

Internship Profile

Intern: Sushima Naraine



The Multicultural History Society of Ontario

The Multicultural History Society of Ontario (MHSO) has collected and saved over 9,000 oral history interviews, photographs and other textual resources from 56 different ethno-cultural groups in Ontario. The archival resources document the lives of groups who have built the multicultural Ontario that we know today. The Society is currently working on a 3-year project funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation to digitize a portion of these resources and develop a digital archive. The aim is to improve accessibility to these vital historical resources for all citizens of the province.

My internship concentrated mostly on fund development and marketing within the Society. Throughout my time, I was responsible for researching and creating proposals about potential grant programs, private foundations, and businesses that the Society could approach to obtain additional funding for the Trillium project. As part of this internship, I had the opportunity to contact philanthropic foundations to make requests for funding and attend fund development workshops presented by Heritage Toronto.

As part of my marketing duties, I was requested to create a newsletter to be sent out to the Society's members updating them on the various MHSO activities and projects. I had to consult with key stakeholders of the Society to determine what stories would best represent their growth over the past year. With another intern, I also had the opportunity to establish a Social Media Strategy and launch the Multicultural History Society on a few platforms – including Twitter. This has greatly improved the Society's public presence especially amongst young scholars and enthusiastic historians.

My experience at the MHSO was very rewarding as I was able to learn about the administrative responsibilities of working in a non-profit cultural organization. I was able to improve my grant writing skills and put my social media knowledge into practice.

The Canadian Cancer Society

The Canadian Cancer Society is currently planning for its 75th Anniversary taking place in 2013. My role in the Marketing and External Engagement department was to develop a timeline of the Society's history, collect archival resources from offices across the country for digitization purposes, and to record oral history interviews with volunteers and employees involved with the Society.

My internship was different from any other professional position I have held because I found myself in a very corporate environment. This meant that I had to adhere to corporate guidelines and be very flexible when dealing with gaps in each province's historical record. For example, some provincial offices could only provide a historical timeline while others were able to provide a bounty of photographs, plaques and marketing documents. This experience allowed me to practice my public history skills of compiling all of the materials to develop a timeline that incorporated important elements from each province yet still illustrated the Canadian Cancer Society as a united organization trying to eradicate the disease.

Overall the Canadian Cancer Society was an enjoyable place to work. All of those involved with this project were always willing to give their input and help to edit any content developed. In particular, my manager was always willing to let me work independently to complete each project while also paying attention to the appropriate archival principles.