



Transformation

A Spiritual Transformation

I am not a person who has ever practiced a specific religion, nor do I come from an immediate family that does. I do have extended family members who do happen to practice different forms of religion. Growing up, I was taught lessons from the Bible and attended a few Catholic based schools, even though I was not. I would consider myself more of a spiritual person rather than a religious person and I believe there is something we can learn from different religions. This is the reason I am open to learning new things about other religions because I feel there is something I can gain, which most likely is a greater understanding of a religion I have little to no knowledge of. One assignment in particular took place during my second semester here at Fontbonne during my World Religions course. The requirements of the assignment were to visit a place of worship and service that was different from my own and reflect on the experience. The reason I am choosing to talk about this event as being transformational rather than as an exploration is because the reflection gave me a deeper understanding of my biases with my own beliefs compared to others.

The place of worship I chose to visit was a Hindu temple, The Vedanta Society of St. Louis, which is not too far from Fontbonne. I wanted to visit a Hindu place of worship because it stood out to me as being more of a spiritual based religion. The service I attended was titled "Death According to Vedanta.," and I attended on Easter Sunday, an important religious event to many Christians. Easter to most Christians faiths reflects on the resurrection of Jesus, so it was sort of shocking to see the Hindu faith discuss death and rebirth so in depth. It focused more on the reincarnation of humans rather than a higher being. Yet, I was able to make connections between how Christians and Hindus focus on the concept of rebirth. Hinduism believes in

reincarnation; which is the recycling of the soul until it has fulfilled its ultimate purpose here on earth. In Christianity the idea is a bodily resurrection of someone who is divine or a human being, and the second coming of Jesus. This is the core of the Christian faith. I have already reflected on this topic once with this assignment but revisiting it years later it is still influential to me.

Now I want to get into why this was a transformational experience for me as well as an exploration one. For obvious reasons, attending the Hindu service allowed me to explore it because it was a religion I did not know much about it and initially seemed different from my own. The not so obvious reasons why it was transformational was that it allowed me take a step back and reevaluate my own beliefs. I feel that most people are afraid to experience other religions in the fear of being converted, which I don't necessarily believe to be true. I believed that the reason there was so many religions is because we all may have beliefs that are all completely different without any connections to be made. After attending the Hindu service, I also realized that some of the Hindu beliefs I learned were similar to my own. It's hard to not have biases towards something you don't understand which is why I feel that experiencing the teachings of a different religion has helped shape my way of thinking about religion overall. There is something we all can learn from another religion that allows us to transform our ways of thinking about religion and help us to accept others no matter what religious background they come from.

The Vedanta Society of St. Louis

On April 1, Easter Sunday, I had the opportunity to visit the Vedanta Society of St. Louis, a Hindu church, and take part in a religious service. Upon arriving, I was welcomed by a homey and sacred environment, both inside and outside of the church. I was greeted by the secretary and given prayer handouts. The service took place at 10:30 in the morning and located a small area, similar to a dining hall. I noticed that the congregation members that were present at this service were of different races, but majority male. The worshippers, as well, were of different races including age and gender. During this visit I learned more about the beliefs of Hinduism, and how my own beliefs differs and coincides.

At the beginning of the service, Minister Swami Chetanananda recited an opening Vedic chant called the 'Peace Chant from the Upanishad'. When translated the chant recites the following:

“Lead us from the unreal to the Real.
Lead us from darkness to Light.
Lead us from death to Immortality.
Light us through and through and
guide us even more with Thy loving presence.
Peace, peace, peace.”

This was recited at the opening and closing of the service. The service was dedicated to the topic of 'Death According to Vedanta'. Since this was an Easter Service and Easter in a lot of religions is related to the death and resurrection of Jesus, these comparisons were used throughout the service. Swami explained that Death According to Vedanta deals with the cycle of life and the reason for life and death. Hinduism believes in reincarnation which means that the soul is

continuously recycled until that soul has fulfilled its desires. One may not fulfill those desires in just one life, so when the body dies the soul returns in some form, for as many lifetimes it make take, until its desires are achieved. There was also a moment when Swami mentioned the important components of the life cycle, which includes karma. The importance of karma to the cycle of life is that life's actions requires a cause and affect; it makes the order of life balanced. The life cycle includes both life and death; the cause of life is desires. There is no need to be greedy for material things or desires because the world is a temporary place.

Swami also elaborated on the importance of the body and how it related to the meaning of Vedanta. One has two main appearances: the apparent man and the real man. The apparent man consists of the gross body, subtle body, and causal body. The real man has no body and the body is only a reflection of God. The apparent man reincarnates and the gross body is merely our actions and matter or fibers. One's subtle body consists of 5 organs of knowledge, 5 organs of action, 5 organs of logic, and then the mind and intellect. The subtle body reincarnates and holds mystery and experience. The final body is the causal body which is ignorance and the cause of the subtle body. I was intrigued by how he explained this because it relates back to karma. After life must come death and everything has a balanced cause and effect because deaths comes to everyone. Three things go with everyone when they die are *veda*: knowledge and wisdom gathered in life, *karma*: good and bad or the results, and your past experiences.

After the service had ended I had the opportunity to speak with some of the worshippers and Swami in the library of the church. One of the worshippers that I spoke with was also a college student around my age who attended the service because her regular church was out of state. I felt very welcome and open to learning more about the religion from those who have practiced it

their entire lives. When I got the chance to speak with Swami in the group session he knew a lot about Houston Smith and how great his book was on religion. He was very pleased that this text was a part of the curriculum and informed me that Smith helped fund the building which is now the Vedanta Society of St. Louis because of discrimination back then against Hindus. This was very interesting to know now being that the congregation and worshippers are more diverse. The most impactful answer that I received from Swami was that to have faith you must have experience. The analogy he made was that if you go to a surgeon you have faith in them that they will not cause harm. So, the faith we have in our religions is made through experiences.

Being raised not attending church, but reading the bible and having spiritual beliefs, I noticed similarities and differences between Hinduism and my own beliefs. One of the main difference was that Hinduism does not believe in a hell which contradicted what I was always taught about those who were evil and did not repent souls go to hell. Hinduism believes that those who are evil soul simply departs them, as oppose to going to hell. They are not entitled to reincarnation and reaching Brahman. Attending several Catholic schools in both high school and college there is more of a difference in life, death, and the meaning of life. Catholics and Christians believe that if we live a good and moral life when we die our souls will go to heaven, which only happens in one life. In Hinduism the soul has continuous life cycles until all of its desires are fulfilled. But, what was similar about these two religions and they agree on is that the world is a temporary place. For us to be closer to “God”, we have to live in this world and see God in everything and in every human being.

