

1. Discuss three staff members you worked with, what you learned and how.

1. Suska Holtzman

I worked with Suska during the 2008 New Beginnings camp as her “Assistant Dean.” This was my first intense experience with a staff member, and Suska was a great woman to work with. I learned the ins-and-outs of High Rocks camps, how to be an effective organizer, the traits that lend themselves to effective leadership, and most of all, how to be a positive presence in a girls camp. Suska is in love with every one of those girls, and I can only hope to be half as competent as she when dealing with high school kids. I learned from Suska by soaking in her positive energy and accepting the opportunities to lead that she gave me.

2. Erica Lipps

I got to know Erica through our Good Green Earth class. From Erica, I learned patience, a hell of a lot about environmental science, and how to be an effective educator. Erica is hands down one of the best teachers I have seen in action. She supported me in my role in class, gave me the windmill project to do on my own, and most importantly, gave me the space to sit back and just absorb a lot of information as a student. I love that Erica was so fluid with her plans; she lets education just happen. That is absolutely the greatest thing I have learned from Erica: the most effective educators make it seem like the lessons teach themselves.

3. Laura Doggett

I got to know Laura early on during camp with our audio training. From Laura, I have learned the power that just a few compliments and a lot of support can have on a person. Laura would always take time to give me some kind words, and I appreciate that more than she will ever know. Due in part to her constant support, I found myself striving to be more supportive myself and give credit when credit is due. This particular countenance of Laura is part of what makes her an exemplary interviewer and artist. I think Laura has helped me to be a more supportive and creative person.

2. Describe the most challenging project or role this summer? What did you learn from this experience?

The most challenging project this summer has been NettleFest. I worked on the programs, the tours, the tour booklet, the bake sale, set-up, ticket sales, cleaning-up, and now this newspaper article; NettleFest was by far the most tiring part of this summer. I learned so much during this whirligig of an experience. I learned so much about High Rocks history and theory from planning my tour, I learned how to organize and stage a huge, successful event, I learned the power of a few amazing people coming together, I learned about these amazing musicians and artists in the area, and so much more. I learned about how strong, determined, and successful every staff member of High Rocks can be when faced with a challenge, and how I can step up to the plate as well. I learned how beneficial an event like NettleFest truly is for a community like Hillsboro, and how it only takes a few committed citizens to change a community. NettleFest really meant a lot to me, and I hope to come back for the return of the nettles.

3. What skills did you gain from interning at High Rocks this summer?

Perhaps the greatest skill, or skill improvement, that I have learned while I've been here has been with interpersonal communication and relationships. I am generally anxious when in social situations, especially when meeting new people. I am so pleased that this anxiety has been significantly reduced thanks to my time here at High Rocks.

Oh my goodness have I learned more about teenage girls and how to get through to them! I feel so much more capable about my ability to relate to teenagers now, and so much more obligated to do so as well.

I've improved my entire social-justice lexicon. I've learned so many new ways to talk about change and be an effective communicator. I've learned a new way to look at and experience the world. I can't quite find a way to express just how much High Rocks has helped me view the problems (and solutions) within West Virginia. This internship has complicated things and made everything simpler at the same time. I can't wait to take this experience out into the world with me.

4. Are you a better teacher/facilitator than you were at the beginning of the summer? Discuss.

Yes. I am better because I helped to teach a class, because I worked individually with a girl on her AP English papers, because I taught a tile mosaic class, because I took the lead with our tour project, because I wrote (am writing) an article for the local paper, because I've been inspired to spread the word of High Rocks, because I would love to do some kind of social psychological research with High Rocks in the future, because I saw the change that High Rocks has made here and want to create that change myself. A small group of West Virginian women have facilitated so much change with this place, and I know I will be a better facilitator for having known them.

5. Has being at High Rocks affected your life? If so, how? Will your summer here affect your future? How?

Being at High Rocks has absolutely affected my life. I'm more out going, well-versed in the language of social change in WV, and more in touch with teenage girls. Additionally, I have benefited so much from the support of High Rocks. I know this is a place I will always be able to turn to. High Rocks, in my mind, is a rock, a destination, a lifeline in West Virginia. I know High Rocks can count on me to carry it with me, and I can count on High Rocks to make my home state a better place and support me in my future endeavors. This has been the best, most fulfilling summer of my life. I know I will always look back to this summer as the one that solidified my deep-seeded belief in the importance of practicing what you preach, of making academic theory applicable to real life, of using the power of intelligent people to make the world a better place. High Rocks will always be a model I will draw on in the future. It is hard evidence that the life I want to lead is possible.

6. Rank the 3 seminars (HR 101, Appalachian history, and HR and Development Paradigms), individual project, group project, and journals from MOST helpful to LEAST helpful. Why?

