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Columbia Public Schools Foundation

Progress Report 1

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#### A. Summary

Working with the Columbia Public Schools Foundation is definitely a new experience for me. As a Secondary English Education major, I have a lot of experience in the classroom, student teaching and observing. I also interned this past summer as a teacher for underprivileged children in Kansas City. Although the Columbia Public Schools Foundation main goal is for the betterment of students and educational institutions, it's the complete opposite of what I have worked with.

My job as an intern with CPSF is to evaluate current donor development structure for the purpose of identifying improvements and enhancing technology leverage, investigate and propose revisions/improvements for the donor development system and present recommendations to Foundation Finance Committee and Board of Directors. These past two weeks I have been researching non-for-profit organizations, researching what it means to be a non-for-profit organization and ultimately look for ways to increase our donations for the public schools in Columbia. I have also been meeting a lot with the CPSF Board of Directors Finance Chair, Cheryl Edington. She has been showing me how to keep records of donors, ways to "ask" for money without necessarily "asking," and finally how to use excel and stay organized.

My job is split up into two different positions. On one hand, I am the Fund Developer, in which I have been researching the non-for-profit organizations, the improvement of social media marketing for CPSF and ways to receive money for CPSF; the other hand I am the

Administrative Intern. As the Administrative Intern I am working hand in hand with the finance chair, Cheryl.

## B. Personal Learning and Professional Development

One of the main things I have learned these past two weeks is how crucial time management is. I have never been extremely organized until I began this internship. My supervisor, Sarah Read has done an amazing job at teaching me how to successfully write in an agenda and plan ahead. Working in such a professional atmosphere has opened my eyes to a “real-world” life. I say this because as a college student, we are kind of still living a “care-free” life. We don’t really have to worry too much about our professionalism (unless we are going to an interview) or our image. I am grateful that this job has taught me the meaning of professionalism so that I can begin to apply this to my life now.

Another thing I have learned is how to take responsibility for my actions instead of making excuses for them. The third day of work, I was late because the shuttle from my house was late. I should’ve called Sarah instead of just assuming he would be okay with me being late. When telling her my reason for being late, she told me that it was an excuse and not a valid reason. She then went on telling that I could’ve taken an earlier shuttle instead of waiting until the last one. Although at the time I thought she was being too harsh, looking back on it, I am actually glad that she held me accountable for my actions and I will not be late again.

Lastly, I have a new appreciation for non-for-profit organizations and as a result it has made me want to look into starting my own. I never realized how important these organizations are to our community, our schools and businesses. The Columbia Public Schools Foundation’s goals are to enhance academic excellence in the public schools by providing funding not

available through public sources, expanding learning opportunities for all our children, stimulating creativity and innovation, enrich the schools' basic curriculum and also encouraging community and business involvement in the public schools. This is absolutely incredible. They are raising money for schools without any reimbursement, acknowledgement or praise; simply out of the kindness of their heart. I am so honored to be here working with them.

### C. Community Issues and Challenges

The Columbia Public Schools Foundation serves the public school district here in Columbia. It is extremely important because community tax dollars barely cover "fixed overhead" – salaries, benefits, utilities, etc., there are few dollars left to invest in innovative materials, experiences and other necessary programs that contribute towards an excellent public school system. CPSF's philosophy is that every child needs a strong foundation. Created for Columbia's youth, CPSF supports quality programs that directly and positively impact student learning. CPSF is an independent, not-for-profit organization governed by a board of directors. Volunteers represent community members, business professionals, educators and parents; established to collect and distribute contributions from individuals, businesses, and organizations.

One of the biggest challenges we have faced so far is trying to convince local businesses that this is a great way to give back to their community. I know the economy is bad and people are on tight budgets, but I would give my last dollar to a school in need. Essentially, they are the people who help these schools, their children, succeed in these schools. Without them, we wouldn't have money to give to the schools. As the economy becomes more and more unstable, I notice that school's funding is being affected the most. Organizations like CPSF help schools; but it's in the community's hands as well.

### D. Reflections on Leadership

One of the tasks of leadership that I have experienced on my site is envisioning goals. This isn't just the most important task, but also very essential to any organization. Sarah, my supervisor, told me the goals and timelines of these goals on the first day of work. I started the job understanding the plan and vision for the organization. Another task she established is the