find it and even research and write about it. The field of sociology is extremely important. It gives insights into society that would have otherwise been forgotten or dismissed. Other fields such as public policy, education, medicine, and marketing rely on sociology. Overall, sociology is just as important if not much more important than any other field you can imagine!

Stephanie Torres

Need Help? Try the Tutoring Center

It is often easy to forget the resources at our fingertips when we are stressed out of our minds and struggling to write a paper or study for a class we just can't seem to understand. Until I became a tutor, I never took the opportunity to look into what the tutoring center offered, a lapse I sorely regret.

Often when I go to write a paper, I become so wrapped up in trying to find the words to express exactly what I am thinking that I start to wonder whether I am getting my message across. With this exact dilemma, I signed up for my first writing conference and found that sometimes it is easier to explain your ideas to someone else and have them explain it back to you.

In order to fully understand the significance of a writing conference at the Tutoring Center, I highly recommend that everyone take the time to experience what the tutoring center has to offer.

Amanda Emmert

Interested in Real World Sociology Experience? Look For Internship Opportunities!

Next semester, Fall 2010, will be my first semester as a college senior, and the first of my remaining two college semesters. It will also be the semester in which I will complete all the requirements for graduating with a degree in Sociology. During this semester I will be taking my Senior Capstone. Though I am quite ready to take a break from writing lesson plans and taking elementary education classes, I also have some trepidation as this semester approaches because of the internship component.

What kind of internship should I apply for? What kind of internship will be related to the theories and concepts of Sociology? Where are some local places that I could intern at? These questions have been floating around my head since about the last time I spoke with my sociology advisor, Dr. Li. Along with her advice, ideas from TCNJ students who have already completed their internship for sociology, and an internet search, I have compiled a list of some internships related to sociology for anyone who, like me will have to begin applying for one soon, or for people who would like to take advantage of their summer and intern somewhere.

Many public officials have some kind of internship program. There are requirements, and eligibility varies, but the program is usually very open to what students are interested in.

For example, I am looking into applying for an internship with my representative. Because, I am an elementary education major as well, I would be interested in focusing on educational policies and reform as an intern in their office.

These internships give students a chance to network and work in an area that really interests them. Someone else I know who has already graduated from TCNJ as a Sociology major, interned at a local radio station. Someone else I know interned as a waitress at a chain restaurant. Other people have interned in senior citizen homes or schools and centers for children with disabilities.

These are just a few examples of what some people have chosen as part of their internship. Though it may not be exactly clear as to how these examples relate to the field of sociology, it all depends on the student and what they plan to study.

The important thing to remember when deciding on an internship in my opinion is to find something that will interest you. It is especially important to pick something that will interest you because you will be spending a lot of hours at the internship. The internship may also provide you with a chance to network and get experience in a career you may one day have.

(Continued on Page 4)

Almost any internship that involves working with people can be an internship for a sociology student. Choose an internship you will enjoy, one that will interest you, and one in which you can apply sociology theories and concepts. A few tips my advisor and others have given me: first: apply early, well before the deadline and the semester in which you will be taking your Senior Capstone, and secondly, apply to a few different places so that you have options and thirdly, make the most out of your internship.

Cynthia Antunes



Image: IOfBoneHealth.Org

I ♥ Sociology Research

As Sociology majors, one of the most well-known and most explored fields in our department is research. We are committed to learning more and more about the world in which we live. It is through our passion, hard work, and dedication that we create knowledge that others can learn and expand upon. TCNJ offers us all many opportunities to conduct research, whether it is with one of our current professors, academic advisors, or independently.

This semester, I am just beginning the research process. With much help from my advisor, Dr. Li, I am going back and using concepts that we have all learned in 301 and am about to utilize methods from 302.

I am currently researching freshman year Community Advisors (CAs). Based on your experiences with your very own CAs, you have either shuddered or have become intrigued by these individuals. I will analyze these reactions in my research, exploring the different perceptions residents have of their CAs and different styles that CAs tend to employ, thus affecting how they interact with their residents.

Why this topic? I have had the privilege of being in this position for the past two years and am now planning on going to graduate school for student affairs. Plus, this topic fascinates me. I am blessed to be able study a part of my life that is important to me.

(Continued on Page 5)

Already, just a few weeks into this research, I have read dozens of articles, and have many questions relating to my topic. Using the skills I have learned from past sociology classes, I am diligently working on answering these questions and sifting through the facts.

Before I knew it, my literature review was almost complete, my research question was forming, and the methods

of data collection were being laid out in front of me. Research does indeed tie all that we learn together, making it come full circle. It is through these connections that we learn more about the things that interest us most and are able to provide more information for future sociology students.

Marjorie Blicharz



Image: Scrape TV

“Pura Vida:” My Semester Abroad in Costa Rica

Hola from San José, Costa Rica! I began my semester abroad on January 2 and will here until June. My overlapping interests in the study of the social world, the Spanish language, and the natural environment made Costa Rica an easy choice as the country for my semester abroad.

This tiny Latin American nation gained worldwide praise when it eliminated its army sixty years ago and transferred funds from warfare to education and environmental conservation. Costa Rica is home to the most stable democracy in Central America, and on February 7, 2010, in fair and democratic elections, chose the country's first female president. The commonly used expression “pura vida,” meaning “pure life,” captures the relaxed essence of the native culture.