As an onlooker I was welcomed into this Holy sanction and learned more about the Hinduism religion. Easter is known to be the day the Christ died and was resurrected and this happened to

correlate with the teaching on the Vedanta and how life is a cycle. The most important thing I learned from attending this service is that even though Hinduism may life as a continuous cycle to fulfill one's desires that does not mean have greed or bad intentions. The spirit still must be pure for it to become immortal. What surprised me was that Hinduism had more similarities with other religions than it did differences. Attending this service was a very new experience for me, and I was given the opportunity to learn from Swami why certain aspects of this religion read about in the text were important to Hindu teachings.

My Academic Metamorphosis

After graduating from high school my transition into college was not as easy as I thought it was going to be. I attended the University of Missouri St. Louis (UMSL) for a semester, mostly taking online classes, but for some reason I wasn't passionate about attending college at the moment. So, after the first semester of my freshman year I decided to take a semester off to give myself time to think about the path I wanted to take with my education. For me, education is very important, and I didn't want to waste money studying a subject that I had no interest in, which was initially law. During the time away from school I regained my interest for the world of business and would research business internships and organizations I could join. I took part in a diversity program with PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), which is one of the four largest public accounting firms in the world. The program allowed students from different backgrounds to shadow accountants for two days and participate in various trainings and activities. I found that I enjoyed the work, found it interesting, and was good at it.

Not much later, I was ready to reapply to college and had a greater understanding of what I wanted my future to look like. I heard good things about Fontbonne and the business program from a few people I know, so I decided to apply. The campus was relatively small, and it was very close to where I lived. I began attending school here in the summer 2017 and chose accounting as my major. My professors and advisors were very reassuring about my decision to become an accountant and I gained a sense that I was making the right decision this time around. It was just the start of something that would lead me to the many opportunities I have today.

Over the last three years here at Fontbonne I learned numerous life lessons from other students in the school of business, my professors, and other advisors. The courses within my

major and the lessons I learned from them are applicable to the real-world work of accounting. My advisors have been excellent guides throughout my time here at Fontbonne and have given me some of the most useful advice about their journeys to becoming an accountant. I was also given the opportunity to be a part of two amazing internships which has expanded my professional network. As I finish my undergraduate studies here at Fontbonne, I know I still have a while to go to get to where I want to be. Even though the process has not been easy and future obstacles will emerge Fontbonne has equipped me with knowledge and skills that will help me become successful in the business world.



Exploration

A Special Piece of St. Louis

Do you know anything about the founders of St. Louis? Did you know that one of the most historic buildings in St. Louis is the Chatillon-DeMenil Mansion? Neither did I before I took part in an Honors Course in St. Louis history that was offered over the summer. After a long week of visiting historic sites in St. Louis, my final assignment was to go out and explore a piece of St. Louis on my own. The former owners of this home were Henri Chatillon, Nicolas DeMenil and his wife Emilie Chouteau DeMenil, granddaughter of August Pierre Chouteau and great-granddaughter of Pierre Laclede, who are the founders of St. Louis. Going into this new place, I didn't know much about the home except for Chouteau and Laclede, who I had recently learned about in class. I was excited and intrigued to learn about the influence their descendants had on the history of St. Louis.

What stood out to me the most about the Chatillon-DeMenil Mansion was the architecture, which set it apart from the other buildings in this South St. Louis neighborhood. An original section of the home that remains standing today was built in 1849 and is similar to the French style of the homes in Lafayette Square. Later owners added Greek Revival style additions. The home was furnished with authentic pieces from the era in which the owners lived, but most was lost because the home was not well maintained until its restoration in 1964. The mansion itself seems to tell multiple stories about the history of St. Louis that all connects to one location. Because the home is still represented as it once was, it reminds me of a lot of the French history that shaped the city into what it has become today.

After visiting the mansion, I did not mind having to write a 12-page report on it because it was something that I wanted to learn more about on my own. It's important that we take the time to explore beyond what we are used to because it allows you to appreciate things in a new way. Before taking this course, I never knew about some of the places I visited; definitely not the Chatillion-DeMenil Mansion. I've only heard about these people and places referenced around the city as streets or other places. So, if you ever have a weekend to yourself or with your family, I would suggest taking a trip and exploring around the city because you never know what new things you'll find and learn.



Chatillon-DeMenil Mansion

For my personal St. Louis memory site visit, I decided to learn about the Chatillon-DeMenil Mansion. Located in the same neighborhood as the both famous and infamous Lemp Mansion, the Chatillon-DeMenil Mansion tends to be overshadowed or not thought of at all when considering its significant connection to the history and city of St. Louis. When I decided to visit this historic site, I had already expected the story and impact both previous owners Henri Chatillon, Nicolas DeMenil, wife Emilie Chouteau DeMenil, and their son Alexander DeMenil had on St. Louis. Each of them contributed to the city's Westward Expansion, French and Creole heritage, and the rise of the city. It could be considered one of the last standing homes of the history of St. Louis as a frontier.

The first observation that stood out to me about the Chatillon-DeMenil Mansion was the architecture, setting it apart from the other building in this South St. Louis neighborhood, such as the homes in Lafayette Square. The original section of the home built in 1849, which remains standing today, had an addition added on by its later owners in a Greek Revival Style. The pillars at the front of the mansion gives the illusion that the house is much taller than it is and displays how larger homes built during this time represented the wealth of the owner. Inside of the mansion, each room is sectioned off and includes mostly similar authentic pieces from the era in which the family lived. The very few original pieces themselves included fine china, pianos, children toys, and art decorating the house. This was mainly due to the home being uninherited, except for caretakers over the years until 1964. I was told that most of the original items belonging to the home had been taken by outsiders, but occasionally some of those items return to its original location from different parts of the country and museums. Although a lot of the

furniture displayed in the mansion is donated to replicate the era of the home, it showcased the wealth and status the families who lived there at one point. Original portraits of the mainly the DeMenil family hang on the walls of each hallway and room of the home, with some story or significant detail about the family members themselves.

With the Chatillon-DeMenil Mansion and the Campbell House Museum, I can draw many similarities of both the sites and families. Even though most of the changes happened in the neighborhood around the homes, the preservation of these two sites happened because of private funding and the names of the people who once lived there. Private funds helped with the restoration of the Chatillon Mansion in 1964, which happened because Emilie Chouteau DeMenil, wife of Nicolas DeMenil, was the daughter of one of the founders of St. Louis Auguste Pierre Chouteau. Her name alone was enough to value and place meaning behind the home's purchase by the Landmarks Association in the 1960s.

