

I interned with Advanced Aftercare Services in Fort Walton Beach. Advanced Aftercare Services is within the Office of Juvenile Studies at the University of West Florida.

“It is the mission of Advanced Aftercare Services, in partnership with the Department of Juvenile Justice and the local community, to provide an array of community-based services to prevent and reduce juvenile delinquency. We are committed to a balanced approach that increases public safety, provides accountability, and affords opportunities for youth to develop into independent, adjusted, employable, resilient individuals.”

The goal of Advanced Aftercare Services is to help juveniles return to society. These juveniles have been in programs and are used to a structured set of rules. Advanced Aftercare provides the structure that these juveniles need to help them become a promising member of society.

We are able to use our knowledge of the criminal justice system to help the juveniles to understand why they need to obey the law and stay out of trouble. We have knowledge of what they have been through and what the consequences are when they break the law. The knowledge that I obtained while studying at the University of West Florida has helped me to be able to inform the juveniles and their parents of the different opportunities that they have within the juvenile justice system. The Department of Juvenile Justice is developed to help the children to become respected citizens, not to throw them in jail and never look back.

During the internship, I learned how to acquire the professional help and the support the juveniles need. I learned how to help them to return to school and perform any other

sanctions that the court ordered them to do. I also learned to prepare a case plan for the juvenile. This plan included his or her legal papers, medical papers and any other pertinent information. I visited with the juveniles several times a week. During this time, I would also write field notes about our visits. These skills will help me in many of the fields that I may pursue a career.

Interning with Advanced Aftercare Services has helped me to realize that most of the juveniles need someone to listen to them and help them when they have a problem. I believe that it has helped me to be more open and trusting with the juveniles. They are able to change and be a productive part of society. These juveniles need to have the training and education that they deserve. We do not want them to fall through the cracks of the juvenile justice system. Advanced Aftercare works with the children. They are more than a statistic. We, as counselors, see these children several times a week. It becomes our mission to help them succeed in whatever they do.

The Criminal Justice classes that I took while attending the University of West Florida have helped me tremendously during the time that I have been interning with Advanced Aftercare Services. I accepted the position with the basic knowledge needed to understand the processes needed to be used in the treatment of the juveniles. The terms used during the course of the internship were also familiar to me because of the prior criminal justice classes. I had knowledge of the juvenile justice system and this was an essential part of the internship. Advanced Aftercare has helped me to acquire the knowledge needed to further my education. This internship has heightened my awareness of the need for leadership within the juvenile justice system. I have made an educated choice to pursue higher education in order to become a leader within the

juvenile justice system. I do not believe that I would have chosen to continue my education if I had not interned with Advanced Aftercare Services.

Interning with Advanced Aftercare Services has helped me to realize that I want to work in the juvenile justice field. I have decided that I want to rehabilitate the children that are deemed to be "juvenile delinquents." This internship has helped me to understand that these children need our help and support, just as well as other children who have not been labeled delinquent.

This internship has been a great opportunity for hands on experience. It has helped me learn to deal one on one with juveniles within the juvenile justice system. I would recommend interning with Advanced Aftercare Services to anyone who has any idea to work within the juvenile justice system. This internship was the stepping stone to furthering my career within the Department of Juvenile Justice.