(Continued on Page 6)

Through my academic program at The College of New Jersey, I now have a particular interest in how human beings interact with and treat their natural environments.

Since my arrival, I have been both impressed and disappointed by the land use practices in this nation. While only the size of West Virginia, Costa Rica is home to five percent of the world's biodiversity. The country has allocated twenty-five percent of its land area to stunningly beautiful national parks and protected biological zones.

On the other hand, the capital of San José is a poorly planned and dirty city without sufficient open land spaces. The city lacks an effective recycling program and is home to many abandoned sites. With a modest investment, these sites could become economic and environmental assets for the

city but for now they are simply eyesores to natives and tourists alike.

In November 2009, I applied for and won the Roebling Scholarship. I will use the funds from this scholarship to pursue my passion for Environmental Sociology; I will remain in Costa Rica for six weeks after the semester ends and work to improve the natural environment through a service/learning project. I will conduct my first participant/observation research as a volunteer with an organization dedicated to improving the local environmental and social landscape. As a sociology student and an environmental activist, this is a truly incredible opportunity. Although Costa Rica has made many accomplishments in favor of the natural environment, there is still much work to be done and I am happy to have the opportunity to be a part of this work.

Julia Flagg

Interview with Adjunct Professor PhD Candidate Vania Cox

This semester, TCNJ welcomes a new professor to the Sociology department, Vania Cox who is teaching Quantitative Research Methods. The Sociology department also had the pleasure of Professor Cox attending the AKD honor society induction this past January, as a guest speaker. In addition to teaching at the College, Professor Cox is also working towards a PhD in Sociology. I recently sat down with her to discuss the process of obtaining a PhD in Sociology, and the path that led her here to TCNJ.

CM: Where are you currently studying for your Ph. D?

VC: I am studying at the University of Minnesota's department of Sociology, but currently live in Philadelphia so am doing my dissertation long distance. I completed my fifth year and it will take about three more years. At this point I am considered A.B.D., which means 'all but dissertation'. I'm in the research phase, and have passed my preliminary exams, and have had my prospectus approved, so am now a PhD candidate not just a doctoral student, which is an exciting milestone.

(Continued on Page 7)

CM: How did you end up becoming an adjunct professor in the Sociology department at TCNJ?

VC: I am involved with a group called Sociologists for Women in Society (SWS). At the annual meeting for the American Sociological Society a couple of years ago, I saw Elizabeth Borland was running a round table discussion on an issue that was of great interest to me. Liz and I were interested in starting a local chapter of SWS. When I finally moved out here I sent her an email asking if TCNJ had adjunct professors and Dr. Borland set me up with Diane Bates.

CM: What are your main interests in the field of sociology?

VC: Well I have a big interest in gender. That's my lens through which I see society. I'm incredibly interested in bodies and I'm interested in how policy regulates bodies, especially women's' bodies and I'm interested in how globalization impacts policies. My scope opens at that point because I'm also interested in human right, which is a body centric idea. We all have this capability of suffering- we all have this body. So then I'm interested in how human rights impacts policies that regulate women's bodies using a human rights perspective. Are women's bodies treated differently than men's bodies in international policy? That's a big question.

CM: Since you are currently a Ph. D candidate, do you have any advice for future students who want to pursue a

Ph. D in Sociology?

VC: My number one advice is to apply to a bunch of places. Find at least six. Two that you are less excited about, two that you are medium excited about, and two that you are super excited about. Look and talk with your advisor about programs that are a fit for you. Look at your favorite authors, books, or articles you've read that you've loved. Write to those professors and consider those institutions, and consider the possibility of working with those individuals. Don't limit yourself to just one place. It's a very expensive process to apply (between \$50 and \$100. per application). So then, explore the scholarships and get paid to go. There are enough places out there that it's OK if it takes you two years to find the right program for you. One of the main criteria should be "you are paying *me* to get this Ph. D". They pay you because you're going to be researching for them, teaching their classes and that is essentially how you learn to be an academic sociologist.

Corinne Meirowitz

SocioNews Spring 2010 Contributors

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Attention Sociology/Anthropology Majors, Minors, New Transfers, and Interested Students!

The student members of Alpha Kappa Delta, International Sociology Honor Society would like to offer you a peer mentor. Your mentor will be a junior or senior Sociology/Anthropology major who can assist you with questions regarding the major/minor, classes, double-majoring, or other topics that can be addressed with a peer. If for some reason your mentor cannot answer all of your questions throughout the course of the semester, s/he can point you in the right direction to find the answer.

We can match you with a mentor who shares your research interests or major concentration, or someone who has studied abroad in a country of interest to you, or has held an internship opportunity you hope to obtain in the future. Current mentors' interests cover a variety of areas in sociology including education, communications, environmental justice, public policy, and health.

You can converse with your mentor by e-mail or AIM, on the phone, or even meet in person if you so choose. The flexibility of this program and the dedication of the mentors to their coursework and scholarship make this program a great resource for you that will complement the assistance you receive from your faculty advisor.

If you are interested in having an AKD mentor, please e-mail Sarah Michlik, michlik4@tcnj.edu, the following information:

- Full name
- E-mail address
- Phone number
- Your program (major, minor)
- Class year (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior)
- Concentration (declared or not yet)
- Any research, study abroad, internship or other interests you wish to be a basis for matching

Thank you.

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