One part of the home that had its own separate history from the family but was a major part of St. Louis history is the collection of the 1904 World's Fair artifacts kept in the attic, or third floor of the house. The tour guide explained how Alexander DeMenil, Nicolas and Emilie's son, was an official director and translator of the French Exhibit during the World's Fair. A man by the name of Joseph Meisel spent time collecting almost every original souvenir from the Fair and donated them to the mansion for this exhibit. I found this detail of the home even more interesting because not only does it share its connection to the founding of the city's history, but one of the city's most pivotal and honored memories. Each souvenir the mansion has holds a different memory and perspective what people experienced during one of St. Louis's most

memorable historical events. It also reminded me of the World's Fair Exhibit from the Missouri History Museum, which keeps preserved artifacts that were used by the nations who participated in the Fair.

The site itself seems to tell multiple stories about the history of St. Louis that all ties into one location. First, it tells the story of Henri Chatillon, a well-known and respected pioneer of his time, which added more history to St. Louis as the frontier it is. I also thought about this being its own "frontier" within itself because Chatillon grandfather founded town of Carondelet which was separate from the city of St. Louis, founded by Laclede and Chouteau, at the time. While helping move people in the country further west, he played a major role in the Oregon Trail in Missouri, one of the first historical starting points of a migration west. Being one of the home's first owners, this part of Chatillon's life is the most talked about aspect used to concentrate on a positive memory of his contribution to St. Louis history. Another part of Chatillon's story may seem to be a little similar to the Laclede-Chouteau story because his second wife was his third cousin. Just as the founders of the city had a history of infidelity, it's a topic not so much acknowledged when talking about these particular individuals and the history of St. Louis because it represents a "negative" memory.

The main story the mansion tells about the history of St. Louis comes directly from the descendants and relatives of the founders of St. Louis themselves. Nicolas DeMenil moved to St. Louis from France in 1834 and married Emilie Chouteau in 1836. DeMenil's contribution to history of St. Louis or the memory the house portrays him as being a hard working physician and was said to be the co-owner of St. Louis's first drugstore, producing medications that quickly

helped viral diseases for traveling families at the time. Rather than just being married to the granddaughter of one of the city's founders, he had gained wealth for himself from his practice and business which made him a well-respected figure in the city. He brought the mansion for his family from Chatillon in 1855, giving it the additional name DeMenil. But, DeMenil's wife Emilie Chouteau may have had more of a story to make this site's history even more important than it already was.

Being the granddaughter of August Pierre Chouteau and great-granddaughter of Pierre Laclede, Emilie had a history and heritage that was connected to the city of St. Louis. Emilie's last name and lineage was definitely a boost that kept the mansion's history alive and well today. Without her relations to the home this site could have very well been lost and torn down. Even though some may not recognize the connection the name Chouteau has to the city, those who do know understands the importance of the family. It creates a booster beyond most other historic sites that remembers St. Louis because the Laclede-Chouteau gives the city's backstory in relation to the Louisiana Purchase. Emilie brought something new to the history of the mansion and the surrounding neighborhood as well. She decided to add a Greek revival addition to the mansion, which was different from the typical French architecture used in St. Louis buildings. But, what may not be known about her story to many is that even though she carries the Chouteau legacy, her father August left the family in debt when he deserted them in 1822.

Nicolas and Emilie's son, Alexander DeMenil, name goes unrecognized to many St. Louisans and Americans because he tends to be overlooked. Alexander DeMenil made many contributions to St. Louis politics, history, literature, and culture during both the 19th and 20th century. He was

also the last descendant to live in the house. Besides the obvious, the reason Alexander is very important to the history of St. Louis is because his committed involvement in St. Louis's culture. An historic building of his in Old Downtown, the DeMenil Building, that was demolished in 1976 offered space to many practices ranging from real estate to dentistry. Being a scholar of both literature and history, and a member of the Missouri Historical Society, he understood the negative and positive impacts the city made in its past. But, he tended to deny his family's own negative history by refusing to believe his great-great grandmother's affair with Pierre Laclede Liguist to keep from giving his family and city a bad reputation. Most of his literary criticism and works became well-known throughout the western part of the nation; even writing not so polite remarks about ragtime and authors such as Mark Twain and Kate Chopin. Alexander seemed to have much pride in the city of St. Louis and his relation to it, which he expressed through most of his writing. He displayed his appreciation for the city's French heritage and his family when participating in the 1904 World's Fair, working as a translator in the French Exhibit.

I think most people who learn the story behind the individuals who lived in the mansion during these time periods, will understand how significant this place is to St. Louis history. Many of these prominent figures go unnoticed because sites such as the Chatillon-DeMenil Mansion are torn down and therefore making it forgotten history. This site in particular is a starting point to knowing the true history of the founding of St. Louis and St. Louis during a time when many other historical events began to take place. It attempts to inspire more on the pride St. Louis because of a landmark so closely related to the beginning of the city is still standing. The mansion's history sparks the connection to St. Louis history to the Louisiana Purchase, fur

trading, Westward Expansion, and Lewis & Clark. When the tour guide explained to me about the history of the people who had lived there, I began to automatically make references to topics and moments in history I learned about St. Louis through the course. So, the house does a very good job of building a memory aspect in a sense that someone who visits will have their own memory or prior knowledge of St. Louis history and relate it to the mansion.

The mansion most likely depicts a faithful representation of the Chatillon, DeMenil, and Chouteau families' history as a memory of St. Louis history. Because the site is presented as a complete representation of what it once was, it reminds people of the French heritage shaping most of the city's history we learn about today. It uses the great stories behind the residents to emphasize the importance of the mansion to the city and the nation. The mansion is considered a symbol of what became of the city of St. Louis, its past, present, and future. When we talked about memories in class and palimpsest, or layers of history, this house represents those layers of families' histories that helped shape St. Louis. There is so much mystery about the house that makes outsiders want to learn more about the other contributions to come out of it for St. Louis. Like, the columns supporting the front of the house may actually be from Emilie's cousin Henry Chouteau's mansion, which she adored. Or, why Henri Chatillon left an oil painting of his first wife, Oglala Sioux of the Bear Robe Tribe, wrapped in a blanket with a Hawken rifle under the floorboards of the attic.

