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WKU seniors interning at Hospice of Southern Kentucky

By ALYSSA HARVEY, *The Daily News*, aharvey@bgdailynews.com
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When a staff member from Hospice of Southern Kentucky's new facility asked Clare Cherry to man the reception area briefly Friday morning, she didn't hesitate to help.

As one of three Western Kentucky University seniors interning at hospice this summer, Cherry - a health care administration major - saw it as another step in helping her reach a goal.

"I was interested in long-term care. The part I was most uncomfortable with is death," she said when asked why she pursued an internship at hospice. "I thought I could either pretend death didn't happen or I could face it. After I did volunteer training, I knew it was a good place to be."

Cherry - along with fellow interns psychology major Lee Adams and health care administration major Bo Smith - sat and talked about their nearly completed internship in the new center, which is designed to provide various services for terminally ill patients and their families.

"A professor sent me an e-mail with information about the possibility of an internship. It was a different aspect of health care," Smith said. "It was an opportunity to see a new facility built from the ground up and be a part of it."

Adams had already done an internship with hospice last spring as part of a psychology major requirement, and liked it so much she wanted to return. She also wanted to express gratitude to the organization that has personal meaning for her.

"Hospice had taken care of my aunt," she said. "I wanted to give back."

Some people thought it was weird that a psychology major would intern at a hospice facility, Adams said.

"A lot of people associate hospice with nursing or health care administration," she said.

Working for hospice can benefit many different majors, hospice community development coordinator Julie Pride, who supervised the interns, said.

"Part of being part of hospice is being able to meet people where they are," she said. "It's not a skill they teach at school."

Some of the things the interns have been involved in for the past couple of months include health fairs, public speaking opportunities about hospice, matching volunteers with patients, helping with hospice's Children's Grief Camp, doing television and radio interviews and planning for events regarding hospice's new facility, which is designed to provide various services for terminally ill patients and their families. Because Adams was interning in the



Miranda Pederson/Daily News Lee Adams (from left), Bo Smith and Clare Cherry are interns at Hospice in Bowling Green. The three have worked together to complete activities for the new Hospice facility on Scottsville Road.

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spring, she got to help with hospice's annual Chocolate Festival.

"Because we're a smaller nonprofit (organization), they had chances to be part of a wide variety of things they may not have been able to do at a larger place," Pride said.

As their internships come to a close, the three students said they have learned a lot over the summer.

"I've never worked anywhere professionally, but I have learned a lot about professionalism," she said. "You couldn't ask for better people to work with. Everyone shares the same vision and works toward it together."

Cherry plans to put her newly learned skills to work very soon.

"I've been applying for positions around town," she said. "It has been a good experience."

She said she'll miss going on patient visits.

"I liked seeing how the whole team worked together," she said. "They're an amazing group of people."

Smith said he enjoyed interacting with people from different organizations and doing the daily tasks.

"When you do things, people acknowledge it and appreciate it. Making the boss happy is a good thing," he said as he, the other interns and Pride laughed. "It's one of the things you can't learn in a classroom."

Dealing with the new facility's open house and reception taught him a lot, Smith said.

"The most work I put in was for that event," he said. "It was good to see it go so well and to have so many people there."

Pride said the interns did a phenomenal job.

"We could not have accomplished what we did this summer without them," she said. "They just worked together beautifully."

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