

Communication Firebrand-ing at the Pauli Murray Center in Durham

Duke

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Pauli Murray Center for History and Social Justice – funding from the Angier B. Duke Memorial Scholarship

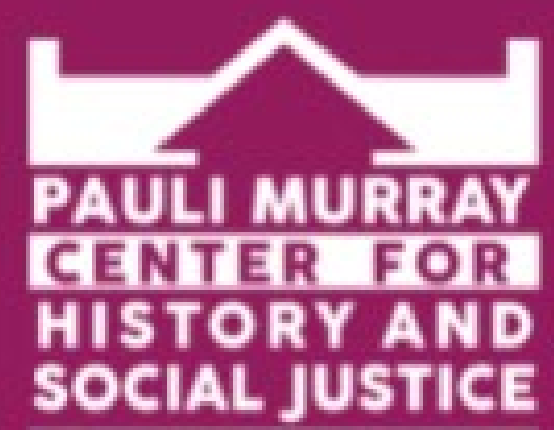
Introduction

During the summer of 2021, I was looking for an opportunity to explore work in the nonprofit sector for the first time. I had heard positive reviews about the Pauli Murray Center for History and Social Justice's work in public history (specifically the walking tours of Durham that they offer) and public art (especially the murals of the Rev. Dr. Pauli Murray they had commissioned throughout the city of Durham), and I had several friends who had previously held work-study jobs at the center in various capacities and stated that it was a positive working environment. Based on this information, when I saw the center had listed an opportunity to become one of its inaugural Communication Firebrand interns, I immediately applied.

The Center offered a stipend for my work, but it was not enough to live on. The support of the Angier B. Duke Memorial Scholarship permitted me to remain in Durham, the physical home of the Center, for the duration of my summer working remotely.

What is the Pauli Murray Center?

The Pauli Murray Center for History and Social Justice is dedicated to lifting up the legacy of the Rev. Dr. Pauli Murray, a twentieth-century human rights activist, legal scholar, feminist, poet, Episcopal priest, labor organizer, and multiracial Black, LGBTQ+ community member of transmasculine experience. The Center offers programming in history, education, arts, and activism and is rooted in the neighborhood housing the Rev. Dr. Murray's childhood home in Durham.



Responsibilities

The following were my core responsibilities in the Communication Firebrand role:

- Completed orientation materials, including a selection of reading materials by and about the Rev. Dr. Pauli Murray
- Initiated social media campaigns that focused on public history and social justice
- Led the production of the monthly newsletter
- Promoted PMCHSJ and affiliates' events
- Worked with nonprofits with similar values on joint programming and social media campaigns
- Created and implemented a personal development plan
- Attended weekly staff meetings
- Communicated and worked with fellow team members, including fellow remote interns

Key Accomplishments

I enjoyed the diverse array of tasks I was able to perform throughout my time at the Pauli Murray Center. Some of my favorite accomplishments were reading the entirety of the Rev. Dr. Murray's autobiography *Song in a Weary Throat* and the majority of their family history *Proud Shoes*; working with my fellow intern Kristen on strategic collaborations with organizations including Black Woman Radicals and the Resource Center for Women and Ministry in the South; and organizing the digital archives of files including the records pertaining to Fitzgerald Cemetery (a historically Black cemetery in Durham where several members of Dr. Murray's family are buried), the Rev. Dr. Murray's sermons, and some of their legal scholarship. I also enjoyed watching the recent film *My Name is Pauli Murray*, about the Rev. Dr. Murray's life and work, and promoting it across the Pauli Murray Center's Instagram and Facebook platforms.

Takeaways

I am taking away from this summer a deeply enhanced knowledge of Durham history and geography, all generated from my contact with the extraordinary life of Pauli Murray, a person whose legacy I'm very grateful to have, in a small way, participated in. I'm also taking with me a set of practical digital skills (social media campaigns and analytics, Squarespace, record-keeping) which seem applicable across a wide range of future endeavors. Finally, thanks both to the reading my supervisor assigned during my personal development sessions and to informational interviews I conducted with PMC staff and affiliates, I now have knowledge to draw on about the structure and history of nonprofits, which will inform my future career choices and the moves I make more broadly.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my direct supervisor at the PMC, Sophia Ross-Hurtado, for being accommodating and welcoming even across the digital distance, and for helping me to learn more about nonprofits; my fellow interns, X, Kaidyn, and Kristen, for the opportunity to share space and collaborate; Barbara Lau, the PMC's director, for being a mentor and neighbor; Beth Weiss and Black Women Radicals for the informational interviews; and OUSF for making my internship possible.