The home's history may be seen as an unsolved puzzle to some, like most old homes that holds so many memories; but, it preserves memories of St. Louis history from its beginning, its peak, and its decline. Near the home is one of Missouri's and St. Louis most famous cave attractions,

the Cherokee Cave, which later on the new owner of the mansion found ancient animal fossils and donated them to The Museum of Natural History. This added another layer of interest to the home because researchers, such as George Simpson, used the home to examine the prehistoric animals who once lived on the land. During the 1950s the house was planned to be torn down so the construction of the Ozark Expressway. Instead, the highway was re-routed so that it went over the entrance of the Cherokee Cave. In a nomination from to the Nation Register of Historic Places the following was said to keep the history and memory of the house alive, “As part of the city’s heritage, it is a reminder of a people and a time we only have in books and faded etching”. The Chatillon-DeMenil Mansion is a reminder of the historic homes and buildings in St. Louis that have been demolished in order to build shopping centers or highways.

The previous point I made about the home being a symbolization of St. Louis and how we tear down history and build on top, is why I think the importance and mission of those who fund the home is presented the way it is. The house is one of the oldest standing building in St. Louis, and was is essentially gained is authentic history. Because the original home is still standing today, its evidence to St. Louis’s past and upbringings. This is the reason why people began to save the home in the 1960s, because they noticed what would have been lost if the home had been demolished. The neighborhood the mansion is located in has a sense of Old St. Louis architecture and French heritage. The display of the home is shaped by the importance of St. Louis’s founding families and figures who once lived there. Appreciation and dedication to preserving historic buildings begins to help people form or add their own memory and interpretation of St. Louis history.

Solving the Mysteries of the Chatillon-DeMenil

Mansion

If I were put in a position to fund an historic site like this, I would make to emphasize all the different periods in history the home withstood and mysteries old homes can have. It will give people an opportunity to uncover more history surrounding the house, while learning at the same time. Because the house has so many unanswered questions and artifacts still out there it greats for historians. I would want people to ask themselves questions to better understand why the home is important, like the following:

- What ever happened to the Hawken Rifle that was wrapped in leather with the painting of Oglala, Henri Chatillon hid under the floorboard?



- Why did Alexander DeMenil refuse to believe his great-great grandmother would have an affair, which was well-known? And even then, why was Pierre Laclede Liguist portrait hung in the family drawing room?



- How does The Chatillon-DeMenil Mansion not have a monument dedicated to the city of St. Louis?

I can imagine The Chatillon-DeMenil Mansion being its own monument with a museum dedicated to it and the layers of history that are underneath and around it. Displaying the history of the land even before the home was built.

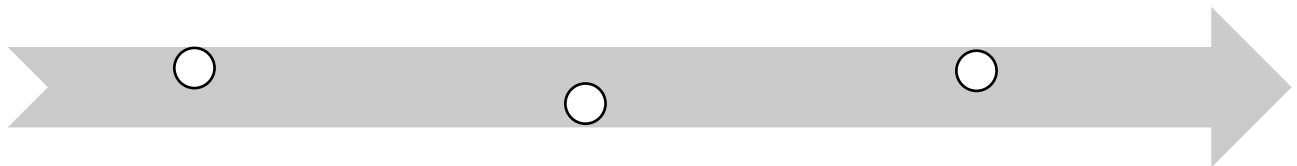
Timeline of the Chatillon-DeMenil Mansion



1849- Henri Chatillon original owner of the mansion



1964- Reopening of the mansion as a historic site



1855- Nicolas and Emilie's buys mansion and revitalize



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A Journey to the International Bazaar

One of my biggest goals and dreams in life is to travel the world, because I am someone who enjoys learning about different cultures and traditions. I am truly grateful that I have been given the opportunity to surround myself with those from different cultural backgrounds my entire life and not isolate myself and create biases towards others. The United States of America is probably one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world, but it is an aspect of living in this country most of us take for granted. Simply trying to connect and learn about someone else's cultural differences opens the doors to so many more possibilities, especially friendships.

My time here at Fontbonne has allowed me to continue my journey of cultural exploration. For the past few years, I looked forward to the "International Bazaar Day" held by the university. For a community and university as small as Fontbonne, it truly amazes me how they can represent the more than 25 countries our international students come from. This event takes place for international students to showcase the diversity at our university. These students may be far away from home, but for them to have the opportunity to share a piece of home with the community is very appreciated. Yes, I was able to taste so many authentic dishes and experience entertainment traditions, but there was also a deeper connection I gained. Something as simple as food, dance, and traditions can bring all of us together in one place to experience it all. I have met so many great people and made friends attending this annual event. Fontbonne should continue its tradition because students should be able to experience this form of cultural diversity.

From a very young age I was exposed to so many different people which has given me long-lasting friendships and continues to help me connect with people in my everyday life. I think the most important aspect this has given me is the ability to not prejudge, stereotype, or

label those who may experience culture in their own unique way. I wish that more people were open to this idea of connecting with each other on a cultural level, because it is the best solution to racial tension the world continues to face. As Americans, we are in a position where we can learn and gain experiences from others who are different. There are more than seven billion people in the world, which means many more cultures for me to explore.

A decorative border of purple dots surrounds the word "Leadership". The dots are arranged in a rectangular shape with rounded corners, with a slightly larger gap on the left side. The word "Leadership" is written in a light blue, cursive script font in the center of the frame.

Leadership

What It Means to Be A Leader

This reflection is not one of personal nature, but one that looks at the true meaning of being a leader and shows appreciation to leaders that go underrecognized.

Our notion of the word leader or the idea of a leader is someone who possesses charisma, has outgoing personality, or someone who is at the forefront of a movement and is able to gain followers. We think of someone like Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., or notable religious leaders such as the Pope. But, let us talk about the leaders that are making a difference in our everyday lives, the ones that lead from behind, our silent leaders, and the ones that are leading by example. Doctors, nurses, teachers, law enforcement, firefighters, parents, students and so on. At this historic point in time, their leadership and commitment to helping others is being put to the ultimate test. The crisis we are experiencing as of now in 2020, requires the help of these individuals the most. Government leaders are some of the leaders that help aid the work of our everyday leaders, those that are continuing to contribute to society on a more personal level.

Some of these people rarely receive the recognition they rightfully deserve. I have two older siblings who are nurses and work with the elderly. Their responsibility has become as great as it's ever been because they have to keep their patients and families, their own families, and themselves safe. Those who are working in the medical field are putting their own lives at risk now, but they have an understanding and selfless commitment to what they do. The most notable thing about leadership is that it is not about the title these leaders are given, but their action and willingness to serve others.

The recent decision educators have had to make are not easy ones by any means. But, it is a time to appreciate the efforts they are taking on to keep students, facilities, and staff safe. It may have taken reconsideration that included the help of hardworking students and parents, but their ability to understand the seriousness of a situation and decide based on the greater good is what make a proactive leader. Having to host, not only class, but numerous events and activities only within the span of a few weeks is not the easiest thing to do, for staff or students. But, it shows that when the academic community, or any community, work together in a challenging situation it's certainly possibly it can be done.

