

Diverse Students Get Valuable Externship Opportunity at Wilmington Law Firm



Wilmington-based law firm **Richards, Layton & Finger** is expanding its commitment to supporting Delaware youth with the launch of a new externship program aimed at local college students from diverse backgrounds. Building on their existing work with Delaware students from grade school through high school, the law firm is partnering with TeenSHARP, a Wilmington-based nonprofit dedicated to helping Black, Latino, and low-income students gain college admission and develop leadership skills.

The six-week externship program provides participants with a unique opportunity to explore various aspects of the legal field while gaining valuable experience and insights. The inaugural session took place in March, with two students selected to participate. During the program, these students had the chance to delve into areas such as business development and marketing, law library and record-keeping, pro bono work, community service, diversity and inclusion initiatives, and wellness.

Daniela Rosiles, a first-generation college student from Mexico, was one of the externship participants. Currently majoring in industrial labor relations at Cornell University, Rosiles expressed her gratitude for the program, highlighting the new perspectives it offered and its potential impact on her future career decisions. She emphasized her desire to utilize her career to serve her community, particularly working-class Latinos. Rosiles encouraged other local students to pursue similar life-transforming experiences through TeenSHARP.

TeenSHARP, now celebrating its 14th year, has been instrumental in supporting nearly 500 teens from Delaware and Pennsylvania. Beyond college admission, the organization is dedicated to guiding students toward achieving their professional and leadership goals. Atnre Alleyne, co-founder and CEO of TeenSHARP, stressed the importance of diverse perspectives and experiences in the legal decision-making process across various domains such as corporate law and criminal justice. Alleyne expressed his emotional response to working with Rosiles and underlined the significance of partnerships like the one with Richards, Layton & Finger in fostering a professional pipeline in Delaware.

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Danielle Nowaczyk, director of attorney development at the law firm, shared the motivation behind the externship program. It aimed to expose students to the range of professional opportunities available within law firms, not solely focused on becoming a lawyer. The primary objective was to provide access to opportunities and mentorship, enabling students to achieve their goals and navigate their chosen career paths. Nowaczyk emphasized the crucial role of mentoring, particularly for first-generation college students, and noted that such programs also serve as a pipeline for local students from diverse backgrounds to find employment within their home state.

Nowaczyk confirmed the firm's commitment to continuing the externship program, with upcoming sessions scheduled for the fall and winter. Each session will welcome at least two selected students. The firm recognizes the potential ripple effect of even the smallest partnership, aiming to make a positive impact on the community one child at a time.

Rosiles's externship experience solidified her belief in her potential and highlighted the significance of representation and success for first-generation college students from diverse backgrounds. She shared her joy and pride with her parents and acknowledged that her experiences were beyond their wildest dreams. Rosiles expressed gratitude for the opportunities she has been blessed with and her realization that she is paving the way for others.

In summary, **Richards, Layton & Finger**'s new externship program provides local college students from diverse backgrounds with an invaluable opportunity to explore the legal field and gain practical experience. Through their partnership with TeenSHARP, the law firm fosters a professional pipeline and supports underrepresented students in pursuing their career aspirations. With plans to continue and expand the program, Richards, Layton & Finger aims to create lasting change in the community and inspire future generations of diverse legal professionals.