
THE
WITNESS

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We would like to thank Kathryn Owings, Lynn Baumgart and Dale Godfrey for the photos throughout this issue.

Cover courtesy of Dale Godfrey

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2019 Interns Belize

Once again, the Lord blessed us in so many ways.
We watched each one of the interns step out of their comfort
zones, stretch and grow. May we continue to keep our eyes
focused on Him, to love, serve and share
The Book of Mormon.

Lynn & Sugar Baumgart

We Walked Among Them

by Dale Godfrey

The Beginning

It was a hot, July 9th, afternoon. I was mowing my lawn in the bright sunshine around 2 PM, when my phone rang. I pulled under a shade tree and answered the call. “This is Sugar,” the voice on the other end said. “How would you like to go to Belize on Friday?” I just laughed. “I’m serious, Eldon is in the hospital and we need another driver.” “Are you really serious?” I asked. “Yes,” she said. “But I need to know right away so we can get the ticket changed.” I said “Well, let me check with my wife,” hoping to buy some time as I mentally went through my calendar for the next week. There was nothing on there I couldn’t reschedule or skip. I called Rita and, after thinking for a moment, she said “Sure, that’s fine.” So, on Friday morning, July 12th, four days after finding out about the opportunity, I boarded the airplane for Belize with 11 interns and Lynn and Sugar Baumgart, the program leaders. Many doors had already been opened by this first day. A few months earlier, I had felt prompted to renew my expired passport, even though I had no plans requiring it. During that short three-day window, the BMF staff were able to get me added to the insurance coverage for the trip, get me a shirt to match the Internship shirts worn by the rest of the group and get

Arrival

After we arrived in Belize City, we rented our vehicles and loaded up the van for the interns and the pickup truck for the suitcases. Our first stop was in Orange Walk Town, where we dropped off some medical books with a lady whose daughter is in medical residency in Guatemala. She invited us to return for lunch on Sunday. Then, we traveled north to Corozal, where we checked into our hotel. There were two air-conditioned rooms for the female interns, while the rest of us had rooms which were blessed with a cool sea breeze every evening.

With the Saints

On Saturday, we presented a “Book of Mormon Day” for the children of the Corozal Restoration Church. We had much singing and laughter, as well as lessons for the various age groups, focusing on Nephi’s dream of the rod of iron. (1 Nephi 2:48-76 RLDS) [1 Nephi 8:9-28 LDS] In the afternoon, we planned to play soccer. Fortunately, the young Saints had a better idea, so we went to a private lagoon to spend the afternoon swimming in the ocean.

On Sunday, we again joined the Saints for fellowship and worship. When we arrived, the pastor invited us to take charge of the morning’s worship services. The four of us with the





Internship, holding priesthood offices, conducted the services for the branch that morning. We had a prayer service, followed by a preaching service. The young people all spoke English. Many of the older Saints did not, so we had a young member of the congregation serve as our interpreter. The sermon focused on the Lord's covenants with the House of Israel in the latter days and the role of the Book of Mormon people in response to those covenants. The Lord blessed us with His Spirit, and good worship and fellowship was enjoyed by all. One young member of the congregation expressed serious interest in applying for the Internship next year, and we pray she will do so.

The Service Project

On Monday, our service project began. We went to a Seventh-day Adventist college (equivalent to a high school in the US). We arrived on the first day of the summer school session. The principal invited us to join them for a short worship service at the pavilion at the center of the compound. During the service, she invited the interns to sing. The students and staff stood in awe as the interns sang the beautiful hymn, *I Have Found the Glorious Gospel*. After worship, we went to work in the library, scraping, painting and moving books and furniture. By the end of the day, we had one coat of paint on the entire interior and a second coat on part of one wall. The work was hot (no air conditioning) and hard, but the fellowship and opportunities to witness were a rich blessing to us all.

Tuesday was more of the same, as we completed painting in the library. We then arranged shelves and loaded them with books. The librarian was deeply grateful for our assistance, as she was unable to do any heavy lifting due to a recent surgery.

On Wednesday morning, I stayed at the hotel with two members of our group who were feeling a bit under the weather. The remainder of our team returned to the school to complete the service project in preparation for the





exciting adventures which lay before us on Thursday and Friday. By 10:30 AM on Wednesday, the two interns who had remained behind had been so blessed that we were able to join the rest of the interns to complete the service project. The school principal and several of the staff members presented the interns with a plaque of appreciation at a ceremony in the courtyard.

