

Interns consider church careers

Regina Linskey/CNS

WASHINGTON — During the summer months, Washington's Metro subway trains are portals of twentysomethings, connecting interns en masse from their rented dorm rooms and lofts to their temporary positions of fetching coffee, filing papers and networking with professional hot shots.

Although they mask their youth well — with shiny leather briefcases and copies of *The Washington Post* in hand — the pocket-sized Metro guides, usually tucked inside the inner pocket of their brand new suit jacket, scream, "I am a lost intern. What station will get me to the Capitol Hill buildings again?"

Washington has long been dubbed the intern capital of the world, many years before the city was linked with the Monica Lewinsky and Chandra

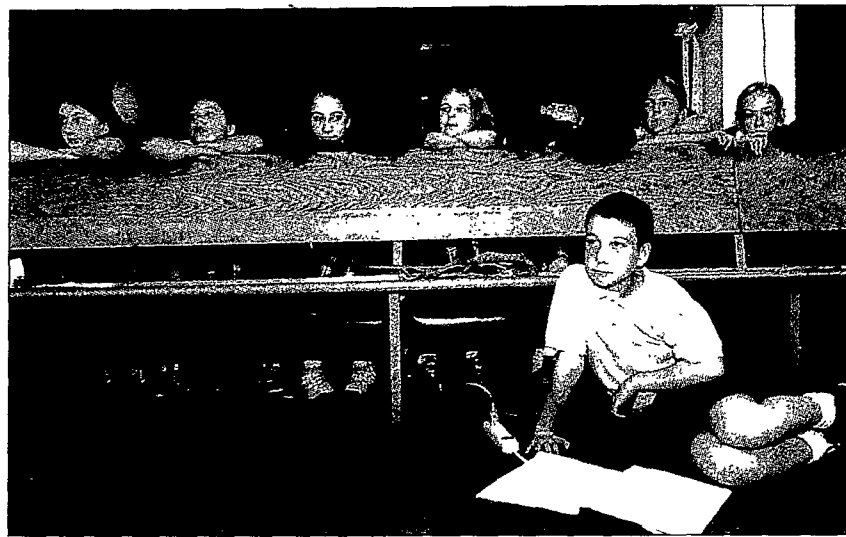
Education

Levy scandals that have sometimes made the phrase "Washington intern" entail a dirty connotation. Many mothers now warn their children, "Be careful, Washington interns tend not to come out the same as they came in."

Some Washington interns, who have chosen to work in Catholic organizations amid an array of secular options, may not return to their academic institutions the same.

A Wisconsin native and junior-to-be at Creighton University in Omaha, Neb., Rebecca Kolis was in her second summer as an intern for the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, the U.S. bishops' domestic anti-poverty program.

This year Kolis was staying one



Karin von Voigtländer/Catholic Courier

Rehearsing a play

Billy Attridge, a fifth-grader at Good Shepherd School in Henrietta, follows a script May 21 as he watches a dress rehearsal for the play "Phantom of the Music Room."

step ahead of CCHD's "Brake the Cycle of Poverty" cross-country bike tour June 1-Aug. 1, as the agency's communications and public relations intern. She helped spread CCHD's mission to raise awareness and come up with innovative solutions for poverty in America.

During her time with CCHD, Kolis learned the importance of working for an organization that reflected her beliefs. "I believe in the work that we are doing," she said. "I think that it is important — especially in communications — if you are trying to promote something, I think you should believe in it as well."

Prior to the internship, Kolis never considered working for a Catholic organization after she graduated, but experiencing the Catholic faith in action for social justice has broadened her options.

"I am definitely going to be looking in the Catholic sector as well, and I never thought that before," she said.

A floor below in the same building, in the department of Migration and Refugee Services, Amy Arnold, from Philadelphia, and Brian Ferry, who grew up on a military base in Japan, were stuffing envelopes, trying to remember why exactly they were interning.

Arnold, who is working on her graduate degree in canon law at The Catholic University of America, is an intern at MRS. She is helping to implement the bishops' 2000 pastoral letter, "Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity," throughout seven U.S. dioceses.

Arnold said that she now knows that she will be working for the church, but at one time she didn't.

"Before, I wanted to go to law school, but the secular world really wasn't for me, the church seemed like a calling to me," she said.

Ferry is completing his master's degree in social work at Howard University. Ferry, who helped at this year's church-sponsored National Migration Conference, said he would like to find a job in the Catholic Church after graduation.

Graduate student Allison Williams, 34, of Georgetown University's Public Policy Institute, is an advocacy intern for the Catholic Health Association.


Williams tracks and researches issues, especially those concerning the uninsured, for the church's health-care ministry. Although the choice to take up the position at the time was, as she said, "less a choice to work for a Catholic organization (and) more of a perk," Williams is happy with CHA.

She said the preferential option for the poor in the church's social teaching "is not taken lightly. I am happy to see that people (at CHA) are serious about that. Clear social justice is evident in the work we do."

"It is nice to see the good side of the church in action," Williams said, especially because of the sex-abuse scandal. To her, ministry is "what the church is really about."

"Professionalism, organization and spirituality combined together makes it a nice working environment," she added. "Although not everyone is Catholic, it is appreciated and respected — and it is not always like that."

Linskey was an intern at Catholic News Service this summer.



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