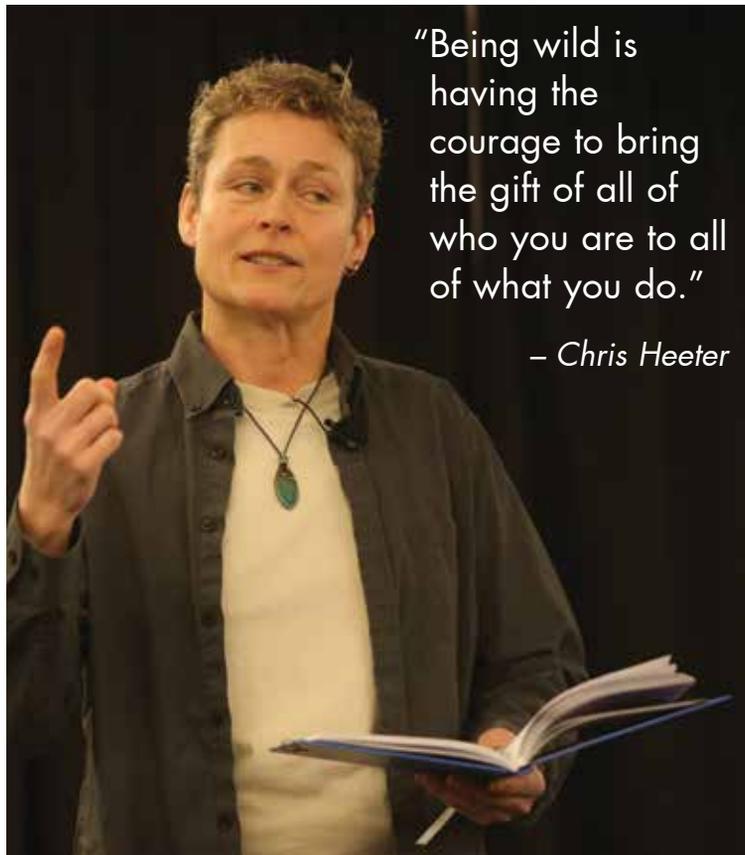


# WILD ABOUT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

## Annual Event Celebrates Internship Success

By Karissa Rector



“Being wild is having the courage to bring the gift of all of who you are to all of what you do.”

– Chris Heeter

On February 7, Chris Heeter, award-winning speaker and founder of The Wild Institute, provided an energizing keynote for the nearly 400 attendees at Indiana INTERNnet’s 12th annual IMPACT Awards Luncheon with the theme “Wild About Workforce Development.” The luncheon celebrates interns, career development professionals and employers striving for internship excellence.

Heeter explained how important it is to work as a team to be successful and how “we need our leaders to go the same direction around obstacles.” She also shared relatable anecdotes from her sled dog team and experience as a whitewater trip guide.

The Indiana INTERNnet team looks forward to the IMPACT Awards luncheon each year, because it’s an opportunity to celebrate the significance of internships and spotlight accomplishments throughout the state. Six winners were announced in the categories of Career Development Professional of the Year, Employer of the Year (Non-Profit and For-Profit), and Intern of the Year (College, High School and Non-Traditional).



Attendees (right) and nominees (below) come together to emphasize the significant impact of internship initiatives.



**Jerica Mitchell** (Indiana State University)  
College Intern of the Year



Jerica Mitchell's hard work has paid off by more than tripling the length of her internship at the Indiana Minority Health Coalition (IMHC). The internship was originally scheduled to run for two months; however, the organization adjusted the budget to extend her time there.

Mitchell's career aspirations of being an executive director of a non-profit

organization or a hospital administrator perfectly align with her work at IMHC. Her first large project involved the coordination of 15 volunteers at the organization's vendor booth at the Indiana Black Expo. To increase visitor engagement, she assisted with creating a prize spin wheel for attendees to answer questions about diabetes. This resulted in positive feedback from the attendees and a local television feature.

Her skills in outreach proved valuable in creating connections and building relationships. One of her duties was inviting businesses to attend presentations or participate as vendors at an event. To gain the attention of younger demographics for event promotion, Mitchell successfully utilized social media.

"IMHC is from a myriad of backgrounds and Jerica quickly learned to respect and value all of the cultures by seeing the underlying connections which make staff members a team," says Lesia Bostick, the organization's state project coordinator. "The other interns within our agency can often be seen asking her for advice. As a knowledgeable and motivated fast learner, I have seen her grow tremendously by helping others within several departments in our agency."

**Camisa Vines** (John Adams High School – South Bend)  
High School Intern of the Year



Summer break means a recess from school and homework for most students. That's not the case, however, for Camisa Vines. After studying youth coding and computer programming at South Bend Code School (read more on Page 47) in 2015, Vines obtained an internship with a local technology company. Two years later, she returned to the coding school as an instructor.

"Camisa worked with children (ages seven to 18) in our program and put in many hours to help the core team define, build and execute a high-caliber coding program that served all ranges of students from many different backgrounds and walks of life," says Alex Sejdinaj, co-founder of the South Bend Code School.

In 2017, the school coordinated a summer camp with a record-breaking number of over 100 student applicants. Vines served as a lead instructor and assisted with the program. She made sure each student felt comfortable and confident with the material they were learning.

"A large part of South Bend Code School's mission is to make deep connections with students in our community while showing them the opportunities that they could have in STEM-related career fields and Camisa is a shining example of what that means," Sejdinaj explains. "She cares deeply for the students we work with, the team that helps to support that mission and the larger community we live in."

