

## Summer Internship Reflection by Sai

This past summer has been a very different experience for all of us, given the pandemic plaguing the world; however, this did not stop ASU Project Humanities from making the most out of the summer experience for its four high school interns.

I had heard about Project Humanities from my mom's friend and applied for a summer internship. I definitely did not know exactly what to expect, but I knew that I wanted to get more exposure to the humanities field, and ASU seemed like the perfect place to do it.

I've always felt that the best way to understand the humanities is through face-to-face connection; however, this summer's experience taught me that this is not always the case. I was still able to attend events and meet new people, all without leaving the safety of my home. Though I wasn't able to meet the team in person, I still feel like a part of the Project Humanities program, and I have thoroughly enjoyed my time interning this summer. My fellow intern, Diya Bala, put it nicely when she said, "This internship has not only given me helpful skills but also refined the skills I had. Even though it is not what I expected it to be (being completely online), everyone made it work and was super kind. I was able to make new friends and connections for a lifetime."

Diya has been a social media and research intern this past summer, and focused heavily on, "creating and starting up a TikTok account, researching for articles and books on each different podcast topic, and posting on social media regularly." Diya mentioned how one of the most important things she learned this summer was how to run a professional social media account. "I thought it would be easy being a social media intern," she said. "But it takes a lot of

behind-the-scenes work to create a post worth looking at.” Katherine Cohen, another social media and research intern at Project Humanities, described how she gained a great deal of new knowledge that will benefit her in the future. “I learned a lot about graphic design and marketing,” she explained. “I used new platforms that I wasn’t too familiar with at the beginning of the summer, but with the team’s help, I feel much more confident in my abilities!”

A huge part of Project Humanities this summer was starting and implementing the new virtual Podcast Club events. Every other Thursday, an online conversation was led by two facilitators discussing a podcast which should be listened to prior to the event. As the writing intern this summer, I wrote reviews on each event describing my experience attending it. I especially loved this assignment because I didn’t have any extremely strict guidelines; all I had to do was write how I felt about each event. I was able to explore my mindset on the topics before and after listening to others discuss it, and I was also able to gain so many new perspectives on the topics. Diya mentioned how she enjoyed that the discussions were not only restricted to the limitations of each podcast, but expanded past the original podcast into a discussion of its own and broader social issues--death and dying, menstrual equity, Black parenting and corporal punishment, youth mental health and defunding police in light of the recent racial unrest since the death of George Floyd.

Sasha Guntu, the homeless outreach intern this summer, worked on “posting engaging articles and donation updates/reminders in Service Saturdays Facebook group at least 3 times a week, writing Event Reports for Podcast Club discussions, using Mailchimp to send emails to Service Saturdays volunteers, creating donation database (filled with grocery stores, dental offices, and their contact information) and volunteer database, and calling stores/offices to solicit

donations.” Sasha also explained how one of the most important things she gained out of the program this summer was “learning a lot more about the challenges people experiencing homelessness have to face and what's being done in Phoenix to support these individuals. I also think I got pretty good at calling places and asking for donations and being prepared for everything they might ask. I also got better at writing engaging emails and posts to keep people interested so they actually read and respond.”

A trend I noticed when interviewing my fellow interns was that we all felt slightly unsure of the program when starting with the new online system; however, as the summer progressed and we got to know the Project Humanities team, we became far more comfortable with the entire situation. The fact is that as daunting as the difficult pandemic situation may have seemed, ASU Project Humanities held its ground and simply looked for a new approach (one that ended up working out quite well, I add). Though online interning may not have been the ideal situation, it turned out to be a great experience in which we learned to stay organized and punctual. Project Humanities was able to adapt to the new situation within the span of a few weeks, not letting the pandemic deter the program’s ability to introduce new topics and encourage *talking*, *listening*, and *connecting*, all of which I felt were achieved with great success this past summer.