

Project RETURN

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Helping men and women leaving prison make a positive and permanent return to our community.

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You can now make online donations to Project RETURN. To make a donation, visit our website at www.projectreturnmilwaukee.org

Project RETURN's 8th Annual Golf Outing to be held June 9, 2016

If you are like me, the recent unseasonably warm weather has got you thinking about your golf game. In just a few short months Project RETURN will be hosting our 8th Annual Golf Outing. We have been blessed to see this event grow every year.

This year's event will again be held at Western Lakes Golf Club (W287 N1963 Oakton Road) in Pewaukee, WI. The event will start at 8:00 am with a shotgun start with a meal to follow catered by Saz's.

Donation of \$100/person includes:

- Golf Fees with Cart
- Catered Buffet Lunch
- Locker Room Facilities Available
- Driving Range Opens at 7:00 am
- Prizes & Golf Awards
- Par 3 events
- Continental Breakfast
- Beer & Soda sold on the Course
- Raffle Prizes to be Won

If you are interested in registering a foursome please fill out this form and send your check payable to Project RETURN in the enclosed envelope. We hope to see you there!

Golfer #1: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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Golfer #3: _____

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City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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Golfer #4: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____



Spring, 2016



Marquette University <> Project Return

Internship Program

Ed de St. Aubin

Marquette Psychology Department Faculty Member

Project RETURN Board of Directors

Director of the Internship Program

If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time.
But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine,
then let us work together. - **Lilla Watson**

I am reminded of this well-known quote often when working with the Marquette University students who are part of the Project RETURN internship program this academic year. It hints at three related set of dynamics that are essential to the internship experience.

First, it addresses the connection between charity and social justice. The author is saying "I don't want your *charity* but let's work together for *social justice*". Project RETURN works towards both and the interns get to witness this distinction. Charity helps people directly with an immediate need that is typically a symptom of systemic injustice, such as hunger or the need for a place to sleep and live. A major part of Project RETURN's mission is to meet such needs of those released from prison. The staff works diligently at this every day. Social justice work, on the other hand, attempts to change those institutions and social structures that lead to inequity. It attempts to prevent the need from occurring in the first place. Helping a person recently released find a meal that evening is charity but working politically to "ban the box" (the question on job applications where one must mark if they were convicted of a felony) is social justice work. It prevents future discrimination. Project RETURN has become involved in many social justice issues such as race-based incarceration, solitary confinement, alternatives to prison, at risk youth prevention, and reducing the prison population. The mentors guide the interns in both charity and social justice efforts. Ideally, the latter would eliminate the need for the former.

Second, the quote captures the reciprocal nature of all relationships. The author tells us we are all bound together – and can learn from one another. Yes, the interns are there to learn from the mentors but the mentors are also transformed by the interns. And, if they approach it correctly, the interns are also changed by the clients. It may be that the sociocultural backgrounds of the interns and clients are quite different, but there is a common humanity that binds them. And the clients often possess attributes, such as resilience or persistence, that are inspiring.

Finally, the quote reminds me of MLK's "if America is to remain a first-class nation, it cannot have second-class citizens" in that the message is that we **all** benefit when we work towards a society defined by justice and egalitarianism. Even those living with great privilege lack a truly ideal life as long as there are others in society who experience oppression. It captures the reality that a solid moral compass demands that we work towards a society that does not provide differential opportunities based on race, ethnicity, sex, gender, or faith. The interns witness injustice and begin to see how closely all our lives are linked. All lives are made better when lived in a context of justice. A life is cheapened if one lives in a place where others are denied a clear path to one's full potential. No truly moral person could passively live in a place where the dreams of certain types of people are forever deferred.

All three messages from the quote – distinguishing charity from justice, the reciprocal nature of relationships, and the need for all to work toward a just society – are at the very marrow of what the interns are doing each day at Project RETURN. I am grateful that the interns work so hard to meet the mission of Project RETURN. I'm also grateful for the mentorship of their onsite supervisors, each of who is dedicated to helping the interns receive authentic field experience. Finally, I am grateful that I get to witness and guide this amazing set of experiences and relationships.