**Miranda Goodwin**  
Non-Traditional Intern of the Year



The Wabash Valley Community Foundation was a little skeptical when a professor at Indiana State University recommended a student majoring in math for a marketing and communications internship. Miranda Goodwin, however, removed any doubt the organization may have had.

The majority of Goodwin's internship was dedicated to working on the organization's legacy

albums, which contain stories of those who have created endowment funds. Through reading provided material, researching other sources and interviewing donors or their relatives, Goodwin skillfully composed each narrative with emotion and purpose. These stories are often shared with the corresponding grant or scholarship recipients.

Due to her excellent time-management skills and hard-working attitude, Goodwin performed tasks for various projects throughout the Foundation. She assisted with a donation campaign, tediously updated a list of professional advisors and provided support for staff members in administration, marketing and communications, and affiliate relations. Her minor studies in non-profit leadership proved valuable when assisting with coordinating donor meetings, processing donations and maintaining the database.

"I believe Miranda understood that an internship should be a continuation of the learning process and treated the internship exactly like that," explains Beth Tevlin, executive director of the Wabash Valley Community Foundation. "She assisted with grant award distributions and attended grant award ceremonies to learn more about local nonprofits and how the grants awarded from the Community Foundation would impact that organization."

**Nathan Milner** (Indiana Wesleyan University)  
Career Development Professional of the Year



Nathan Milner has shown great strides in his first year as internship coordinator at Indiana Wesleyan University. Before his transition to career development, Milner was the university's resident director for 10 years.

"Nathan integrates his extensive residence life experience in the field of career development and shines in the area of student advocacy and development," says Tiffany Snyder,

director of career development at Indiana Wesleyan University. "He enhances internship programs, contributes to improved and even innovative communication with students and employers, and reflects a strong level of commitment to professional development."

One of Milner's early accomplishments was facilitating a program funded by Lilly Endowment that provides wages for up to 20 students interning at start-up companies each semester. He made valuable improvements to the program, including a wage increase for student participants. Milner also strives to provide professional development opportunities for the interns. Every other week, he sends a reflection question for them to submit a filmed response.

"Nathan goes above and beyond in his internship coordinator role by offering each and every intern a personalized video response, celebrating student growth and offering suggestions where appropriate," Snyder shares. "He treats the program as a developmental opportunity to ensure that the students feel heard, to learn what needs to exist, to encourage growth and cultivate professional development."

Each semester, Milner coordinates an internship banquet for the

participating interns and start-up companies. The programming includes awards for Outstanding Interns and Outstanding Employers, testimonials and a video presentation of the interns.

## Indiana Farm Bureau Insurance

Employer of the Year (for-profit)



In 2017, Indiana Farm Bureau Insurance (IFBI) revamped its internship program and doubled the number of interns for the summer. It began 13 years ago and continues to serve as a recruiting pipeline for hiring future talent.

“Interns spend 32 hours each week working in various operations

to gain hands-on, real-world experience working alongside industry professionals. They are integrated into the IFBI culture and have access to our corporate benefits, which include a 24-hour fitness center and full-service cafeteria,” offers Tiffany Hackett, the company’s talent acquisition administrator. “Job shadowing is also highly encouraged for the interns, which allows them to gain insight into the insurance industry and acquire knowledge of other areas of the company.”

A newly-developed feedback initiative, SWAG, was integrated last year to improve communication between interns and their supervisors. It stands for strengths/skills, weaknesses/improvements, accomplishments and goals. This also helps IFBI implement changes and enhancements in programming for future interns.

“The SWAG process was successful and gave the interns an opportunity to have open dialogue with their managers and on a more consistent basis,” Hackett boasts.

Group collaboration and skills development is evident in the program’s capstone project. Interns are divided into teams to create commercials promoting the internship program and its value to fostering internship excellence. Project managers are chosen to guide and direct the team. Once finished, the projects are showcased during

a last-day luncheon with peers, mentors, supervisors and executive leadership members. The winning video is displayed on the company’s web site.

## Bowman Creek Educational Ecosystem

Employer of the Year (non-profit)



Bowman Creek Educational Ecosystem (BCe2) tackles socio-economic and environmental issues in South Bend by partnering with community organizations, city government and educational institutions. Interns ranging from all walks of life and regions – high school, college and non-traditional – form the bulk of the team. Last summer, the program had the largest group of participants with 30

interns and 22 project mentors.

“This is not the typical internship where you might work on one or two small parts of a project that are non-critical to project success. BCe2 interns are fully responsible for their own projects from concept to completion and accountable for seeing them through to results in the community,” outlines Kate Lee, director of talent engagement at the South Bend Regional Chamber.

Interns work in teams to design a solution for a real-life issue in the community. They conduct research and interviews, develop strategies and present their findings to relevant stakeholder groups. Since these are substantive issues, the community partners and stakeholders are vital to the continued success of the projects.

In addition to the group project, interns can take on a community issue of their own. The 2016 High School Intern of the Year, Britney Arenas, designed and built a lending library in a neighborhood park.

“Bowman Creek Educational Ecosystem is a sandbox for emerging talent to work with seasoned mentors solving real-world community challenges, with results and discoveries that could help hundreds of similar American industrial cities,” says South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg. “I applaud their efforts to help build a thriving city for all.”