Fortunately, when we returned to the hotel, there was time for a dip in the ocean before dinner. That evening, we shared our reflections on the trip thus far and our experiences in service to others. Finally, we spent a few moments sharing information regarding Altun Ha, the archaeological site we would be visiting on Thursday.

Altun Ha

On Thursday morning, we began our adventures to make the Book of Mormon come alive by visiting archaeological sites which existed in Book of Mormon times. Altun Ha was a mid-sized

Mayan trading center. Archaeologists estimate it was first inhabited around 200 BC. The site consists of two main plazas, each surrounded by buildings of various types and sizes. Despite the heat, the interns managed to climb all of the major pyramids at the site. They stood atop the tallest pyramid and sang *Ancient Words*, written by Lynn DeShazo. It drew applause from the groups of tourists gathered in the courtyard below.

Two items of particular interest, at Altun Ha, is a Mayan-built water reservoir with a stone dam and a bottom lining of yellow clay. The other was a jade head measuring approximately six inches tall and weighing nearly ten pounds.



Other Adventures

After leaving Altun Ha, we stopped at a Belizean restaurant where we enjoyed a typical local meal consisting of rice and beans, chicken, plantain and coleslaw. After lunch, we were off to a monkey sanctuary where we saw some

amazing howler monkeys. As the name would indicate, the alpha male in each group can produce a howl, which is reminiscent of a lion's roar and can be heard for great distances in the jungle. After some coaxing and bribery by the guide and a nearby neighbor, members of the group came down from their lofty perches and were hand-fed bananas by some of the interns. Both the interns and the monkeys seemed to enjoy the encounter.

Lamanai

Friday was our last full day in Belize. It began as each day before, with devotions presented by selected interns, followed by breakfast. Then it was time to climb aboard the van for a bumpy ride to our next adventure. This day, our destination was Lamanai. There are several things which make Lamanai unique. First, the easiest way to get there requires an hour-long boat ride up the New River. This river has a wide variety of plant and animal life, including crocodiles. Perhaps that explains the name of the ancient city we were visiting. Lamanai is the Mayan name for the city and it is translated "submerged crocodile."

Lamanai is a very old and large city and is believed to have been continuously inhabited for 3,000 years.

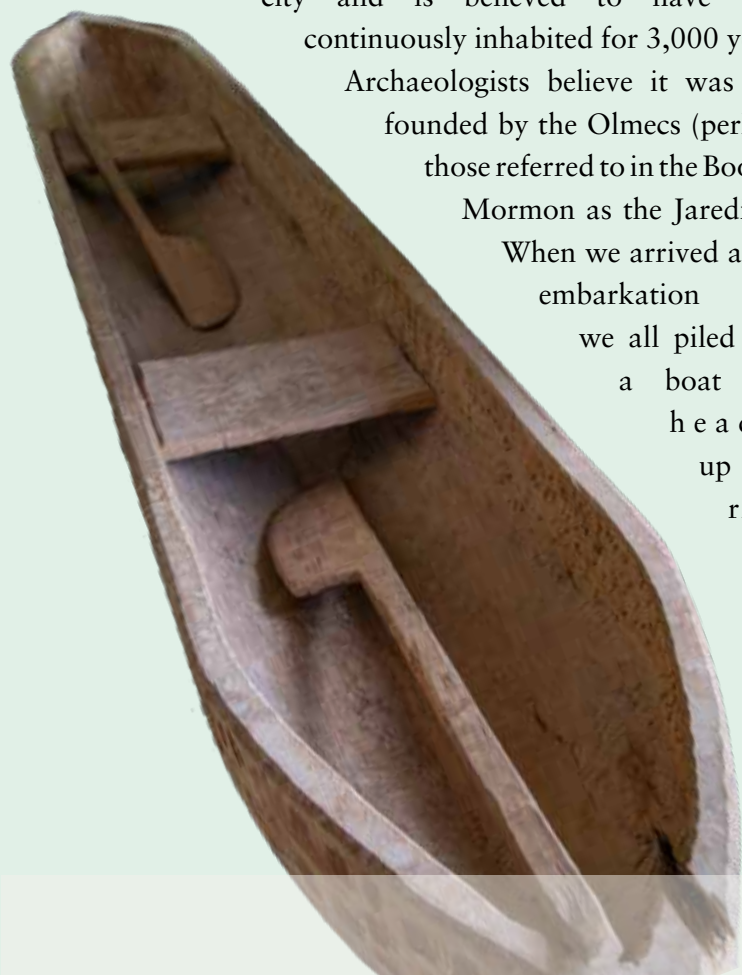
Archaeologists believe it was first founded by the Olmecs (perhaps those referred to in the Book of Mormon as the Jaredites).

