

# Shooting for Internship Success

## Hundreds Attend IMPACT Awards Celebration

By Karissa Bash

Experiential learning is a critical ingredient in Indiana’s workforce development strategy. With that in mind, the IMPACT Awards winners and nominees offer a promising indicator of our state’s future.

Indiana INTERNnet (IIN), managed by the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, is a statewide organization focusing on talent retention through increased work-and-learn experiences. On February 8, IIN recognized internship excellence at the 11th annual IMPACT Awards luncheon, sponsored by Ivy Tech Community College. Over 80 individuals and organizations were nominated for their leadership, hard work and ingenuity in their internships and intern programs in 2016.

The luncheon theme was “Shooting for Success.” Tamika Catchings – four-time Olympic gold medalist, former WNBA All-Star with the Indiana Fever and founder of Catch the Stars Foundation –

delivered the keynote address, “Scoring Big with Your Career.”

Catchings described her internships with the Phoenix Mercury and the WNBA league office. In addition, she shared four keys that helped her along her path to success and noted how everyone can apply these approaches to their lives.

1. Be open to new experiences and opportunities
2. Go over and beyond the call of duty
3. Never stop learning
4. Enjoy the process

The following winners were honored:



A record number of nominations were received for the IMPACT Awards. In inspiring remarks, Tamika Catchings demonstrates her greatness is not limited to the basketball court.



**Hannah Dodd** (Indiana Institute of Technology)  
Intern of the Year – College/University



When Hannah Dodd started her geographic information systems (GIS) internship with the city of Butler, she had little knowledge of the field. That would quickly change as Dodd was contributing to projects within just a few days of beginning in her position.

“Hannah’s ability to learn, to understand the purpose and focus on what we do here, and her strong work ethic made her an integral

and indispensable part of the team within only a week or two,” shares James Otis, GIS/IT coordinator for the city of Butler.

On her second day, Dodd and Otis were working on a time-sensitive project when they received another time-sensitive task of collecting data for a water service repair. Instead of delaying the second task, Dodd offered to collect the data on her own. She had only been shown the procedure once before, but she completed the work with ease.

“It was at this point I realized I didn’t have just a student, but a partner,” Otis affirms.

As a junior studying computer science, Dodd relied on her educational knowledge to assist with various aspects of her internship. She was able to work on public speaking and problem solving skills by conducting training sessions on a new technological system for the organization’s operations personnel.

“I have come to depend on Hannah and she will be sorely missed when her tenure has come to an end,” Otis admits. “It’s hard for me to imagine how I could be more pleased with an intern.”

**Kayleigh Duerksen** (Indiana University)  
Intern of the Year – College/University



An internship in one department can be challenging at times. Kayleigh Duerksen, however, interned in two departments at TASUS Corporation. Duerksen filled the need for someone to connect marketing and human resources (HR) for recruiting and outreach initiatives.

Duerksen, a junior majoring in human resource management and minoring in marketing, demonstrated excellent leadership

and responsibility by owning two major initiatives during her internship. One project was launching Facebook pages for each facility and developing a marketing plan to engage with the organization’s employees.

“Kayleigh recognized that Facebook wasn’t the place to promote our company or products; it was the place to promote and connect with our people,” explains Zoullin Ballman, business development and marketing coordinator for TASUS Corporation. “She has weekly posts highlighting a different employee from one of the manufacturing plants, she shares community and educational outreach activities our employees participate in and posts photos from company events such as the TASUS softball tailgate.”

The other project Duerksen completed was standardizing employee uniforms at all facilities to create a consistent brand image and cut down on costs. This was a major undertaking with both marketing and HR needing to collaborate to coordinate the logistics.

“The standardization and centralization of many tasks has ruffled feathers, and due to Kayleigh’s leadership during the uniform transition she was often in situations with unhappy employees,” Ballman describes. “She navigated through these times like a seasoned professional and ultimately brought all parties together and achieved the end goal.”

**Britney Arenas** (South Bend Riley)  
Intern of the Year – High School



The youngest of the summer interns at Bowman Creek Educational Ecosystem (see story on page 68) last year, Britney Arenas overcame her nerves and demonstrated her confidence during her internship. Her optimism, drive and skill in brainstorming sessions were among her greatest assets for the organization.

Arenas owned her suggested project of building a lending library in the community.

With the help of her father, Arenas designed and executed the lending library in a neighborhood park. She documented the whole process to share templates and the project budget for others to replicate.

