

Hannah Berendzen

AFE Mosmiller Internship Report

August 30, 2021

There are very few things in this world that have common connotations to many varied demographics of people. But when people see flowers, give flowers, receive flowers; they do so in a common gesture. Flowers are happy, they are romantic, friendly, consoling, a sweet gesture. People like flowers- an uncommon link that we have to each other.

I have always loved flowers. As a horticulture major at my university, I always wanted to be able to work with plants, not only in a scientific capacity, but also in a creative one. The floral industry is notoriously hard to get into without experience; it's the vicious cycle of needing experience to get a job, but also needing a job to get experience. When I stumbled upon the American Floral Endowment and it's vast opportunities for college students, I immediately began applying for every internship and scholarship that interested me (there were a lot). But, as someone that had plenty of interest, but no experience with flowers, I thought my chances of actually receiving an internship were slim. When the American Floral Endowment notified me that I was a recipient of the Mosmiller internship, I was ecstatic and couldn't wait to see what this opportunity had in store for me.

During the summer of 2021, I began my floral design internship at A Moment of Grace Florist in Warrenton, Missouri. To begin with I was slightly overwhelmed. There was so much going on at any given time. I was handed a vase and free reign of the cooler, and was told to make whatever I wanted. For a student that has always worked in a field where there are very strict rules and guidelines to follow, embracing creativity and making "whatever I wanted" was a

foreign concept. But, I quickly figured it out. Through the next 12 weeks of the summer, I worked several days per week in the shop and gained confidence in myself and my designs. My responsibilities in the shop also expanded, and I was given more difficult designs to do, as well as answering the shop phones, taking orders, and helping customers.

A Moment of Grace florist kept a variety of business. The largest number of orders were vase arrangements put together for deliveries. Most of my design time was spent on these. We also did quite a few funeral orders each week, and while I was very daunted by the size and perceived difficulty of casket and standing sprays, they quickly became some of my favorites to do. A challenge that soon turned into something that I sought out because I enjoyed playing with different styles and sizes. I was also able to help the shop out with some special events, including dance recitals and weddings. The dance recital work entailed making hundreds of various sized flower wraps, while the wedding work was arranging centerpieces and various floral decorations, as well as setting up for the wedding on site. I loved the variety of work that I got to do, and the confidence that working at A Moment of Grace through the American Floral Endowment's connections provided me.

All interactions that I had with the American Floral Endowment were incredibly positive. My constant connection at AFE was with Candice Musgrove, and I would like to specifically mention her in this report. Candice notified me via phone call that I was chosen for the Mosmiller internship in June of 2020. She worked very hard with me to figure out a placement for the internship for that entire summer, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, no florist was able to hire me. Thankfully, Candice worked with me again in 2021 to find a host shop. Through the hard work that she put in during the spring, Candice was able to find and secure my internship with A Moment of Grace for the entire summer. I cannot commend Candice Musgrove enough; I

would not have had this amazing experience without the hard work that she put in for not only one, but two years with me.

Now, for the future. As a college student, the future is incredibly daunting. What do I want to be when I grow up? I have absolutely no idea. I'm just hoping to figure it out as I go. I have many options to choose from, and I don't doubt that I will try out many things and find the perfect career for me. I have done a lot of different jobs in my field, from farm work, public horticulture, and hydroponic urban agriculture, to floral design. I have enjoyed them all, but I honestly did not expect to feel the way about floral design that I do after this internship. *I love it.* I thought that working at the florist would be fun and relaxing, that it would be nice to be surrounded by flowers all day. But I did not expect to fall in love with it the way that I have. Flowers connect people. They're perfect for every occasion; they're happiness in a glass vase. Regardless of what career lies in my future, I have no doubt in my mind or my heart- flowers will be there. My feelings towards floral design are not what I expected from this internship. Not what I expected at all, but what I needed and am glad to have.

I would also like to thank Cathy Kohensky and Ainsley Farrar for agreeing to host my internship, and teaching me so much. I will cherish my time at A Moment of Grace forever!

Thank you AFE! I have attached pictures below of some of the designs that I did during this internship.