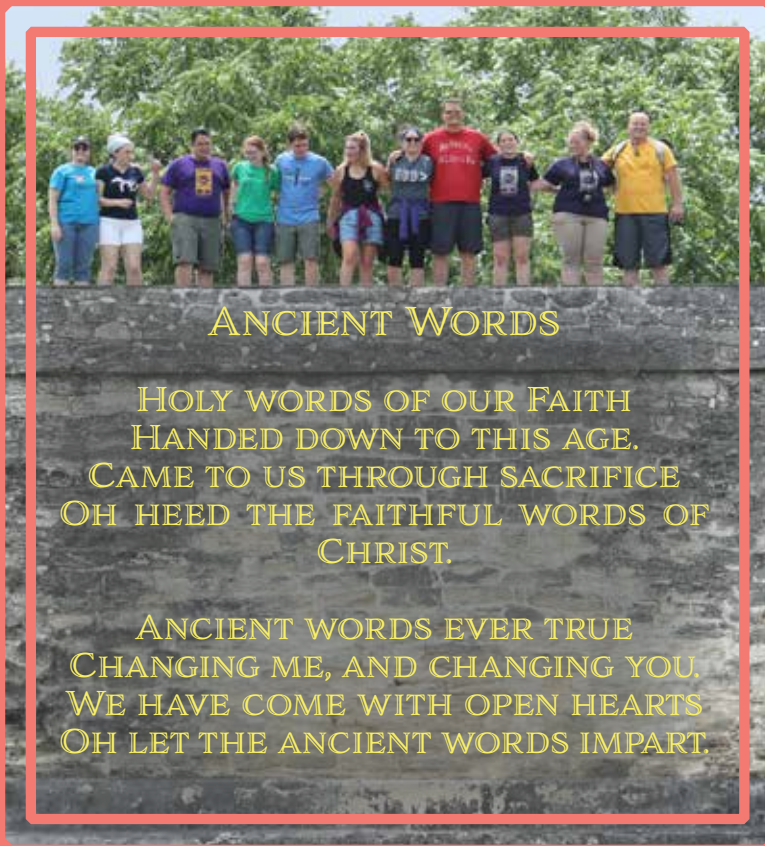
When we arrived at the embarkation site, we all piled into a boat and headed up the river.



The journey was fascinating. There were new animals and vegetation surrounding us around every bend. Lamanai is located on the shore of a lagoon formed by the New River. After visiting the on-site museum, we set out in the jungle to examine this magnificent site. The top of the tallest pyramid affords a breathtaking view over the jungle canopy to the deep waters of the beautiful lagoon. Looking out over this serene scene, it is almost possible to imagine the lagoon filled with the fishing and trading canoes of the city's inhabitants.

Just as the day before, the interns managed to climb each pyramid they could find at the site. From atop the





tallest pyramid they once again sang, *Ancient Words* as the appreciative tourists in the courtyard below paused to listen and applaud. We discovered there was also a group of howler monkeys living at Lamanai. After a strenuous morning of hiking and climbing, we were ready for lunch, and we again enjoyed rice and beans, chicken, plantain and coleslaw. Then it was time for the boat ride back to the staging area and another bumpy ride to the hotel. After dinner, we gathered to reflect on and critique the week's events and to give thanks to our Heavenly Father for the blessings, experiences and safety we had enjoyed all week long.

The Last Day

Saturday, we were up and out, headed for the airport with many new friends, wonderful experiences and fond memories. In addition, we each had deeper appreciation for the Book of Mormon, its lands and its peoples.

