Undergraduate Spotlight

Marie Avilez is a senior in the Dietrich College of Humanities and Social Sciences majoring in Ethics, History and Public Policy, with a minor in Psychology. Marie says, “My love for The Children’s School started Freshman year when I took Dr. Carver’s Introduction to Child Development class. I loved seeing the interactions between the teachers and the children during my observations for that class. In the spring of 2014, I took the Practicum in Child Development class, and began as an intern at the Children’s School. It didn’t take me long to fall head over heels in love with the school, the teachers, and most of all the children. I am naturally an introvert, so at the beginning it was hard for me to get right in there with the children, but the Children’s School really made me feel comfortable and confident so that I could do that. The Children’s School is a place where I am always comfortable, but I also always have the opportunity to grow. I love that every day I walk into the Children’s School and know that I will be challenged, supported, and ultimately learn something new. All of my family lives in Arizona and being across the country from them can be hard, but the Children’s School has become a home away from home for me. It is so rare to find a place in this world where you can walk in the door and immediately feel all of the love, care and respect around you. The Children’s School is that place for me, and I love every second that I’m here.” After graduation, Marie plans to return to Arizona, where she wants to pursue a Masters degree to prepare her to work with children who have special needs. She is currently considering occupational therapy and hopes to work in a school context.

Undergraduate Researchers in Training

Students in Dr. Anna Fisher’s Developmental Research Methods class are preparing their final projects for the semester. Though the research protocols are still being developed, the students are planning to study many educationally relevant early childhood tasks.

• One group is studying the effect of music tempo on the speed and accuracy of children’s tracing of simple figures to see whether the music alters the typical tradeoff between speed and accuracy that affects individuals of all ages on a variety of tasks.

• Another group is investigating whether physically holding a doll will help young children better imagine the doll’s perspective in a story, a task that is usually quite difficult for 3 and 4 year olds.

• The third group is exploring the impact of advertising on children’s toy preferences by contrasting the choices they make among gender-neutral toys when the toys are shown with a girl, a boy or no child playing with them.

Families whose children participate will receive fuller parent descriptions via the child’s backpack. Everyone can read the study descriptions on the Research Bulletin Board across from the Children’s School library. What an interesting set of developmental psychology topics!