

## Will Holloway

I decided to apply for the internship with the Tennessee Department of Children's Services for two main reasons: I wanted to gain experience in the legal field, and foremost I wanted a glimpse into what I had been told was "third-world America;" where I would be awakened to problems that face lower-class citizens in rural Tennessee. From the first day on I was immersed in juvenile law and due to the hefty amount of case-work that DCS is responsible for I had plenty of work to do throughout the summer. Moreover, I felt as if I played a valuable role in the inner-workings of their day to day process.

Most of my responsibilities centered around helping assist Attorney James Stephens with his job as assistant general counsel for the Department. I spent much of my time drafting various petitions, motions, subpoenas and court orders. I was also able to accompany Mr. Stephens into court to take notes on particular cases and record the judge's final orders. This description may sound mundane, but it was constantly interesting due to the variety of issues that are intrinsically linked to child abuse cases. Of the cases I encountered over the summer around 70% were drug and/or alcohol related, and many of the families we assisted had a prior history of domestic violence issues. Therefore, I enjoyed an introduction to criminal law in addition to juvenile law. At one point during the internship, I was even fortunate enough to have the opportunity to sit in on a two-day criminal jury trial where two men were on trial for aggravated burglary and assault. And to further prove that my internship offered a variety of tasks, on several occasions I was able to accompany the Child Protective Services workers into the field to conduct home visits. These home visits involved us dropping in on the family uninvited and searching around for signs of foul play.

Thus, I found much satisfaction in the work, and I am happy to say that I went to bed at night knowing that I had been working for the "good guys;" playing a role, however small, in improving the lives of kids who suffer from abuse in some form. The work wasn't all that glamorous, and the graphic details of many cases don't attract the attention of an average American. But I am proud to say I had the opportunity to help people in need and enjoyed collaborating with some of the most hardworking, compassionate, and patient individuals I have met. I can't thank the Coffee County DCS enough for allowing me this opportunity and I cherish the skills and experiences I have obtained as a result of my time spent there.