



Mission Southside 2019 Summer Interns Maria Bocanegra, Jesus Molina, Nick Wagoner, and Frankie Skinner

Below are some stories from the interns compiled from Ministry Letters they sent out in the middle of the summer. God is at work in and through these young hearts!

Jesus Molina

I'd like to tell you a little bit of God's goodness in my life this summer. I had the humbling opportunity to work with Mission Southside as a summer intern and let me tell you it was the most blessed experience



I've ever had. The largest part of my internship included working with a group of kids grades 7-9 in a program for under-resourced communities called Leaders in Training (LIT). They quickly became some of my favorite and most beloved people. Since I attend college in Kansas and I'm originally from North Dakota, my closest family members are a cool 12-hour drive away from me. With the absence of my immediate family, these kids became part of my extended family. All ten of them. We drew so close together that the kids have come to know me as "Padre" which of course means father. Truthfully they grew to be more like brothers and sisters to me and that is something I am eternally grateful for. There's one instance I remember vividly when we took the kids on our annual canoe trip and one of our two boys, Ruben, and I had a defining connecting moment. On our first night there, Ruben and I helped lead worship and after

we all finished singing and praising, Ruben sat down next to me in front of the fire and said, "I hope I get to have more moments like this. They don't come often." I had the privilege of mentoring Ruben

through LIT and after that trip he and I have gotten closer than I would have ever guessed. He has a story that would break your heart to pieces, but his enthusiasm and his big heart wouldn't lead you to think that. Through this program, I, along with the other amazing interns that are involved with Mission Southside, have been able to impact the lives of kids like Ruben through mentorship and faith. Putting God at the center of everything we do has not only given the kids a new perspective, but me as well.

Nick Wagoner

I would like to share an amazing story about a little man who I came to learn to love as my little brother. In the first couple weeks of my internship, the interns and LIT students split up into two groups,



embarking on a mission to bring the Gospel story to a multitude of apartment complexes throughout the Olathe area, called Backyard Bible Clubs. The last location my team went to each day, Reyes apartments, was one of my favorites. These apartments were so special because of one little dude named Omar. Right off the bat, I began playing soccer with Omar, for that was his favorite sport. What brought Omar and me together so quickly was how similar we were. Sports has always been a huge part of my life,

and Omar loved sports, and he was also the most competitive kid I had ever met. In anything we did or played, Omar was out to beat me. This five-year-old had no fear of any bigger kids that were older, faster, or stronger. He always played with the mentality that he was going to win, which is exactly how I am as well, whether it be in sports, academics, or my walk with Christ.

After that week of Backyard Bible Clubs, I found myself sad that I would not see Omar on a more consistent basis, but I was so grateful I was able to start such a strong bond with him and his parents. However, God was not through with our story. That next week was the start of a night sponsored by Mission Southside called Sports night. Sports night is an extremely fun night of games and getting to know more kids. And sure enough, the first night of the event, Omar found me and ran up to me and we picked up right where we left off, only this time Omar brought his whole family, and I got to meet his cousins: Marily, Yarely, and Diego. The coming sports nights were the same, and it soon became the night I looked forward to the most every week. As I continue to get to know Omar and his family, I see how God is working in their lives. How, even though they love sports, they also look forward to listening and discussing the Bible stories that are shared throughout all the events put on by Mission Southside. And our story does not just stop there. We have also made steps in allowing Omar and me to continue to grow in our friendship, and I am hoping to continue to disciple him and watch him grow. Thanks to Mission Southside, I have had a summer, a memory, and a friendship I will never forget.

Maria Bocanegra

There is one specific moment this summer that I think will impact me for the rest of my life. I am a huge music person and love to share that with everyone I encounter. I was able to share my love of music



with the LIT kids this summer and have seen so much fruit be produced from it. I decided that 'Nothing I Hold Onto' was going to be the song I really wanted to focus on this summer. Some of the lyrics include: "I lean not on my own understanding; my life is in the hands of the maker of heaven. I give it all to you God, trusting that you'll make something beautiful out of me." We sang this on one of the first days we met and it truly stuck with the kids. At Living Waters, the canoe trip we all get to go on, we had a bonfire and the kids initiated singing this song. It brought the biggest smile to my face, and still brings tears to my eyes because they knew all of the lyrics by heart. A simple song with four lines in it made such a huge impact on them and it is incredible to think what more can impact them.

Another thing that has really impacted me is just being able to become family with the kids. I would one million percent give up my life for those kids. I don't know if they will ever understand how much they really mean to me, but I am so excited to continue being a part of their journey in life. Those kiddos are my lifelong friends and I'm thankful for a place like Mission Southside that allows the

opportunity to be extra intentional with God's people.

I would like to ask again for your prayers as God is enlarging my heart and as I continue to serve many less fortunate. Being at Mission Southside has confirmed my call to ministry once again, and I am look forward to being able to do this kind of thing for the rest of my life. I am so lucky to be a part of their story, and if you ever feel like hearing more about it or want to help this organization out in any way at all, please reach out to me, I would love to be a connection and help you be a part of their story too. God is doing big things in the community and in people's lives.

Frankie Skinner

A sweet story I would love to share happened near Camdenton, MO at Living Waters Canoe Ministry. All of the interns, the Leaders in Training (LIT) and a few staff members packed up in two vans and made



our way to the river for a canoe trip. Before we even left for the canoe trip, Craig, a staff member at MSS, prayed over our group. He prayed for a trip that would bond us and he specifically prayed Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 which says “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.” And boy

oh boy did we see this come to life. We stayed the night on the campsite, had a worship session by the fire, shared meals together, woke up the next morning and started out on the adventure. I was placed into the canoe with a girl I mentored, which was great for our friendship. However, about 30 minutes into the trip, we got stuck on a tree and tipped our canoe, so some of the guides got off their kayaks and canoes to help us out. Along the way, many people tipped, got stuck on trees and had some stressed filled moments. On top of these intense experiences, it was storming. It was windy, raining and the temperature began to drop. At several stops, we would gather in a group and pray. In words, I cannot express the amount of stress many of us were feeling during this trip, but being able to cry out to God for His provision, protection and hand in the whole situation was of great comfort. At one point, a fourth of the group got separated from us. We all got out of our canoes and waited patiently yet very intently for them. It was a scary moment not knowing where they were and if they were ok, but it was also a special moment because I realized how much I cared about all of these people. We were all wrapped in these foil-like blankets with one another, trying to stay warm and it reminded me of Ecclesiastes 4:9-two are better than one, always. These people had become more than people I interned with or kids I spent most of my summer with, they were my family.

Before this trip, these kids were people I enjoyed to be around, people that made me laugh, but after this intense trip, we bonded. Bonded in faith, friendship, in trust, and in communication. The shift even was seen on the car ride back and in our everyday schedule. We now hug each other when we walk in the door, we are more vulnerable with one another, we trust each other deeper in various situations, we communicate more and we have become each other’s family. I am extremely grateful for God’s provision of “family” and bonding experiences that turned from stressful events into memories.