Kirstin Mathers

Majors in Psychology & Spanish, Junior
 I am interested mental health and how it affects the individual. There are a myriad of characteristics that makes everyone unique. It is interesting to see how various situations have an influence as well. I had never heard about Project RETURN until I heard the news that they were looking for interns. I did some research on the organization and was instantly intrigued. The prison population is one that often goes unnoticed and suffers from a lack of help. I thought it would be interesting to learn more about mental illness within this population, and ultimately this population as a whole. When ex-offenders return to society, they are left with virtually nothing, and no one. It is our duty to help them in all aspects of life. At Project RETURN, I work with Wendel, the executive director. I go on many trips with him to various prisons and outings in order to tell people about Project RETURN and the various obstacles that ex-offenders face on the outside. I work on many projects such the newsletters, pamphlets, posters, editing, research, and working with walk-in clients. I also helped put together many aspects of our annual Celebrate the Return Gala. These efforts are centered on increasing support for ex-offenders and reducing the chance of recidivism. Project RETURN has taught me more about life than I had imagined possible, and about issues that I had not even realized existed. Every day prisoners suffer from untreated mental illness. Every day ex-offenders are getting re-admitted into prisons. Every day ex-offenders have a stigma to face and falsify. Every day ex-offenders and prisoners both are left feeling hopeless. These experiences I have had and the stories I have heard I will always carry with me. My goal is to one day go to graduate school for Clinical Psychology, and eventually own my own practice. I want to help underprivileged populations any way that I can and decrease the stigma that is associated with ex-offenders, and ultimately mental health in general.

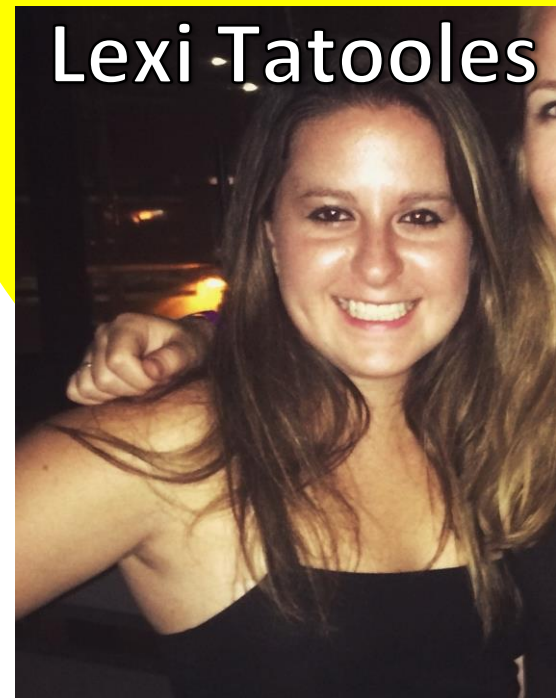
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Major in Psychology, Minors in Criminology & Law Studies, Senior
 My interests include learning about the effects of mental illnesses and how they affect different populations, cultures, as well as their cognitive, physiological, and behavioral affects towards individuals.

I became very interested in Project RETURN because I really wanted to learn about the prison population and system as well as the integration aspect of it as well. I also wanted to examine the different mental health problems that can surface from either being in prison or from returning to society.

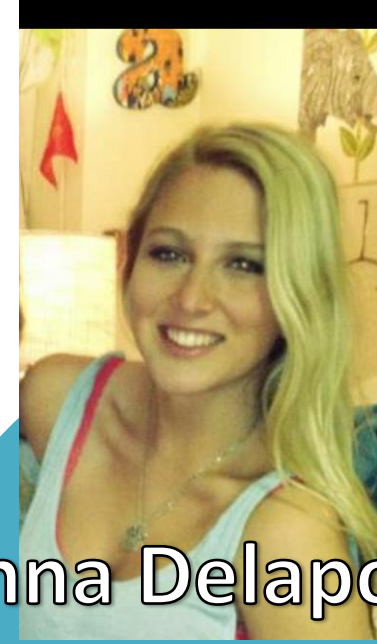
I currently work closely with Teri Woodley and my roles consist of many responsibilities such as creating job and housing lists as well as contacting previous clients and updating their files. We are also in the beginning phases of organizing a Parental class so that parents can come in and learn the tools they need for either reconnecting with their children since being released or learning maternal responsibilities as well. I also have had the opportunity to attend prisons in the Wisconsin area to talk to inmates about the resources that Project Return has and to build community outreach.

