Interns come from as far as Italy, state of Washington

INTERNSHIP from A1

of special programs at MCLA, I learned that it wasn’t a normal internship — we’d have classes, outings and the opportunity to meet with the executive directors and managing directors of nonprofit institutions,” she said, during an interview at MCLA Gallery 51 where she worked for DownStreet Art. “I researched North Adams and found that I had a great opportunity to come to an area that is growing in the arts. I also found that it was the home of Mass MoCA, which is very famous for its contemporary art.”

Besides being placed in cultural institutions around the county, the program, which runs as a 12-week summer program, offers an intense experience to its participants — requiring the students to participate in class readings once a week, go on cultural outings and attend “talk back” sessions led by arts administrators from across the county.

This summer — in addition to four MCLA students and others from across the commonwealth — B-HIP also attracted students from the states of Indiana, Connecticut, Virginia and Washington. They are serving internships across the Berkshires, including the Williamsstown Theatre Festival, Shakespeare & Company, The Clark and the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center.

Growing up in Italy, Caruso said she was surrounded by great masterpieces, but found that Europeans very rarely engage the community with art.

“I’m very interested in contemporary art, both visual and performance art,” she said. “While I was here, I had the opportunity to go to Jacob’s Pillow three times and see some very young dancers and choreographers perform some very innovative contemporary art.

As part of her internship, Caruso was tasked with coordinating the nonprofit DownStreet Art, which has been overseen by the college for the last three years and will fall under the auspices of Develop North Adams in the future.

“I worked on the program — the communications and marketing aspects, putting together the map and the postcards,” she said. “I also was in charge of the web content and social media sites.”

As a special project, Caruso, who spent two years working at a nonprofit in Italy, helped Secor develop a fundraising and cultural strategic plan for DownStreet.

“There were a lot of ideas,” she said. “I really enjoyed being here. There’s a great creative community full of artists and craftsmen.”

Before completing her internship and heading home to Milan, Caruso has one final task — representing DownStreet Art at the Solid Sound Festival at Mass MoCA.

“I’m hoping to come back to the United States to work or perhaps participate in another training program,” she said. This has been such a great opportunity. The Berkshires is my first experience in the United States — people tell me I need to see the cities too. I want to see more of the country, but I’m happy that I came here first. I was surprised by all the landscape and where it was, because usually cultural institutions are all in big cities. There are so many here and so many different types.

For more information or to apply for this program, go to www.mcla.edu/bhip or contact Valeria Federici, program coordinator of MCLA’s Berkshire Cultural Resource Center, at (413) 663-5255 or via e-mail at Valeria.Federici@mcla.edu.

To reach Jennifer Huberdeau, e-mail phuberdeau@northtranscript.com.