The point of this reflection was not to talk about myself but take a moment to recognize that we should not take for granted the leaders we encounter and engage with daily. Let's not just live by the motto that it takes a certain type of person to be a leader, but leaders and leadership is a unique way of sharing our abilities to serve others. **Learn, Empower, Adapt, Delegate, Engage, Reflect, and Serve.**

Intern Leadership Program

The Intern Leadership Program or I.L.P. was an opportunity I took advantage of in high school and participated in up until my junior year of college. I.L.P is a program at Cardinal Ritter College Prep that provides students, specifically African American youth, with professional preparation to work in and provide leadership to the workforce throughout high school, college, and life after college. In high school I was asked to join an organization that promotes the career journey and success of students from high school to college. During the program I had access to networking events, internships, job shadowing, and planning for a career after college. I also had the opportunity to share my experience of the success I've gained from being in this program to other high school students beginning the program. Even though I did not have the opportunity to return to my high school and share my experiences one on one with students, I was used as an example student for those who were interested in accounting.

Leadership is a key word in the program, so it isn't hard to guess that this was a major part of what the organization stands for. The mission of the program is to train and prepare students for the workforce. When these students then go through college and begin taking on internships and career opportunities, they can help guide a new generation of college bound students. I know when I was in the current students' position, I was grateful to hear how college students were receiving job opportunities and taking part in different internships. Their stories made me feel more motivated to attend college and continue with the program. I was ready to become a leader in my own career as well, which I thought was the best feeling I received from being in the Intern Leadership Program.

A leader must be willing to learn before they expect others to follow. I had to go on my own journey of studying my major and taking part in different internships in order to figure out the type of leader I wanted to be in this program. I know that not many people pursue accounting, so it was great to see that more students from my high school had become interested in this field. I was one of the very few students in the program who had pursued accounting in college and successfully take part in the program. I would have never thought my decisions in college and in the workforce would have a major impact on students years later, but I am still grateful that my experience was used as a leading example for the high school students interested in accounting.

Even though I only took part in I.L.P for 5 of the 6 years, I can say I have become more acceptive of the ideal I can make a difference in another person's life. I usually do not think of myself as someone who could heavily influence someone else, but I guess everyone can be a leader in different ways.



Occupation

It's Not Just Crunching Numbers

I've always been interested in learning more about business, especially when it comes to a future career. I'm specifically interested in accounting. As I've learned more about accounting, most people have misperceptions about the discipline. When we tell people our major, people will respond with questions and comments like: "You must be really good at math"; "Wouldn't you be bored sitting at a desk all day?" or "You are going to make so much money." Well, in my experience after almost four years of study and two internships, I can most definitely say accounting is not what most people think it is. When I explain to others what accounting is, the most important aspect I want them to remember is that accounting isn't just a one-way street. There are so many paths one can take in the field and so many industries an accountant can work in. To name a few, you have auditors, tax accountants, forensic accountants, controllers, CPAs, and so on.

Like any other career field, the only true way for you to be happy with what you do is for you to be passionate about it. It reminds me of a saying that goes along the lines of, "if you refer to your place of work as a job that is exactly what it is, but if it's your career it's something you are passionate about and motivated by." I've met so many people who have made the comment that they are entering the field of accounting just for the money or the stability of having a job. But, I've also met people who speak highly of what they do because they are motivated to help individuals financially.

My opinion on the matter is that over the years I learned that being an accountant can open so many doors for you in the world of business. I've had the opportunity to network with many people who are clients of the companies I worked for and they are grateful for the services

offered and provided to them. Some accounting firms also take part in annual community seminars that provide free financial advice to nonprofit organizations or an annual day of service when the entire firm volunteers at different organizations.

Think about it, how would a place of business be able to function properly if someone wasn't there to care for the financials? Or, how would a company fairly allocate resources and costs across different departments within the business? I know I have a long road to go to achieve my full potential as accountant, but it's the territory that comes with any career path. As long as I stay true to the reasons I chose accounting, which is to help others, I see it as more than just numbers.

A New Company, A New Experience

Here I am; a new intern for my second internship, which happens to be another tax internship. The process it took to land this opportunity was a lot tougher than I anticipated. In the fall of 2019, I was seeking a new job or internship during my last semester of college that could potentially lead to something more long-term in the future. During the entire month of October, I had applied to about fifteen positions and ended up with three offers. I was grateful for all of these opportunities, but the company that I chose in the end stood out from the rest.

In January of 2020, I started my internship with RubinBrown, the largest mid-tier accounting firm here in St. Louis. The reason I chose this company over the others was the positive and family like environment it possessed. It wasn't just your average everyday cubicle environment where employees rarely talked. Everyone seemed to know each other and are friendly team members. This rang true for the interns I had the opportunity of working with as well. The company offered many opportunities to gain relationships outside of the office with team building activities. For instance, all of us spent a day at Escape St. Louis, where each group of interns solved a murder mystery. We had many little events like this to help us relax during the beginning of tax season.

I not only had a pleasant experience with the other interns, but most of the people I met daily at RubinBrown. The tax team was so helpful, especially since for most of us, it was our first-time doing taxes. Even though this wasn't my first tax internship, tax laws are always changing, and it was nice knowing I had help readily available when I had a question. Additionally, each of us also had our own individual help from our Career Advocate and Tax Buddy throughout the entirety of the internship. I received not only help on the work I was

completing, but career advice as well from people who had been in the business for 20 plus years. The main thing I noticed about the company, is their dedication of building strong relationships with their employees and clients.

What I wanted to gain from the internship was experience outside of the classroom. Yes, the lessons I learned in class were a great foundation, but I believe I really did not learn as much as did until I really began to do the work. Given the recent instability COVID-19 has caused the company has accommodated and worked with each of us. I already had the experience of going through one hectic tax season the previous year, and I was prepared for another in a different way.

RubinBrown's motto is "one firm, one way," and I believe the positive environment they have been able to create for their employees and clients continues to benefit them. This is a firm that I could potentially seeing myself working for fulltime and I am grateful I had the opportunity to work with so many amazing people.

Reflective Essay

At the beginning of this course my idea of business writing was being able to write proposals, memos, and reports based on different situations that took place within a business. I have had previous experiences with these genres before but never knew what went into the process of writing them in a professional business setting. The genres I worked with during this course have helped me understand that business writing and the business discourse is more about specific language. With the help of MacRae and other readings done throughout this course, I was able to form a new understanding of business writing and apply them to the 4 genres I wrote with.