1. Seminars
2. Group project
3. Individual project
4. Journals

The seminars served as a fabulous introduction to this place. I cannot tell you how many times these topics of discussion have popped into my head during the last couple months. They really got me excited about my time here, and I feel that they are a perfect way to introduce the theory of High Rocks and also to ensure that people will take the wisdom of High Rocks away with them. I ranked the group project next because for me, personally, it is where I feel I took on the most leadership in this place. I also felt so connected to High Rocks with this project. I really came to understand the history and mission of this organization through organizing my tour, and I am still just so pleased that I got to introduce a handful of

people to High Rocks, that I will be a sort of representation of High Rocks to those who learned about its history from me. I was really honored to be a part of those tours. The individual project took 3<sup>rd</sup> here, because although I enjoyed conducting the interviews and am happy with my finished product, this project absolutely stressed me out. I think it was because I was already fried from the first camp, and we only had one computer to work on, and we would sometimes have to get up at the crack of dawn or work late into the night to get it done. Under different circumstances, I would have enjoyed this project a lot more. However, I do feel immensely more equipped to produce radio pieces and conduct interviews in the future. The journals took last here for a couple reasons. First, and most mundane, is because a lot of times they became an after-thought to me; I was so caught up in other things I usually forgot about them until the last minute. Also, I love the idea of having an emotional check-in with the staff, but I felt that a lot of the time the journals were swept aside by the staff during this jam-packed summer, which is understandable. Maybe the Journals could be replaced in the future by some one-on-one time with the staff, or the journals could be more seriously addressed in a meeting of some kind.

7. Should all High Rocks summer internships be for college credit? Do you work as hard (intellectually) and learn as much as you do in a college class? What would you suggest we add/take away?

In this specific situation, since I just graduated with my undergraduate degree, college credit wouldn't have changed to much for me in terms of my intellectual work here. But I most certainly feel that the experience here either equals or exceeds the brain-work of a college class. I am a big advocate of service-learning, and absolutely believe that you learn the most by doing. The only thing I think I would suggest adding is to possibly add a couple seminars throughout the summer. So much changes with your modes of thinking as you experience the camps and projects, and another intellectual, structured conversation as provided by the seminars would be a great place to infuse that experienced knowledge with theoretical framework.

8. Do you feel more prepared to be an advocate for social change? Why or why not?

This is a difficult question for me because I came here already an immense advocate for social change, but HR has shaped how I will approach social change and the community-building techniques I will use. The seminars have probably done more towards this end than anything else, because I really believe they set the stage for how I experienced and processed my time here. Yes, I have gained the tacit knowledge of how to organize events and people and how to be a more effective communicator, but that theory-based education will really help me take all that concrete information with me into my future world.

9. Do you see yourself continuing to be involved with High Rocks? If so, how?

Oh good lord, I hope so! I cannot tell you how excited I am to talk about assisting in having a High Rocks presence in Huntington. I would love to come back here to Pocahontas County for a summer camp(s) as well. High Rocks really has altered me in a meaningful way. I am so grateful for this experience, and would be tickled to death if I could have a continuing role in the phenomenal work of HR. I would also love to talk to the Women's Center folks and see if something between them and HR can be coordinated, like a possible spring break trip.

10. When you leave High Rocks, what are three things you could do to promote the internship program? Which of these are you willing to do?

1. I can spread the word through the Women's Center and my personal contacts about this opportunity.
2. I've been thinking what a great thing it would be to get the Women's Center or some other department (Counseling? Education?) to maybe pay to send an intern here.
3. I could speak at conferences or even campus events about High Rocks and the internship program.

I would definitely be willing to do all three of these things. Number one is already happening, I'm going to push for number two, and I'll seriously consider doing number three should the opportunity arise.

11. THE MILLION DOLLAR QUESTION: What is the magic formula that makes High Rocks work?

THE PEOPLE!!! Every single person brings so much to this institution. Every single person is strong and shining at one point and disenchanted and pessimistic at others, but the people in this place can always bring each other up. High Rocks has such a diverse supporter population; people from all over the country have worked here and brought their wisdom. High Rocks grows not with each dollar donated, but with each new soul who comes to this place. High Rocks has done a lot to improve my opinion of humanity in general and West Virginia in particular. Ever single day of this internship I was moved by what someone said or did. The people in this place are simple exquisite. It sounds like a simple formula, but with the people who are motivated to come here and dedicate time to this place, any challenge set before them can be accomplished. These women have come together to make High Rocks, and in doing so have made themselves into outstanding people, citizens, daughters, mothers, and scholars.

12. If you have suggestions or advice for program development at High Rocks, we'd love to have them. Please share.

I would suggest maybe not having an intern in the "Dean" or Wellness role for the first camp of the summer. Although I ended up loving my role and finding my own way to connect with the girls, I got really discouraged in the beginning because I felt like an outsider to the whole camp. Having the New Beginnings camp first with being in the dean role seems especially hard because not only are you adjusting to this life as an intern and learning how to interact with the girls, but the girls are also here for the first time and are maybe not as apt to connect with the dean or wellness as some of the older girls are. That said, I really did love being Dean.

A psychology of women and gender class during Camp Steele would be terrific. Who knows, maybe I'll be able to come back and teach one. ☺ I think the class could really help the girls to see how gender is socialized and women in particular are marginalized, and really how many gender differences, especially gender differences in the brain, are socially constructed. It's liberating to have the facts and theory ready when someone tries to make those antiquated arguments of female inferiority.