“Britney was perceptive in taking into account the need to research and integrate multiple stakeholder needs and perspectives, including the addition of artwork on the side of the lending library, which promotes South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg’s commitment to the Mayor’s Monarch Butterfly Pledge,” according to Alicia Czarnecki, previous team leader at Bowman Creek Educational Ecosystem. “She successfully implemented the lending library during the summer internship and worked to promote its purpose and uses by appearing on the local news.”

Following the completion of the lending library, Arenas was offered the opportunity to include the Food Bank of Northern Indiana in a lending pantry. She is pursuing her goal of working to develop similar building plans for the Little Free Pantry, which will have a further-reaching social impact.

“Participating in an engaged internship helped to transform a clearly talented young student into a leader with the confidence to articulate and employ her skills in a real-world setting,” Czarnecki boasts. “While previously planning to leave her neighborhood and South Bend after graduation, Britney shared that she felt she could use her interests and talents to improve quality of life in her own backyard.”

**Katherine Larrabee**  
Intern of the Year – Non-traditional



Student, intern, single mother and caretaker are just a few terms to describe Katherine Larrabee. She tackled her busy schedule to complete an internship with DirectEmployers Institute (DEI) and graduate from Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne.

From day one of her internship, Larrabee showcased her professionalism and leadership. She was placed as a leader over her fellow

interns to help ensure efficiency and timely completion of projects. This display of professionalism was awarded by receiving more responsibility in her role, including representing DEI at important meetings.

During her internship, Larrabee was tasked with acquiring food donations from local restaurants to feed students during DEI’s summer program. Instead of securing food for the five days she was assigned, Larrabee doubled the amount of food and was able to feed 90 individuals for 10 days. This was accomplished by creating positive relationships and professionally following up with each restaurant to adhere to a time-sensitive schedule.

“Katherine always excelled in these situations by making lasting connections with everyone she met and by representing DEI in a way that was positive and refreshing,” offers Kasey Cross, DEI vice president of programming. “She did such a wonderful job that she has now been hired as DEI’s project manager to lead and guide the partner organizations DEI works with daily in several of their programs within Indiana schools.”

## **Darshini Render** (Purdue University College of Engineering) Career Development Professional of the Year



As the assistant director of student success for the Purdue University College of Engineering, Darshini Render does exactly as her title suggests – direct student success. She supports and empowers students to accomplish their internship and career goals. Her impact on the program is clear as she received two nominations. Both individuals noted Render’s excellent leadership,

professionalism and passion for student achievement.

“One can tell that she genuinely cares about you and is genuinely driven by other people’s successes,” notes Kaushik Manchella, one of the nominators and now a Purdue University graduate. “When students go to her for help, she goes above and beyond in connecting with them.”

Render started at Purdue University as career services consultant for international students. Almost three years later, she was promoted to her current role. Two of her major accomplishments are developing the Cross Cultural Leadership Program (CCLP) and managing the International Student Peer Coaching Program.

“Darshini Render’s stand-out qualities in communicating with students and employers are something that can be seen in the success of the organization,” describes Tony Orr, student leader of CCLP. “She is very good at checking in on all of her students consistently to make sure they are on the right path and keeping up with what they need to get done.”

Render is a motivator and a teacher of career development strategies. One noteworthy approach she is known for is relaying advice from previous students to those currently looking for internships. In addition, she facilitates connections between students to improve their networks and prepare them for the professional world.

“I would not be the same person I am today if I had not had the honor of meeting and working alongside Darshini Render at Purdue University,” Orr confides. “She has made me a better candidate and person for the future.”

## **Ambassador Enterprises, LLC** Employer of the Year – For-Profit



The Fort Wayne-based Ambassador Enterprises, LLC internship program is centered around the development of four professional skills: leadership, problem solving, project management and teamwork.

Interns participate in 11 weeks of programming that mimics a higher-education atmosphere; it is nicknamed “Corporate University.” The program’s syllabus details seven goals, six professional development outcomes, three reading assignments and additional information. Each intern will complete five deliverables during the program: personal assessments, various projects and assignments, performance evaluations, individual

development plan and a work journal.

“My major project was compiling a comprehensive analysis of the competitors of one of their holdings. They gave me a rubric and contact information for the CEO. I then had to develop the plan for how I would complete this project,” says Paige Stark, a summer 2016 intern. “I asked a lot of questions and was definitely out of my comfort zone, but grew immensely as a result of this experience.”

In the 2016 Ambassador Enterprises (AE) program, 12 interns worked on 150 projects across eight areas of business. They met every Friday for group development sessions led by Larry Rottmeyer, senior operations manager and director of the AE Intern Experience. This includes various learning activities or local business tours.

