



Bringing History to Life

By Nancy McComish, Senior Writer

Carly Boerrigter first heard a Holocaust survivor speak when she was 10. She was captivated by his story, which awakened a thirst for more knowledge about that part of history, particularly for the personal stories of other survivors. Carly started reading about the Holocaust, and because she lived outside of Los Angeles, she spent many hours at its Museum of Tolerance (MOT). A December 2013 graduate of Franklin Pierce, Carly majored in History with a double minor in Public History and Anthropology; she recently completed a museum internship at the MOT as one of the Public History requirements and could not be happier to have become an insider there.

Behind the Scenes

Over 250,000 people visit the museum annually to learn about the Holocaust and all forms of prejudice, discrimination, and intolerance in historical and contemporary contexts. Carly's internship has given her valuable behind-the-scenes work experience in visitor services, the archives, museum education, and special events. "You can study the museum world, but once you are on the inside, you see how it really runs. You get to see things firsthand," said Carly.

Carly and other interns were the first to tour a new Anne Frank exhibit and provide feedback to museum staff to enhance the experience for visitors. She has helped put on special events, like recent movie screenings of *Twelve Years a Slave* that included the director, Steve McQueen; *The Book Thief* with lead actor, Geoffrey Rush; and *The Dallas Buyers Club* with actor Jared Leto. Carly keeps notes on the stories of survivors who visit the museum, whether they were hidden children or survivors of concentration camps, and has contributed a few biographies to the museum's collection. "Everyone's story is incredible," she said.

While working in the archives, Carly has come across intriguing items, such as a condensed milk can with the name of a girl, her school, and her grade written on it. This can, along with many other canned foods, was sent

to children in Europe from a parochial school in Louisiana during World War II. The boy in Europe who received this particular can was eventually able to find the girl who sent it from the information on the can. The two wrote letters to each other, and the girl continued to send him items long after the war. Years later, the boy, now a grown man, was able to retrieve his grandmother's necklace, hidden behind a brick in the fireplace in the family home. He sent the necklace to his friend to thank her. Carly said, "This collection – the can, the letters, the necklace – they tell a story."

Passion & Preparation

The academic field of public history, sometimes referred to as applied history, strives to make history relevant and useful to the public. Carly has no doubt that her internship at the MOT has provided her with exceptional professional experience in public history. She also credits her academic preparation at Franklin Pierce, and in particular her history classes, as giving her the skills and confidence she needed to be successful at the museum.

"The small size of my history classes and my professors' encouragement for all of us to participate in class discussions and to share our opinions helped me feel confident at the museum and able to offer my opinion when it was asked for," said Carly. "I relied on the research skills learned in my history classes as well," she added. Carly brings plenty of her own enthusiasm for history, but she does not hesitate to mention the passion her professors demonstrated for their subjects and how inspiring that has been.

Carly has advice for anyone contemplating an internship: Do it! She recommends applying to multiple organizations, and stresses the importance of being knowledgeable and passionate about each institution and its mission. After the MOT internship, Carly's plans included a three-month internship at the prestigious National Folklore Collection at the University College Dublin, Ireland. From there she hopes to stay on in Ireland to work and travel before returning to the U.S. to apply to graduate school.



If you can provide a high quality internship for a Franklin Pierce student please contact Rosemary Nichols, Director of Career Services at: nicholrm@franklinpierce.edu.