As oppose to being descriptive like academic writing, business writing deals with the concept of plain language. According to MacRae, business writing focuses less on complexity and vocabulary and more on clarity and attractiveness. Some writing scholars believe that technology has caused writers to lose their skills of communicating in written form effectively, which makes it difficult to write clearly and correctly in professional genres, such as business writing.

Correctness is very important in business writing, and so is grammar (MacRae). A few of the other texts I have read this semester from writing scholars believe that there is no “correct” way to speak or write in plain English, and technology has not hindered peoples’ writing abilities when it comes to writing in general (Curzan, Trubek). Even though language is not more “correct” in one way than another, I think all these scholars would agree with the fact that professional writing has its required standards of correct language.

One of the first concepts discussed in this course was MacRae’s 8 C’s of Good Professional Communication. Those C’s included the following: clear, concise, concrete and specific,

complete, courteous, coherent, constructive, and correct. In each genre these C's were used to create text that best communicated the situations of the genres. While writing the incident report, I think I exemplified completeness the best the situation needed to answer the questions of who, what, when, where, why, and how. I kept my writing very specific and concise while providing every important detail needed about the situation to make the language of the document clear. The summary of this report was very short and straight to the point as well, while still providing enough detail for the reader to understand the situation.

Another genre I believe that I did well with showing all of the 8 C's was the bad newsletter. This genre dealt a lot with courtesy and constructiveness. For me to avoid giving the customer a direct no I had to make clear the policy and reason for the product that my company sold. Since this was a shorter genre it was easy for me to give a very simple and direct reason why I couldn't sell the product to them for a much lower price, while also offering an alternative to keep them a satisfied customer. I think that I applied most of these qualities of good professional writing to each genre effectively, especially with providing enough detail and avoiding any real grammatical errors.

In order for me to write with these genres in a professional manner, my team member and I had to create a place of business that either manufactures or sold a product or service for consumers. It made me able to write in these genres because the situations correlated with them and I was able to come up with solutions based on my company. Each document had to be written to a specific audience, while fulfilling a person at the same time. The first document, the incident report, needed to inform my artificial company's board of directors about an embezzlement issue. The purpose for using an incident report, or any formal or informal report, is to inform the

company of an issue that has taken place and the action that was or needs to be taken. This was also very similar to the third genre which was the bad newsletter because it was an informative document. The situation I worked on with the bad newsletter was informing a customer that my company could not complete their request of a price match. MacRae suggested using a formula when writing this document that includes a general statement, the request, an explanation, a sweetener, and a constructive closing. With this genre I avoided any apologetic language such as “sorry” or “unfortunately” and gave an indirect “no” with reasons why I couldn’t act on the request. But instead I offered the customer an incentive, which was possible.

The other two genres dealt with the purpose of persuading the audience of a new product my company was launching or creating. The second genre was the business proposal which I based on the idea of creating a new product. The purpose of the proposal report was to pitch a new product idea and persuade the company’s board of directors to fund the product by creating a need and interest. I created a plan that was both feasible and profitable for the company by buying the materials needed for production at a discounted price and selling it cheaper than the market price. My fourth genre was the press release, in which I made the idea of creating a new product that would also contribute to miners who helped supply the manufacturing process. The purpose of the press release was to create newsworthy content about the release of my company’s new product. MacRae recommended using an attention-grabbing headline that would attract readers or viewers of that news source. This was one of the difficult genres for me to work with because I had to come up with a story that was newsworthy and had to avoid promotional language and act as the voice of the journalist. I used the AIDA techniques when writing both genres because its best used with persuasive documents (MacRae). These persuasive techniques include creating attention, interest, desire, and action for the audience.

At the end of the semester, I learned a lot more about the process of business which helped me add to my previous idea about it. I now realize that business writing not only means writing reports or proposals but is about time and efficiency creating a document that is both clear and concise in language. Each genre I worked with in this course used the concept of plain language or plain English. MacRae's techniques and concepts I used, including the 8 C's and AIDA, were helpful as well because it gave me more knowledge about the process of business writing. Also, creating a business and working out the details to put in each genre based on my business and the situations was very useful, being that I will have to work with similar genres and situations in the future.

Memo

Sharon's Jewels

To: Board of Directors
From: Elouise Hardwict, Co-Founder
Date: February 21, 2018
Subject: Information regarding Store Manager embezzling company funds
CC: Nicole, Co-Founder

Summary

On January 30, store manager Bill Edwards was caught embezzling company funds. Financial Officer Rachael Smith filed a police report against Mr. Edwards shortly after the discovery. He was then placed under investigation and questioned about the missing \$250,000. Mr. Edwards employment was terminated on February 10. The company is deciding whether to sue for reparation.

Details

At 12:30 am, on Wednesday January 30, Sharon's Jewels Financial Officer, Rachael Smith, was performing a scheduled routine audit of the company's financial statements. Among those recent statements was a large unknown withdrawal of \$50,000. She believed that this was the banks mistake and called to have them remove the error. National Bank explained that someone who was employed with Sharon's Jewels had made the withdrawal. The bank sent information of all the withdrawals this person had been making for the past 6 years. Sharon's Jewel's executive staff, Nicole and Elouise, were informed of the incident.

The bank statements revealed the employee had been removing small amounts of about \$2,500 monthly from the bank account since 2012. The total added up to about \$250,000. Ms. Smith's police report led to an investigation revealing that store manager Bill Edwards was able to get away with this because of the small amounts. This would make it seem as if the withdrawals were company expenses. Because Mr. Edwards was planning to quit, he wanted to take a large amount before quitting. After work hours, Mr. Edwards hacked into one of the company's systems to find files that obtained the company's financial information. This allowed him unauthorized access to make the withdrawals. The money was being placed in a market account with Bank of America

Mr., Edwards was found to be breaking numerous federal laws, company policies, and embezzling private company funds. The personal bank account that was being used to hold the stolen money has been closed and may be used as evidence if a lawsuit is filed. Mr. Edwards is still under investigation until further action is taken.