The interns also travel to another city for their Intern Business Study Tour and Retreat. The cities have included Indianapolis and Nashville, Tennessee. The retreat lasts four days and includes business tours, presenters and team-building activities. This is an opportunity for students to explore other cities and further their professional development.

## **DirectEmployers Institute** Employer of the Year – Non-Profit



DirectEmployers Institute of Indianapolis is a double winner in 2017, adding this honor to serving as the home for the non-traditional intern of the year. The program gives high school and college students the opportunity to learn and grow through innovative programming, group project work

and networking.

Interns begin the program with several days of “professionalism” training – punctuality, professional attire and behavior – to prepare them for the internship. They continue to learn and develop these skills through group projects, assignments and engaging activities.

The majority of the interns’ role is contributing to the coordination of a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Youth Enhancement Summer Camp. Interns are divided into groups to work on social media, student registrations, food donations and more. In 2016, the interns more than tripled the number of student registrations they were asked to secure.

Another major aspect of the internship program is networking. Interns attend biweekly meetings at the Rotary Club of Indianapolis to network with professionals and listen to engaging presenters. The interns are challenged to collect at least five business cards and the intern with the most cards wins a prize. This entices the interns to engage with professionals and grow their networks.

“DirectEmployers Institute’s summer internship program is one-of-a-kind in its ability to adequately prepare young people to take on the business world with confidence and poise, all while engaging their minds and hearts with projects that not only better their community, but themselves as well,” explains Kasey Cross, the company’s vice president of programming.

# Hobart High School, St. Mary's Earn New Award

Teamwork and the results it delivers are at the core of a new School Counseling-Business Partnership of the Year award presented by the Indiana Chamber Foundation. The inaugural winners are Hobart High School and the community's St. Mary's Medical Center (SMMC).

The honor was developed to recognize innovative approaches to college and career readiness of Indiana students. And since schools and businesses are teaming for that specific purpose, the award also presents a \$1,000 scholarship to a Hobart senior. Rachael Gayton, a 21st Century Scholar who will be attending Ball State University in the fall of 2017, was selected by the school to receive the scholarship.

Among the reasons the Hobart-St. Mary's alliance earned the award:

- Hospital sponsorship of Hobart's Promise Indiana 529 college savings program
- Establishment of a health care clinic in the schools to meet the needs of both students and their families
- St. Mary's providing a wide range of work-based learning experiences and credential opportunities for high school students

More specifically, the medical center provides over 50 students each year with the screening tests required to take part in the Emergency Medical Services program. It hosts approximately 30 students a year in a variety of internship and other learning opportunities. To accommodate one student's interest in health care administration, a SMMC team member changed his hours of work to ensure the student was able to participate in meetings and experiences.

Gayton is in her fourth year of the school's biomedical sciences program and interning at St. Mary's in the pediatric unit. She says that



The honorees include Janice Ryba (left), CEO of St. Mary's Medical Center; Rachael Gayton (third from left), Hobart High school senior and scholarship recipient; and Peggy Buffington, School City of Hobart superintendent.

her interaction with nurses and their willingness to share their experiences have solidified her plans to become a nurse practitioner.

"We are encouraged by the various work-and-learn and career mentoring partnerships between schools and local businesses and look forward to expansion of those programs," shares Christy Huston, executive director of the Indiana Chamber Foundation. "Congratulations to St. Mary's, Hobart and Rachael for their excellent work."

Danielle Adams, director of guidance at Hobart High School,

Continued on page 78

**ROSE-HULMAN**  
**Ventures**  
DESIGN · DEVELOP · DELIVER

**WHERE SOLUTIONS TAKE SHAPE**

We bring together outstanding students and technology-based companies to develop new products, specialized testing, process equipment, prototypes and software, and refine design of existing products.

[rhventures.org/solutions](http://rhventures.org/solutions)

## School Counseling Award

Continued from page 75

writes, “I can’t say enough positive things about our relationship with SMMC. They have truly gone above and beyond to help our students to succeed and pursue their postsecondary goals.”

And in the words of one teacher, “The students truly enjoy wearing their scrubs!”

The Indiana Chamber Foundation has conducted extensive research into effective school counseling practices. It is currently working with 15 districts (78 schools) that are redesigning school counseling programs as part of an up to \$30 million Lilly Endowment Comprehensive School Counseling initiative.

---

**RESOURCE:** Indiana Chamber Foundation school counseling work at [www.readyindiana.org](http://www.readyindiana.org)