

My Summer at Eden House

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Rachel Cline newcomb@tulane.edu

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Hi everyone! My name is Rachel Cline, and I am a junior (rising senior) at Tulane University. I study Art History with a minor in Cell and Molecular Biology, while on the pre-med track. At Tulane, I am a DJ at the Tulane Radio Station, WTUL. I also serve as the budget director for Women and Youth Supporting Each Other, also known as WYSE. WYSE is a mentorship-based after-school program that provides middle school girls in New Orleans with the knowledge and resources they need to live healthy, informed lives through sessions based on sex education, mental health, consent, healthy body image, and so much more.

This summer, I am excited to be serving Eden House as a resident support intern. Eden House is a non-profit organization in New Orleans, Louisiana, that provides shelter, community, and advocacy for women who are in recovery from being trafficked and/or sexually exploited. Additionally, Eden House offers sex trafficking prevention education and outreach through its Recognizing Exploitation and Advancing Life (R.E.A.L.) Choices program. This program aims to help members of the New Orleans community identify, prevent, and resist human trafficking, sexual exploitation, and gender-based violence.

As a resident support intern, I will be responsible for driving or accompanying residents to appointments, meetings, or other events; planning and implementing resident activities; and supporting the clinical staff at Eden House with programming needs. Though my experience as a resident support intern, I hope to accomplish the following five objectives:

1. To identify at least three specific and realistic steps that can be taken to advocate for victims of sexual exploitation.
2. To develop a better understanding of how human trafficking and sexual exploitation effects women in the New Orleans area, which will be summarized in a brief report at the end of the internship.
3. To identify aspects that make women vulnerable to sexual exploitation, and steps that can be taken to prevent the sexual exploitation of women in the New Orleans area.
4. To identify at least three specific ways that the knowledge and skills that I have acquired during this internship can be applied to a career in women's healthcare.
5. To formulate a new activity for the young women in the R.E.A.L choices program, and to integrate this activity into the R.E.A.L. choices curriculum.

I believe that that this internship is inherently intertwined with NCI's mission to prepare women for leadership, empower women through teaching, research, and community engagement, and disseminating knowledge about women. I believe that Eden House fosters an environment for both its residents and its interns that allow women to achieve these goals. Eden House is an organization created by women and for women, much like NCI.

At Eden House, I will be able to learn from and collaborate with the women leaders who comprise Eden House's staff and Board of Directors. Through working with these women, I will have the potential to learn new leadership skills and more about what it means to be both a leader and an advocate amongst women. As a resident support intern, I will be able to collect knowledge on the sexual exploitation of women in our community and learn how to best support victims in their journey to healing. Through assisting with the R.E.A.L. Choices program, I will be able to extend my knowledge gathered through this internship to young women in order to help prevent the sexual abuse and dehumanization of women in our community.

I am also an aspiring gynecologist: through working directly with residents, listening to survivors' stories, and gaining a better understanding of their backgrounds, I will be able to gain the skills and knowledge that will allow me to practice as a physician who not only understands and empathizes with her patients but also serves as their advocate. I also hope to collaborate with the physicians that comprise Eden House's clinical team to learn more about what it means to be a woman in the medical field.

I can't wait to begin my internship at Eden House: I am filled to the brim with excitement. To prepare for this internship, I have been researching stories of women who have been subjected to sex trafficking in order to gain a better perspective on how women are affected by sexual exploitation. Though I know that working with residents can be emotionally taxing work, I am excited to know that I can be a contributing factor to their journey to healing, recovering, and becoming empowered after a traumatic experience.