Takeaways from Belize

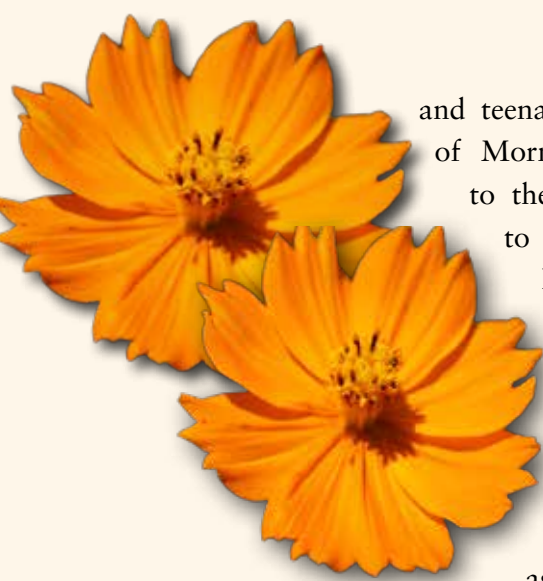
For me, this trip to Belize was a miracle from beginning to end. It had been many years since I last visited Mesoamerica and even longer since I have been blessed to visit there in the company of interns. Even

though I had often thought I would like to do it again, I had no real expectation that I would, so it was not something I have even been praying about, and yet it happened. It didn't begin when I received a call on July 9th. It actually started months earlier when I was prompted to renew my expired passport, even though I had no travel plans which required it at that time.

The way everything came together between July 9-12 involved several miracles. The ticket, the insurance, the shirt, and my availability were a series of miracles which came together, enabling my participation.

I had taught classes to the group a couple of times but I really didn't "know" any of them very well. As we sat in the airport in Kansas City, waiting to depart, I kept asking Lynn and Sugar the names of the various members of the party. During the following eight days, I would come to not only know their names, but also some of their strengths and weaknesses. I would watch them labor together under extreme conditions of heat and weariness. Even in these conditions, they were working hard supporting one another, forgiving one another and loving one another despite our human frailties. I saw the children





and teenagers at the Book of Mormon event warm to them as they stood to sing and teach Book of Mormon messages to them on Saturday. I saw the joy and love on the faces of the little ones as the interns held them in their arms, allowing them to splash and play in the ocean waters which would have otherwise been well over their heads.

On Sunday, I sensed the presence of God's Spirit, as we shared with the Saints and laid before them the covenants and calling of the Book of Mormon to their people.

I watched the interns each evening as we returned from working on the service project, weary and exhausted (at least I was) from the day's work, but joyful for the opportunities which had been presented and thankful for the camaraderie and love they shared with one another. One of the greatest gifts I received from the trip was the transformation of eleven near strangers into eleven dear and close friends who I came to love and appreciate very much.

I saw the two members who had been taken ill recover in miraculous fashion, so that within just a couple of hours, after the others had left, they were wanting to join them to complete the service project.

The thankfulness and appreciation of the librarian, who was physically unable to do the tasks we accomplished in less than three days, touched us all.

As they wandered the grounds at Altun Ha and climbed the grand structures, built so long ago, their comprehension that the Book of Mormon in its account of the people was true, grew in their hearts. At Lamanai, the interns stood together atop a very tall pyramid and proclaimed, in unison, to all who could hear that those "ancient words" proclaimed there by

the prophets so many years before were "ever true," knowing how the words matter in our lives today as they did to the people who heard them when they were first spoken.

This trip was amazing and potentially a life-changing experience for each of us. We were each blessed and challenged, perhaps in ways we've never been before. I would be remiss if I did not mention and thank the leaders, Lynn and Sugar Baumgart. They were both school teachers, and Lynn was also a school counselor before their retirements. Both have given their lives in educating and ministering to youth. I watched their laboring alongside young people almost 50 years their junior in the stifling heat and humidity. I could see in their faces that they were exhausted, yet they continued to faithfully toil as a witness to the interns.



The trip was a blessing to each one who participated, perhaps in some ways that will not be fully appreciated or understood for years. I'm thankful to God, The Book of Mormon Foundation, the interns and their leaders and to all who support the work of the Foundation, that I was blessed to be able to share in this marvelous experience. The Lord's work continues to go forward. May we each be faithful servants in the army of the Lord.

There were four little children sitting next to Lynn who wanted to go swimming, but did not know how to swim. Sugar took them in one at a time so they could swim. The interns played with the kids also, and we all had a great time. The youngest one fell asleep on the way home in the arms of one of the interns. He didn't wake up as we passed him from one another to his mother.



