Hancock Shaker Village

provide a detailed documentation of the lives, needs, beliefs and resources underlying the placement of every foundation, the orientation of every window and the breadth of every beam. For graduate students, this living record affords ample opportunities to learn about building conservation, structural and mechanical systems, preservation methods, research methodology and nineteenth century building traditions. As a museum, our purpose is to help engender interest in preservation and sustainability," says Spear. "We need to help foster love and caring of places like Hancock Shaker Village in the next generation."

Hip to Arts

The innovative B-HIP program, an initiative out of the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) Berkshire Cultural Resource Center in North Adams, Mass., takes the idea of hands-on career sampling, workforce training and regional assets for learning one step further. B-HIP harnesses the needs and the resources of the Berkshire cultural scene to create a program where students from across the country can spend the summer interning at the region's top-notch performance, publishing and visual arts institutions, learning the ropes of arts management and spending what MCLA director of special programs Jonathan Secor calls a "cultural immersion, day and night, in the Berkshire's rich cultural scene."

"I'm a huge proponent of real life experience, of hands-on learning," says Secor. "B-HIP is about getting out there, and doing it, and learning from those that really do it well."

The B-HIP program is unique—and powerful—in pairing well-prepared intern applicants with positions where their skills are of real service, and in which the intern and the non-profit they serve are well matched in terms of interests and skill base.

Most notable, the program functions holistically. B-HIP interns divide their time between their internship and in-class courses at MCLA. On the job, they learn about arts management skills including development, marketing, education, programming and more. They unite once a week for the in-class opportunity to absorb, analyze and share what they've learned, and also engage in "Talk Backs" with professionals in the field, who give great deal as well. Secor explains, "In the late '80s, there was a general perception that there was need for a local supply of arts management interns." Those intern were being recruited in major cities and brought into the area. B-HIP provides a homegrown answer. "We're providing a hard-working, interested, educated work force," he says. "In the immediate, these institutions are getting great arts administration for 12 weeks at a fraction of what it might cost. In the long term, they get a work force." At least 24 past interns have stayed in the area following completion of their degrees, contributing the skills they have gained locally on a permanent basis. Secor begins to list them all: young, energetic, highly trained staff now working at Clark Art Institute, at Berkshire Creative, at Mass MoCA, at Community Access to the Arts, at Jacob's Pillow... "At this point," he concludes, "it's almost harder to find an institution that doesn't have a B-HIP alum..."

Education pioneer Maria Montessori wrote, "...education is a natural process carried out by the human individual, and is acquired not by listening to words, but by experiences in the environment." When schools open the doors to learning in this way, the potential for learning becomes as wide as the world beyond. On both sides, the sharing of new ideas and fresh insights have proven beneficial to teacher, student and community alike.

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