KidsVoice Legal Externship Program

KidsVoice, a 501(C)(3) organization, provides legal representation to 3,000 abused, neglected and at-risk children each year. Law students in our Externship program have the opportunity to advocate for the safety and well-being of children victimized by crime, mistreatment and severe neglect. Students accepted into the program will appear in court on behalf of our child-clients.

Our cases primarily involve the representation of children in child abuse and neglect proceedings involving the Allegheny County Office of Children, Youth and Families. Pennsylvania law requires that children in these cases be represented by an attorney.

The core of our Externship program is the successful training and supervision of our students, each of whom is teamed with one of our staff attorneys. KidsVoice attorneys are expert child advocate attorneys, with years of valuable experience. Student Externs will draw from our staff’s wealth of experience to gain insights and opportunities about the work and careers of child advocate attorneys.

KidsVoice utilizes a unique multi-disciplinary team approach in which our attorneys team with in-house Child Advocacy Specialists (CASs) who are experts in social work, mental health, education, child development, case management, domestic violence and substance abuse. Interns will also work with our CASs who can assist with understanding each child’s developmental needs and the placement and service options available in specific cases. Our team model ensures that each student receives the necessary resources and support to conduct the quality of investigation needed to render appropriate recommendations regarding what is in the best interests of our clients.

The KidsVoice Legal Externship Program begins with a training program designed to ensure that interns have the tools, knowledge and resources to successfully advocate on behalf of our clients. Upon completion of training, each Extern will be paired with an experienced mentor attorney. This attorney will guide the student through case preparation meetings, shadowing opportunities, provide instruction, and supervise the student in court.

We are pleased to provide this exciting hands-on experience and the unique opportunity to make a difference by representing and advocating for abused and neglected children. In addition to courtroom practice, student Externs obtain real life experience in meeting clients in their respective homes, working with other child advocacy professionals and advocating in various forums on behalf of our clients. By the end of the internship, legal externs should have a full understanding of what is involved in providing quality child advocacy to abused, neglected and at-risk children.
REQUIREMENTS: Students must meet the following requirements to apply for and remain in the program.

1) Students should be considering a career in child advocacy.

2) Time Commitment/Schedule Availability – To participate in the KidsVoice Legal Externship program, **students must commit either to a two semester long Externship or to one semester and one summer.** This time commitment is necessary because the objective of the Externship is to provide a comprehensive child advocacy experience with the potential for successful interns to be considered for future employment opportunities with KidsVoice. **For the semester long internship, students must commit to 16 hours per week**, including having a schedule of one day per week with at least six consecutive hours of availability for court. Any day of the week can be accommodated but the student must have the same day of the week available for court throughout the semester. The summer program is a ten to twelve week full-time commitment. Duquesne students who work at KidsVoice for the summer are eligible to receive a $3,000 Public Interest Fellowship from Duquesne. For more information, visit [http://www.duq.edu/academics/schools/law/clinical-legal-education/summer-public-interest-fellowships](http://www.duq.edu/academics/schools/law/clinical-legal-education/summer-public-interest-fellowships). There may be additional funding sources, including through the Allegheny County Bar Foundation and other sources.

3) **Student Practice Eligibility:** To participate in the KidsVoice Legal Intern Program, students must be qualified for admission under the Pennsylvania student practice rule. This means that students must successfully complete a class in Evidence before participating in the Internship. For more information about admission under the student practice act, also known as Pennsylvania Bar Admission Rule 321, please see [www.pabarexam.org/bar_admission_rules/321.htm](http://www.pabarexam.org/bar_admission_rules/321.htm)

4) Duquesne offers 6 credits per semester for the KidsVoice Externship. Because the Externship is 16 hours per week (four more than usual 12 hour minimum for a six credit externship), Duquesne allows students to apply the additional hours towards earning a pro bono certificate: [www.duq.edu/academics/schools/law/clinical-legal-education/pro-bono-program/students](http://www.duq.edu/academics/schools/law/clinical-legal-education/pro-bono-program/students)

5) We will consider 1st semester 2Ls if they commit to an additional two semesters or a semester and a summer after they are certified.

TO APPLY: Students who want to apply for the KidsVoice Legal Externship Program that begins in January 2015 should send a letter of interest and resume by **November 1, 2014 via email to interns@kidsvoice.org**. This is a competitive program and selected students will be interviewed as part of the application. Questions about the program should be directed to Jonathan Budd at 412-391-3100.