I am currently applying to graduate school to achieve my goal of obtaining a Masters in Social Work. My career goal is to work with stigmatized populations who have historically had difficulty in obtaining mental health resources. My experiences at Project Return have prepared me for this because the prison population is a severely stigmatized population and one that I hope to work with as well. There are many marginalized populations who do not have the resources in order to absolve their mental illnesses and I hope to reduce this problem.



Lexi Tatoes

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Anna Delaporte

Major in Psychology, Minors in Criminology & Law Studies, Senior

My interests include learning about mental health and the stigma that surrounds it. Including how self and societal stigma affects those from seeking proper mental health treatment. My other, non-academic interests include running, hiking, seeing a good movie and eating good food at great restaurants.

I wanted to work at Project RETURN because I have always been fascinated with the prison population and previously incarcerated individuals. I wanted to not only learn more about these individuals and the system but I also wanted to see first hand how the re-entry process works and help in any way that I can. I also was very interested to see how prison and the re-entry process can affect mental health. I currently work with Brian Osei and I have had the opportunity of helping clients complete their resumes and apply to jobs, creating job lists made for specific individuals and contacting old clients and updating their files. More recently, Brian and I have started a long-term project aligning all of his past client's convictions into the database, making sure all the prior convictions are uploaded. When that is finished we will develop a spreadsheet showing the number of individuals helped in each category according to conviction and which type of jobs they were able to get. These statistics will help future clients, to be able to compare their convictions with past clients to show them the types of jobs they were able to secure. I have also had to opportunity of traveling to prisons and race relations panels in statewide.

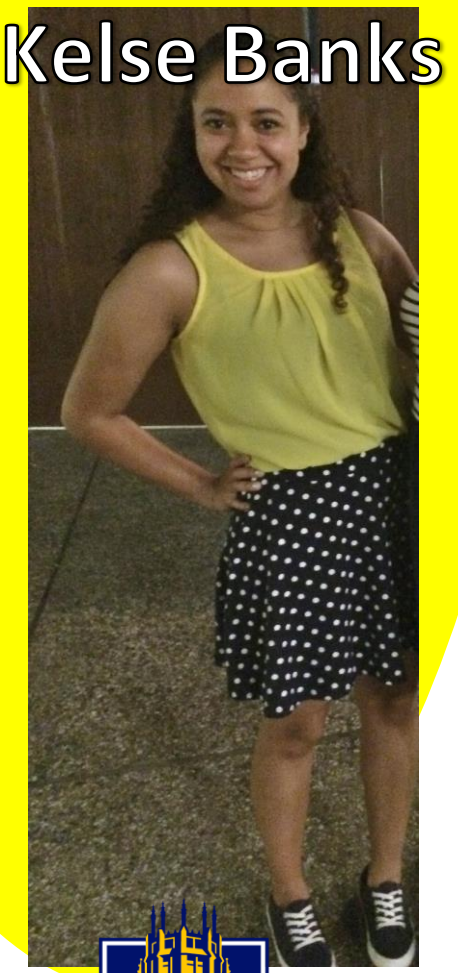
After graduation I plant to attend graduate school to pursue my Masters in Social Work, in the hopes to one day become a licensed clinical social worker, working with stigmatized adults who have serious and persistent mental illness.

Majors in Criminology Law Studies and Psychology

I wanted to work with Project RETURN because I wanted to have the opportunity to help those that had been through the system to get back on their feet.

I work with Andre Brown at Project Return and together we work to help find opportunities for clients. Whether it be calling past clients to see if they are in need of further assistance or actively searching for jobs within the community for clients.

I will be graduating from Marquette in May and from there I will be headed off to Law School. My plan is to take what I have learned from the experiences at Project Return and bring them to my classes in Law School. There are many flaws within system and I hope that I can, with other students, bring them to light in my classrooms and work toward fixing these problems.



Kelse Banks



MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY