



# Glen S. Goldberg Scholarship Winner Mike McDonough Shares his Internship

## DAILY JOURNAL

Monday, June, 2, 2014

### Journal #1

The first week in Dublin has been awesome and very busy. I had the interview for my internship on Thursday and it went very well! I will be interning at Headway, a rehabilitation center for patients with acquired brain injuries (ABI). I am very excited to see the rehab methods that will be used with the patients and find that this is the perfect internship for me because I am interested in occupational therapy. Additionally, the brain injury aspect of the center ties in well with my minor in psychology and it will allow me to make the most of what I have been learning in my academics over the course of the last three years. Due to staff development, I will not begin going into the office until June 9<sup>th</sup>, however I was asked to complete an assignment this upcoming week illustrating common types of brain injuries, structures of the brain, what each structure is responsible, and

how damage to a particular area of the brain could affect a person's functioning. I look forward to starting my internship next Monday and cannot wait to get to know the people I will be working with.

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### **DAILY JOURNAL**

Thursday, June, 12, 2014

Journal #2

The first week of my internship has been amazing. I commute to Headways city center office on Mondays and Fridays, and to their Donnybrooke office Tuesday-Thursday. I began the week on Monday by taking the clients bowling, as I will be doing every Monday throughout the internship. The clients found bowling to be fun and exciting, and it helped them open up and talk a little about themselves. On Tuesday, we have our most impaired clients come in. Many of them were nonverbal and it was a challenge to understand some of them. However, they all had patience with me and I learned a lot from them. The biggest lesson I took away was that these people are all still very intelligent and talented in their own way. Many of them understood what was going on around them but had difficulties with communication and speech. Meeting these people

really helps you to take into account how lucky it is to be in good health and fully functional. Our Wednesday group is the highest functioning group. There was a huge difference between the functioning ability of the Wednesday clients and Tuesday clients, illustrating how variable brain injury can be. We taught the clients a little about the brain and also had a nutritionist come in to teach them how to read food labels and make healthy choices. The Thursday group was another relatively high functioning group and I really enjoyed the opportunity to speak with them and learn about their families and personal lives. On Friday we did a lot of administrative work such as organizing client files. All of the staff at headway has been more than welcoming and all seem to be such genuine people. I could not be happier with my placement. The therapists are helping to teach me how to talk with clients in a way to promote thinking and problem solving for themselves. This will be an extremely valuable skill to learn. I look forward to things to come in my internship!

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## DAILY JOURNAL

Friday, August, 22, 2014

Journal #3

Contrast business practices in your internship with business you are familiar with in the U.S:

In my experience, business practices here are much more laid back and casual. It is not unusual for the staff to arrive up to a half hour late. Nobody is offended by this and it really does not seem to be a big deal to them as long as you arrive within the hour. Also, the dress is much more casual than I expected. I have done some shadowing work at home and all of the OT and PTs I have seen have always been dressed in khakis and a polo at very least. Here everyone wears jeans. Furthermore, their topics of conversation are also more casual. It is not unusual for the staff to talk about drinking, hangovers, and what the good pubs are in the city. In comparison to home where it is seems unacceptable to admit that you “go ouu” and drink. Lastly, you get to work with everybody in the staff. The CEO of my company has his office on the same floor as the rest of the staff. He comes out and eats lunch with everyone, checks up on both offices, and is a

very nice guy. At home I feel like the bosses of companies do not get that involved with their business. I really enjoy the work environment here. It is very friendly and laid back. My opinion is that work is more enjoyable because of this. The atmosphere takes some of the stress off of always trying to be “perfect” which lets me really enjoy the job that I am doing.

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### **DAILY JOURNAL**

Wednesday, July, 2, 2014

#### Journal 4

In my experience, the Irish work place is much more casual than the American work place. It is said that the Irish tend to avoid confrontation and take the “polite” approach for most things. So far I have found this to be true. When my supervisor asked me to do something, she often does it in a suggestive manner, rather than an order. This is very typical for all of the staff members in my office. I think that it’s nicer to do things that way. Work is done out of respect for your supervisor, rather than just being bossed around and doing something because you were told to. In my opinion, the laid back nature of the Irish work place is very pleasant.