Grace Johnson

This testimony started the day after we arrived in Belize. I'd dreamed of working with children since I was a child, so I was very much looking forward to the children's activities. That Saturday morning, we'd taught the children's classes and did crafts with them, but the icing on the cake came that afternoon. We'd intended to play soccer at the park with the children, but the plans were changed at the last minute, and we went to the lagoon to swim instead.



There were some younger children there who couldn't swim, so we interns took turns holding them and helping them have fun in the water. About 30 minutes before we ended the swim, Daniel passed off a little four-year-old boy to me. This particular child liked to jump off the boat deck into the arms of whoever was watching him. As I played this little game with him, I could feel an innocence and great love about the place, something I haven't felt in a long time. It was the kind of thing I was very reluctant to leave behind when the swim was over. That day opened my eyes to just how precious quality time with others is. These children, although they never said much, taught me a valuable lesson in humility and love. These people treat even the most simple of gestures with much love, something we often take for granted. My hope is that those who read this will be inspired to see innocence and love in everyday interactions with their loved ones, perhaps even give it themselves. It's a very precious thing God gave us to use.



Abbey English

My testimony began before we actually left for our trip. It was a couple of days before our departure, and we were discussing the kinds of weather we would be having while in Belize. We were especially warned about the weather in the jungle areas while we would be visiting the ruins. For instance, it can flash rain very suddenly. I personally happen to really love and enjoy rainy weather, so this to me was very exciting. Fast-forward to our first day of visiting

the ruins, and it was hot and dry. We had climbed the majority of the ruins, and I had been praying quietly to myself throughout the day that the Lord would let it rain. My hopes were slowly fading when we only had one more ruin to go, with no signs of any rain to come. We had saved the biggest and best for last, of course. Once we all made it to the top, we rested and decided to sing our theme song, *Ancient Words*. While singing, I said one more final prayer in my



head, asking again if it could rain on top of this temple, because that would just be a really cool blessing for me. We finished our song, and as a group, started single file down the back stairs. I was one of the last people in line and, as we were starting down the stairs, it began to rain. A giant downpour came and those of us left got to dance around on top of this incredible structure, surrounded by God's beauty. To me that is a testimony of how God listens to even the small, almost non-important prayers.

Lauryn Smith



In class, we were told that for our trip to Belize, we would be putting on a Book of Mormon day for the Saints. There was a class for the two and three-year-olds, the four and five-year-olds, the elementary aged kids, and ages twelve and up. I typically do not like to be super-involved with young children, and the idea of teaching adults (who might not know English) intimidated me. It was then revealed that there was also going to be a music class. I signed up and was excited to teach the class, until I realized it included teaching everyone. If you don't know me, I stress out over everything. I was very nervous about teaching music class. A few days before we left for our trip, my cousin messaged me and asked if she could pray for anything specific for me while I was on the trip. I told her I was nervous about the class. I was a little discouraged at the beginning of class, because no one besides the interns knew any of the songs we sang, in Spanish or English. As the class progressed, they still didn't know any of the songs, but they all looked like they wanted to learn the songs. Regardless of whether they wanted to sing along with us or not, they all were excited to be there and at least listen to us sing. It wasn't until music class had ended and crafts class had started that I realized I wasn't nervous at all while leading the class. It was a huge blessing that God relieved me of that stress and anxiety and gave me the assurance I needed that class would go well, no matter what would happen.



Taylor Morrison

Prior to our trip to Belize, there were several things I was focusing on. One such prayer was that the weather would be nice while we were in Belize. God answered that prayer in tremendous ways.

First, the week before leaving home, the weather in Missouri was almost exactly the same as we would experience in Belize. Actually, the whole week we were there, it was a few degrees cooler in Belize than Missouri. This made the transition very easy when we got there.

Second, there was a constant strong breeze off the ocean all week even though we would get hot and sweaty on service projects, we could always come back to that comforting breeze, standing out on the balcony. It also made living in a room without air conditioning bearable. It was never too muggy.

Third, the rainy season was starting in Belize, but we didn't get more than a few minutes of rain, until we were heading back to the airport. On that drive, it poured on us. This all, testified to me in a big way that our prayers were answered tremendously. This blessing allowed us to receive some of the other great testimonies we had.





