



Internship drew her back to work for Promise Zone

By BAILEY SHANNON

I HAD ONE SEMESTER left of undergrad work at Ball State University before my summer at Growing Places Indy. The previous year I decided to design my own major, titled Cross-Cultural Community Development, with minors in Sustainability, International Resource Management and Spanish.

I had taken a course in urban agriculture and wanted hands-on experience; the Growing Places Indy Summer Apprenticeship Program was the perfect opportunity for me to do that.

GPI's apprenticeship exposed me to a part of Indy I'm not sure I would have noticed otherwise, and provided me with many opportunities for networking and building relationships. I met key people in the community and had the freedom to mold my experience in a way that fit me best. GPI greatly added to my college experience, my personal and professional development, and helped me craft a plan for where I wanted to be after I finished school.

During my apprenticeship experience in the summer of 2014, we helped facilitate GPI's Lunch and Learn series at the Platform. In attendance on multiple occasions were VISTA members with the Indy Hunger Network and various other non-profits from the community. That experience introduced me to VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) and put it on my radar as an option for the future.

I often think back to my experience with GPI and realize how many people believed in me. The group of women I was with every day that summer have been some of the most influential people in my life, and



◀ Bailey Shannon at Tyner Pond Farm, during her 2014 Growing Places Indy internship.

way back to the Near Eastside and now live in the Englewood neighborhood. There I have found a committed group of people who want to see change and restoration in their neighborhood and surrounding community. I applied to and was accepted into an AmeriCorps program

each of them have empowered me to be who I am now. I still practice "checking in" with my friends and family, which is something we did every morning and afternoon to help understand how people were feeling and "being" as we arrived together and parted ways at the end of the day.

We learned how to be committed to people and place in ways that strengthened my desire to be rooted in a community of people. The more I learned about the Near Eastside and was exposed to its beauty, the more appealing the idea of moving back to this part of town became. I remember that in my interview for the apprenticeship, GPI staff mentioned they were hoping to invest in people who were wanting to invest in Indianapolis. That model of sustainable education and community development stuck with me as I finished up my final semester of college, and I was determined to move back to Indy.

After a bit of wandering, I have made my

with the Indy East Promise Zone Initiative as a VISTA member. My role as the job creation strategist in this initiative is to focus on workforce development, industrial redevelopment, and infrastructure and transit improvements as it relates to job creation within the boundaries of the Promise Zone.

Similarly to GPI's apprenticeship, this VISTA experience is allowing me to connect and build relationships with community development organizations, residents, and movers and shakers of the Near Eastside and the City of Indianapolis. There are a lot of parallels between the programs and I believe that my GPI experience set me up for success in terms of applying for and being accepted into the VISTA program.

Ultimately the goal of the Promise Zone is to alleviate poverty on the Near Eastside of Indianapolis. GPI's apprenticeship taught me a lot about poverty and wholeness and all the components that make up humans

and community. It has been encouraging to see the ways I have been able to apply what I learned with GPI to my work with the Promise Zone and life in Englewood - both intentionally and inadvertently.

I was recently looking through old journal entries from my GPI summer apprenticeship experience. The following is a journal entry from June 2014:

"Peddling down Washington Street I see man-made mountains behind the misty haze of an overdue storm. Sugar-snap peas grow from the rooftop of Eskenanzi Hospital. People in all shapes and sizes travel from cars to buildings, offices to lunch breaks, from one side of the street to the other. The soil is home to many creepy crawly things, like "rollie pollies" and inch worms, indicating the exceptional health of the dirt. I prune tomato plants and I am reminded of the many unnecessary energy-suckers attached to me that could use some pruning.

"Metaphors, similes, parables, and puns constantly stream through my mind as I am doing farm work. It makes sense as we are made from the dust of the ground and filled with the breath of Life. We are human, made from humus, the organic component of soil. With soil under my fingernails I remember the sanctity and simplicity of life."

Growing Places Indy and my apprenticeship experience played a special and significant role at a pivotal time in my life. During the transition out of college, I was reminded of the summer I spent with such beautiful and intentional people and all that I learned from doing life that way. I longed for that again, and in making my way back to the Near Eastside, I believe I'm finding it. ■

KIB report

A little humor, a lotta litter in Highland Park

By ASHLEY HAYNES

A CORN DOG, a headless doll, a full loaf of bread, and a unicorn walk into a city park. What do you have? Just a few of the items Dan Remington has found on his mission to keep Highland Park clean, green and litter-free in Holy Cross.

Remington, the wit behind the litter-abating Instagram feed @litterofhighlandpark, is a block captain for the Keep Indianapolis Beautiful Inc. Adopt-a-Block program. He became a block captain in 2015 because he was tired of looking at Highland Park's scattered litter across the street from his home. Through KIB's Adopt-a-Block program, neighborhoods receive free tools, resources and plants to bring beautification and revitalization down to the smallest city unit, the block.

When Remington began his litter crusade, he was collecting litter about twice a month. He quickly noticed two things: litter builds up exponentially (people like throwing trash on top of other trash) and he not only enjoyed col-



▲ A Dave Remington Instagram posting bore these words: "When you come to a fork in the road, pick it up."

lecting litter, but the relationships he was building with his neighbors by being out in the community.

The crazy items left behind in Highland Park are now

humorously captured almost daily on Remington's Instagram feed. He once put out a plea to the local Mattress Crimes Division to alert them of the egregious crime of a mattress tag being removed and left within eyesight of small children. Remington thought people might enjoy seeing the strange objects people part with while visiting the Holy Cross neighborhood.

While the fan base for @litterofhighlandpark continues to grow, thanks to Remington's smart quips and litterati-art, his mission remains the same as when he first became a KIB Adopt-a-Block captain: cleaning up Indianapolis and encouraging others to do the same.

Keep Indianapolis Beautiful has a number of ways neighborhoods can work together to keep Indianapolis clean and safe. If you're interested in keeping your Indianapolis block beautiful, you can join KIB's adopt a block program at kibi.org/adopt-a-block.

On Saturday, Oct. 8, KIB will host the **GREAT INDY CLEAN-UP** in the United Northwest focus neighborhood. To get involved with KIB's city-wide clean-ups, submit an application for resources at kibi.org/great-indy-cleanup. ■