Additionally, there is no doubt that the Irish really enjoy going out and having fun. It is typical for them to go out to the pub almost every day after they get off work. This aspect of their culture promotes friendship in the workplace, as opposed to just “co-worker” type relationships. Again, I find that this makes work much more enjoyable. It is not uncommon for a worker to talk about their weekend, no matter what kind of shenanigans they got into. (Including drinking, hangovers etc...). I respect this because it makes for very honest and enjoyable conversation, similar topics of would most likely be considered unprofessional office talk in the States. This makes me realize more and more how “stiff” and boring the work place in the US can be. I heard a quote the other day that I find relevant to this topic “The Irish work to live, where Americans live to work.”

Lastly, it is important to note that my office gets by perfectly fine, even with their casual work mannerisms. At times they can be less organized than I am used to, however, they always get their work done on time and seem to enjoy doing it. I really enjoy the environment of my office because of this.

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## DAILY JOURNAL

Monday, July, 7th, 2014

Journal 5

“In your travels around the city/country, what preconceived impressions of yours did you have dispelled by direct experience with the people and culture of your new home?”

When first coming to Dublin, I assumed that the people here would be like people in any large city in the states. I thought they would be distracted with themselves, cold, and very businesslike. Fortunately, that is not the case at all.

Many of the people I have come in contact with in Dublin are extremely genuine.

Many of them have such an interest in people traveling and really love to ask about where I come from, what brings me to Dublin, and what I think about it.

The Irish seem to have a very welcoming culture, based around helping each other. Dublin is a huge city, but it still maintains a “small town” feel because of how kind the people they are, I have felt a real sense of community here.

Furthermore, I have traveled to Cork, Galway, and Belfast. Cork and Galway move at a much slower pace than Dublin. Everything seems so casual; the people seem to have the mind set of “I’ll get there when I get there.” It is nice to be in a place

without a rush. The locals seem so relaxed and happy. Conversely, Belfast in Northern Ireland (considered part of the UK) was much different than the cities in the republic of Ireland. It resembles a city that you would find in the U.S. The architecture was much more modern, and the people were focused primarily on themselves. It was not a bad place, but it did feel much more impersonal than the other cities I have visited. In conclusion, my travels have led me to believe that the Irish really are exceptionally kind. Many of them show such a strong interest in others, and an overall enthusiasm to help. It has been a very pleasant stay here, and it is refreshing to be around such nice people.

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## DAILY JOURNAL

Friday, June, 6th, 2014

Journal 6

“In all jobs we have customers. Describe the main customer of your company and your work unit. Do the employees in your firm view customers in the same fashion as U.S. firms in the same industry?”

The “customers” of my company are clients who have had acquired brain injuries. As a day service, it is Headways responsibility to facilitate rehabilitation activities that challenge the clients to communicate, think, and reason in an attempt to improve their cognitive abilities and overall social functioning. Headway treats their clients with tons of respect. The number one priority of the job is to help the clients. The staff are sensitive and patient and to each of the clients struggles. There is a lot of time put into each rehabilitation session to ensure that each of the clients are getting the most out of their time at headway. Furthermore, Headway’s psychology team offers support to the loved ones of the client who has been affected by an injury. I think it’s really great that they cover all aspects of coping and rehabilitation following an ABI (acquired brain injury).

My position requires me to be in constant communication with the clients. I have developed my work etiquette by watching how the other staff members treat the clients, and use this as a guide for my own interactions. This internship has taught me that the most important personality trait to have when working in a rehabilitation setting is patience. As far as healthcare is concerned, I would say that the US and Ireland have very similar views. Both understand the importance of rehabilitation services and how beneficial they can be to a person's recovery process.

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