One of our projects was to paint the library, which had not been painted in 14 years. We put two coats of paint on the library walls, and sanded and varnished two or three book cases. As we were putting books back on the shelves, we discovered the librarian had just had an operation. She could not bend down or lift heavy objects. The interns put all the books back on the shelves and set up the computers. The librarian was very happy for the help. We also painted another classroom and shutters. We were glad we could be of service to the Lord, and that He put us where we were needed the most.

The Life of an Intern



Kathryn Owings

When I got accepted into the Internship, I was concerned about two things. First, I really wanted a testimony of the Book of Mormon and, second, I really wanted to make friends with the people I would be interacting with. The first concern was addressed, starting about two weeks before the start of the Internship, on June 23rd.

One of the things you are asked to do before the Internship starts is to read the Book of Mormon cover-to-cover, even if you've read it before. When I looked at how many chapters there were and how many days I had, I could have read a chapter a day and finished just in time for the Internship. However, I am a procrastinator by nature, and two weeks before the Internship started, I had only read through 2 Nephi. Another thing I did this summer was start working on a research project for school. This project involved traveling around Missouri and taking pictures, so I was alone for several days at a time. This worked perfectly for reading the Book of Mormon, because I would check into my hotel and read for five or six hours at a time. Five days after I had only gotten through 2 Nephi, I was in my hotel room, and I was reading Moroni. Approximately halfway through Moroni, I began to feel the Spirit so strongly that I began to cry. I finished reading Moroni, including chapter ten, verses four and five. After I finished, I knelt beside my bed, and I wept for the people of the Book of Mormon, and for the people of this time that do not know the beauty of the book. Nine days before the Internship actually started, I had my testimony of the Book of Mormon.

As I started classes in the Internship, I learned a lot of things about the Book of Mormon and why it is important to our lives at this point in history. Not only did I receive my testimony of the Book of Mormon in my heart because of the Internship, I also received knowledge that made it clear that logically, it must also be true.

The second thing I was worried about was making friends. Naturally, I tend to lack trust in others, which makes it extremely difficult to make friends. However, particularly through our trip to Belize, I learned to trust my fellow interns with the things I was struggling with



personally, and with the fact that I tend to lose contact with people easily. Throughout the Internship, each and every one of my fellow interns was so encouraging. One example happened while we were in Belize. We had come to the tallest pyramid at Altun Ha. I wasn't sure if I would make it all the way to the top. I reached a middle point, and I thought I would just stop there, but my fellow interns encouraged me to get to the top, so I did. The view was so spectacular from the top and, because we all made it, we were able to sing our theme song, *Ancient Words*. The experiences I have had with these people will follow me for a lifetime, and I know they will be some of my very closest friends for the rest of my life.

God blessed me so much through the Internship, and I look forward to seeing how He uses these experiences in my life and in the lives of all my fellow interns.



Danielle Hopper

When I was asked to share a testimony, I was concerned because I didn't think I had anything to share from the last week, so I began to pray about it. A little while later, I remembered a story that had been shared in a class a few days earlier. It was about a person who missed God working in their life, because it wasn't what they were expecting. This prompted me to pray and ask to be able to recognize what blessings I had received recently. While pondering this, several things came to mind. I had been feeling sick last week, but it was only on my day off. When I went in to class the next day, I felt fine. Also, I'm usually hesitant to pray out loud, but I've noticed that doing it more often during the Internship has made it easier. Lastly, I often get distracted during prayer services, but I had prayed before our service on Wednesday that I would be able to be focused during the service. Afterwards, I realized I had paid attention during every prayer. I was even blessed by being asked to write down this testimony, because it made me stop and consider all the blessings God has given me.



Daniel Morrison

When the Internship began, we were asked one thing we wanted to work on through the Internship. I wanted to work on my prayer life. I just wasn't making time for it like I used to. We were quickly told each of our prayer lives would be strengthened throughout the six weeks. They were right! We said a prayer every morning before devotion, went through our entire prayer list, said a prayer before morning class and after the break, and before lunch, and before the afternoon class and after the afternoon break, and then said another prayer before we all left. I can say confidently my prayer life is stronger now than when I started. I have actively found myself wanting to and saying prayers before random activities throughout my day. I'm very thankful for that. Though it will be sad to not have the support of my other interns every day with me, I think it's a habit they formed in me that I will keep for a very long time.