Action Taken

After the accident we took the following actions:

- A Financial Officer reviewed the bank statements and reported the incident
- When Mr. Edwards was found to be the employee committing the crime, he was immediately fired from the company
- The company conducted a thorough investigation on Mr. Edwards embezzling the \$250,000

Action Required

As the company's co-founder, I recommend the following:

- File a lawsuit and sue for reparations of \$250,000
- Review our company's financial security policies for better protection
- Invest in better security systems

Business Case – New Product Investment for Sharon’s Jewels

To: Board of Directors
From: Elouise Hardwict, Nicole Packowski Co-Founders
Date: March 11, 2018
Subject: Expanding Sharon’s Jewels product selection

SUMMARY OVERVIEW

Sharon’s Jewels currently manufactures and supplies a wide selection of jewelry set with stones to retailers nationwide. There is a demand in the jewelry market recently for the manufacturing of natural stone pendants, which we do not carry. Our plan to meet this demand is to buy 15,000 units of three types of stones including Moonstone, Rose-Quartz, and Amethyst, from a wholesaler at a discounted price. We propose an investment of approximately \$200,000 to allow Sharon’s Jewel’s to produce these pendants. Our projection indicates sales of these pendants will amount to a yearly profit of \$50,000.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Sharon’s Jewels manufactures a large quantity of precious jewelry. We provide services to a wide range of customers from local boutiques to high-end retailers, such as Tiffany & Company and Kay Jewelers. The demand for natural stone pendants is at an all-time high in the jewelry market. Therefore, we would like to introduce three natural stone pendants set with Moonstone, Rose Quartz, or Amethyst. A Brazilian jewelry wholesaler, Dango Stones, has offered us these stones at a discounted wholesale price. The pendants can be created at a very low cost and sold for a significant profit.

RATIONALE

The rationale for this proposal is for Sharon’s Jewels to enter the marketplace with a more unique and natural jewelry design. With our existing and new customers asking for such products, we expect a significant profit of \$50,000. We believe that Sharon’s Jewels will create a unique jewelry line by adding these new products.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

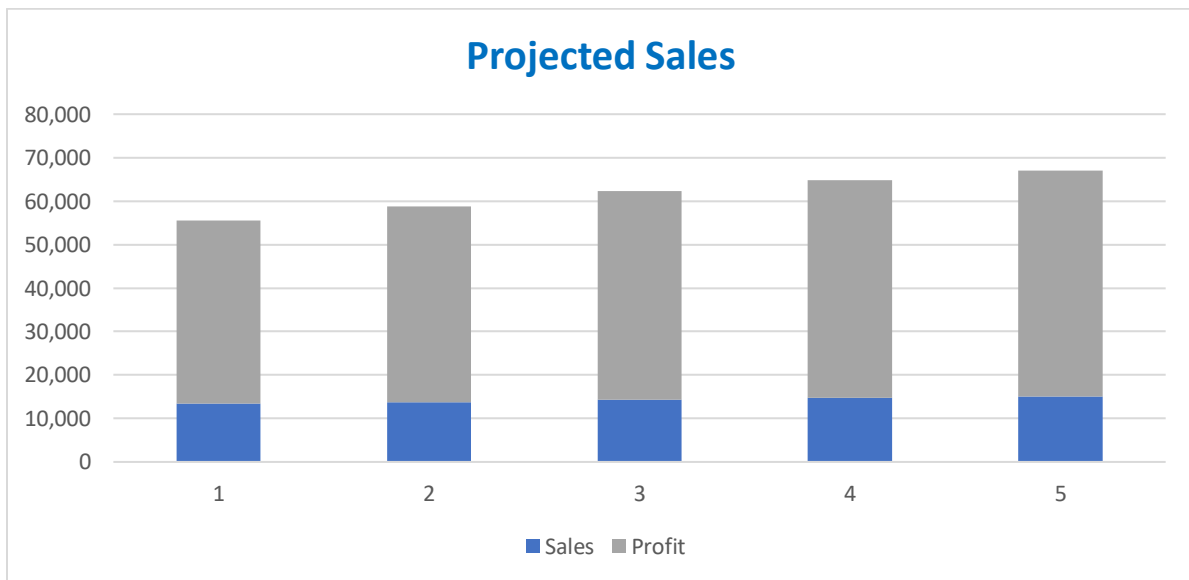
- To add more variety to our selections
- To bring in more customers with new merchandise
- To increase profit and sales of Sharon’s Jewels

ANALYSIS

Our marketing team has conducted a price analysis that shows the value of these pendants at market price, the price that we are buying, and our selling price.

Natural Stones Price Analysis			
	Market Price	Buying Price	Selling Price
Moonstone Per Stone	\$ 100.00	\$ 75.00	\$ 85.00
Rose Quartz Per Pound	\$ 25.00	\$ 18.00	\$ 22.00
Amethyst Per Carat	\$ 50.00	\$ 35.00	\$ 40.00

Sharon's Jewels plans to purchase a combination of 15,000 units of these stones at their discounted price from Dango Stones in Brazil. Our markup price will be between 10% and 20% of the buying price. Gaining us a profit of about \$50,000.



ADVANTAGES

This proposal has the following advantages:

- Offering more unique and natural jewelry
- Gaining new customers
- Earning higher yearly profits

DISADVANTAGES

There are some disadvantages:

- Adding additional manufacturing space
- Hiring specialized craftsmen

These obstacles have little to no impact in comparison to the potential profit of the proposal.

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that Sharon's Jewels begins production of these natural stone pendants as soon as possible. Our recommendation would be to buy from Dango Stones 15,000 stones to begin with. We will create these pendants by the end of the year to sell to our customers.

Sharon's Jewels

6800 Wydown Blvd
St. Louis, MO 63105
Contact: (314) 555-5555

March 31, 2018

Mrs. Alice Rodgers
XYZ Jewelry Store Manager
2124 St. Louis Galleria
Richmond Heights, MO 63117

Dear Mrs. Rodgers:

Subject: Request for price match on gold pendants

There is great pleasure in finding that perfect piece of jewelry to fit your style and personality. It is a piece of jewelry to keep for a lifetime.

You have requested that we match the price of Sharon's Jewels' signature gold pendants similar to pendants available at Custom Fashion Jewels.

Custom Fashion Jewels makes their \$90 gold pendant from stainless-steel plated in a thin layer of 10k gold. Sharon's Jewels crafts its \$150 pendants with 18k gold. Our gold pendants are made from pure gold to produce a more elegant and balanced pendant for the Amethyst, Moonstone, and Rose quartz stones to be set in. Our goal as a jewelry manufacturer is to serve you with the best quality jewelry.

We want you to be completely satisfied with your pendants. We do offer a line of less expensive 14k gold pendants that you might also like for \$100, and we'd be happy to exchange your pendants and refund the difference.

Our company provides some of the purest golds and silvers, and whichever pendant you choose, we will continue to provide you with the best service possible.

