

Calvin Spanish major Michaela Meckes committed to a fall internship at Roosevelt Park Ministries, a non-profit organization in one of Grand Rapids' Latino communities. She learned so much from her experience in non-profit program development that she decided to continue the internship into the spring semester. The same decision was made by Nichole De Vries, another Spanish major, who is helping to organize and teach ESL classes at Roosevelt Park Ministries. She began the internship in the fall and has continued into the spring, for which her enthusiastic students are very thankful.

Because the internships are structured programs allowing students to work alongside professionals, these two Calvin students have benefited greatly from their participation. Michaela, for example, has a second major in business finance and has gained experience in writing grant proposals and in preparing financial reports.

Some of the programs that she has helped with are "Walking with the Wise" (for seniors), exercise and cooking classes for the community, and after-school programs for children.

Because Michaela speaks Spanish almost exclusively with those around her, her ability in Spanish, including her fluency and use of technical vocabulary, has continued to improve since returning from the fall 2014 semester in Peru. Also she can now recognize the different dialects of Spanish spoken around her (putting into practice what she learned in her Calvin linguistics class). She has likewise expanded her knowledge of Hispanic cultures through meeting many new people from different areas of the Spanish-speaking world and through experiences such as eating



*pupusas* with her colleagues. She has improved her abilities in web creation and in writing technical English and Spanish, and she has learned a great deal about how a non-profit organization operates and raises funds. Last, but not least, Michaela now has many connections in the Grand Rapids Latino community and with various businesses in the greater Grand Rapids area--and she has valuable experience to add to her resume.



During the summer of 2015 the Spanish Department worked to create 15 internship positions that require an advanced knowledge of Spanish, and Michaela and Nichole are a couple of the students who are taking advantage of these opportunities. Other students have worked or are working with organizations such as the Micah Center, Bethany Christian Services, Grandville Avenue Arts and Humanities, La Voz (Spanish-language newspaper), and Farmers Insurance. So far the organizations have been enthusiastic about the Calvin students who have worked with them, and our students have been enthusiastic about all they have learned through these opportunities.