Ellie Williams

I received a call from Sugar during my sophomore year at college asking if I would be willing to be one of the staff members for the 2018 Internship. I told her I would pray about it, but I knew I wanted to say yes. After a couple weeks of praying, the Lord confirmed to me that I should say yes and keep my summer open for the Internship.

Later that school year, Sugar called again with the news that we would not be having the 2018 Internship and asked if I would be able to staff the 2019 Internship instead. I told her I would pray about it, but was much more doubtful. I was left without a summer job and had to figure out what to do about my study abroad requirements for the next summer. Soon after, I received an email from my school about a summer internship opening at a great firm in Kansas City. I applied and was accepted! Had I not been planning on doing the Book of Mormon Internship, the timing would not have been right for me to get this job. God always provides.

I continued to think and pray about being on staff for the 2019 Internship. For my major, I knew I needed to use my summer for either study abroad or a school-related internship. After a lot of thinking, looking, and praying, I found a study abroad program that only lasted the first month of the summer and ended just a few days before the Internship! I was able to fulfill my school requirements and still participate in the work I felt the Lord wanted me to do. With God involved, everything works out perfectly.



The Character of an Intern





Rachel Mann

God has commanded us to read His word regularly, so we may know His commandments. In my patriarchal blessing, I have been told that if I took time to study God's word in the mornings each day, the Lord would be well pleased with me. Habitual study has never been a strength of mine, but I have been working to put more effort into my scripture studies. While we were in Belize, we would host group devotions in our hotel room at 6:45 in the mornings. On Sunday morning, I got up early to watch the sunrise, and to share quiet time with my Heavenly Father. But, as the week went on, getting up early and studying fell a bit by the wayside. Sometimes, all we could do was get out of bed, get dressed, and get the room tidied before the morning service started. My lack of study was bothering me, though. On Wednesday morning, I sat outside on our hammock and read for a few minutes. As I was reading, a phrase was put into my mind. "Your morning study will prepare you for the challenges you face each day." In that moment, the Lord helped me understand the significance of what I was doing. Every morning, that phrase comes to my mind and helps motivate me to get some reading done before getting busy with the day. God gave me something I really needed, even though I wasn't expecting it.



Josh Vander Zwaag

After six weeks of not seeing my family and not really communicating with them either, I had a lot of things I wanted to share with them when I got home. When they asked how the Internship went, I said it went well, and I wished it wasn't over. Over the past few weeks I have grown in so many ways. One of those ways has been my walk in faith. I pray every day several times a day. I study my scriptures every day and, in general, I feel so blessed in everything I do. Before I joined on this Internship, my faith was really struggling to find the right path. Through this experience, I have learned the meaning of seeking God out and acting upon the strengths and weaknesses I have. I have truly become a better man through this experience, and as I return home for a few weeks, I realize how blessed I am. God has given me so many things in life from good friends, a loving family, a good financial situation, and the list could go on forever. As I prepare to move back to the Independence area, I realize that without God providing the opportunity to be a part of this Internship, my life would be very different right now. As I shared with my family, I have found a new home in Missouri, and I am so excited to do God's work in a new place!

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Looking back on the Internship this year, there were so many blessings throughout the entire six weeks. The one thing that stands out to me the most is when we were in Belize. As funny as it may seem, the biggest testimony I received was from the speed bumps. It wasn't until the last day of the Internship that the lesson from the speed bumps came to mind. In Belize, you never know when there is going to be a speed bump, you have to be prepared at all times. There were times when we didn't see them, and everyone in the van suffered from it. It came to the point that those sitting in the front row of seats had to help watch for the bumps. What stood out to me is that life is like the roads in Belize. There were times when it was smooth driving, looking at the beautiful scenery and then, when you least expect it, a random bump can ruin your day. In life, there are times when everything is going great and things seem to go your way, then out of nowhere, a bump comes up. We need to know how to deal with those bumps. We can learn from it, knowing to always trust God whenever life gets rough, and to be better prepared for when the next bump comes. We can also learn there are times when we need to rely on those around us to help us to stay on that smooth path. If they see us going down a path with bumps, we need to listen to their advice and steer clear of those bumps. So, when those bumps come, and they will, keep your eyes focused on God, and He will help you through anything and everything!