Sincerely,

Flouise Hardwict, Nicole Paczkowski

Co-Founders



Sharon's Jewels

April 22, 2018—FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sharon's Jewels Gives Miners a Share of Profits

CLAYTON, MO- Sharon's Jewels announced it plans to donate 10 percent of profits earned from its new line of natural stone pendants to Brazilian miners of the stones. The new line of natural stone pendants is set with Amethyst, Rose Quartz, or Moonstone.

"Everyone wants that perfect piece of jewelry to add to their style," said company president Stacey Smith. "We also want to give back to the miners who made this new line possible for the company and customers."

Miner in Brazil are known to be given low wages and work in poor conditions. Working with Dango Stones on this project, Sharon's Jewels is looking to give back to the community who helped make production of these pendants possible.

"Natural stones have become the latest trend in the jewelry industry for both men and women," said the company's co-founder Elouise Hardwrit. "With our new collection of stone pendants, jewelry lovers will have a natural and elegant piece of jewelry for any occasion and we will be able to fund better working conditions and wages for factory workers."

These natural stones were mined by Dango Stones from a mountain top in Brazil. The pendants range from 18k to 20k gold and rose gold and 925 sterling silver. These unique stone pendants can be bought at a reasonable price and Sharon's Jewels guarantees they will last a lifetime.

"I was surprised at how many compliments I received when wearing my pendant. Everyone comments on how unique they are. But it is also good to know my money went to a good cause," said Julie James, longtime customer.

"What a wonderful birthday gift. It's the best present ever," said Reagan Frino, a college student in New York.

Sharon's Jewels pendants can be purchased at Kay's Jewelers and Tiffany & Co locations. A 10 percent discount on any purchase will be given to those who mention this press release before May 30.

Elouise Hardwriet
6800 Wydown Blvd.
St. Louis, MO 63105

February 12, 2018

Ms. Aracelie Aguilar
Julian Electric
West 147th Street
Orland Park, IL 60462

Dear Ms. Aguilar:

Subject: Application for Accounting Clerk position

I am writing to highlight my interest in accounting and my abilities to performing the desired responsibilities related to the Accounting Clerk position at Julian Electric. I believe that I will be the ideal candidate for this position because of the dedication this company has to hire forward thinking and driven individuals.

My experience with previous internships, such as PWC LLP Accounting Firm, combined with my courses in accounting, has made me certain about the field of accounting as a career path. I have also taken part as a student member of the Missouri Society of Certified Public Accountants (MOCPA). I have gained experience through various courses and programs on computer software, such as Excel and Microsoft. These skills will be very useful to this position, along with my other experience.

I look forward to hearing from you about this interesting position, because I believe that Julian Electric can benefit from me as an employee and this will be a continued learning experience for myself. I am available to talk anytime, or at your convenience, so my contact information is listed below.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Elouise Hardwriet
hardwricte@fontbonne.edu
(314) 555-7578



Service +

Social Justice

Being A “S.T.A.R.”

A little over halfway into my first year at Fontbonne, I received an email from the Counseling and Wellness Department which stated I was nominated by faculty at Fontbonne to join S.T.A.R.S. Peer Listeners. I was slightly confused because I didn't know what this program was and why I was chosen as a potential candidate. So, I decided to do some research about this organization and what their purpose and mission was on campus. The acronym S.T.A.R.S. stands for Students Thinking and Acting Responsibly and Safely, and it is an on-campus student group that provides training and support to student advocates. These students gain knowledge about mental health and how they can reach out and help their fellow classmates. For example, this group organizes the Pet-a-Pup Day during mid-terms and finals week. After thinking about it, I decided to join, not only because it interested me, but because mental health is something people close to me deal with.

During the fall semester of 2018 I began my six-week training, along with other students in the program. We discussed and learned techniques about various topics in mental health including depression and anxiety, stress management, support and leadership skills, and many other issues students at Fontbonne may deal with. With every new topic we learned, we would role play situations similar to what a student may be experiencing to come up with strategies to help. I found this part of training very valuable because I sometimes find myself in a situation where a friend or any person in general is looking for advice and they do not know who to turn to for help. I now had resources and knowledge that could potentially be a benefit and a service to others. But, the most important piece of advice I learned during training was that it's not going to be easy for us to approach a person who needs help, if they think they do not need help.

The role I was able to have in the program made me aware of some of the problems a lot of students on campus were dealing with that I was not aware of. Some of them are far away from home and in a new environment they aren't familiar with, or some are just struggling with college and life. So, connecting with these students, listening to their problems, and finding ways to help them, was challenging and rewarding. Even though I was not the person to solve their problems, I could at least be someone who was able to help them get the help they needed. After the program ended, I believe I was more confident about myself being in a position that would service others because I know after college and in the work force, I'm going to be putting these skills and knowledge to good use.

An Idea For Change

If you think about it, most inspirational leaders and activists have an entrepreneurial aspect to them, which in their case, is social entrepreneurship. They see a problem in society that is not being met with a significant solution and their goal is to create one. A class I took last semester was based on this aspect of entrepreneurship. We spent the entire semester creating our own nonprofit businesses that would meet the needs of a societal problem. I am a person who believes that everyone deserves the right to a proper education, no matter where they come from. So, this was the perfect opportunity for me to take a deeper look into the education system, not just nationally but internationally, and solve an issue I felt was being overlooked.

My research led me to an issue that I never would have thought was a major problem, especially here in the United States. There are seven million students in America who suffer from some sort of disability, but the most surprising part was that 34 percent of those students suffer from specific disabilities that are not immediately apparent to others. These disorders are ADHD or Dyslexia. I felt strongly about this because many of these disabilities go unacknowledged and the students suffer. In my research, the issue pertained to a lack of resources that would help accommodate these students so they can succeed academically. My idea was to start a nonprofit organization that would create an audiobook learning system for students who suffer from these disabilities. Volunteers, such as educators or anyone who has a passion for helping others, would record the audiobooks and each student would have their own tailored learning system. There are other nonprofit organizations who have taken the initiative to address the issue, but it was much fewer than I had thought.

I was glad that I made the rest of my class aware of this problem. I think for most people they get the idea that they must do something extraordinary to be involved, but simply becoming aware and help spreading information is the first step in moving forward towards a solution. I don't see myself as the type of person to be at the forefront of a social movement, but I am the type of person who likes to get involved from time to time when I feel an issue is not getting the awareness it needs. I hope I can help make people aware of more issues like this in the future and maybe even contribute towards a solution.

Here is a quote from my research conducted by UNESCO to help promote the human right to proper education:

“If all students in low income communities and countries left school with basic reading skills, 171 million people could be lifted out of poverty, which is equivalent to a 12 percent cut in world poverty.”