



Board & Fellowship Acknowledgements from 2017 Summer Fellows

Jackie Abrahante

IRTS Summer Fellow sponsored by NBCUniversal

Interned with NBCUniversal Ad Sales

This summer was definitely one to remember! I wanted to say thank you to everyone on the board for being so kind, thoughtful, and willing to help shape us fellows and guide us towards success. Not everyone can say that they've met executives and CEO's of world renowned companies. I, for one, am extremely thankful for those that took the time to pencil me into their extremely busy calendars to help ME succeed in my future endeavors. I thank you all, and IRTS as a whole, for molding me into the outgoing woman I am today that strives for nothing but the best. IRTS taught me that in order to be successful and rise to the top, I have to be willing to go out of my comfort zone. Again, thank you all for making this summer the greatest one yet!

Kevin Abreu

IRTS Summer Fellow sponsored by National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences

Interned with *The Rachael Ray Show*

Being a 2017 IRTS Summer Fellow was by far one of the most rewarding experiences I've ever had. This summer was nothing less than perfect. I had the opportunity to be in a program with highly intellectual and creative individuals. I was immersed in all things media, and had the opportunity to walk through the doors of some of the world's most innovative media companies and organizations (Facebook, Google, Spotify, and CNBC, to name but a few). Being a 2017 Summer Fellow, I gained a wealth of knowledge and for that, I want to thank all the IRTS Board Members. I've only been out from the program for a few weeks now, but I still feel the impact it has made on my life. The IRTS program has added a new layer of confidence to my life. In addition, I have gained a lengthy list of reputable contacts that I know I can turn to for guidance and mentorship. If ever I want to share some exciting news about my career or I'm conflicted on an issue, I know my IRTS family will listen and be there for me in a way that no one else can. I also know that they will always have my best interest at heart, something often difficult to find.

Living in the heart of New York City for two months opened me to new possibilities. There is no way that I would have had the opportunity to live in Union Square on an intern wage, let alone on West 13th Street! My experience this summer has assured me that I am exactly where I want to be. I live, breathe, and sleep media. From improving my interviewing skills during our mock interviews to scheduling informational interviews, I know that I can do it all. I will forever be indebted to the IRTS Foundation. I owe my life, career, and current dream job at MTV to this phenomenal organization. There is a fire inside of me that was ignited the moment I received my acceptance into the program. I know that I'm ready to take over the media world but, is the media world ready for me? I guess we'll have to wait and see.

Tom Austen

IRTS Summer Fellow sponsored by National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences

Interned with CBS National News Investigative Team

My experience with IRTS has given me newfound confidence, life-long friends and insight into an industry that before, felt impossible to break into. I have the confidence to tell myself I can get to where I want to go. Likewise, I have the confidence to tell myself I need to improve in order to excel in this ever-changing media landscape. Perhaps most importantly, I have the friends & mentors to help guide me in the right direction. And, I feel as though I have a foot in the door (or many doors). I certainly couldn't say that three months ago.

Nora Bess

The IRTS Helen Karas Memorial Fellow sponsored by Dan Karas and Rick Sirvaitis

Interned with Viacom Program Acquisitions Team

When I visited New York as a teenager, I was awestruck by how behemoth the city seemed. It was simultaneously the most terrifying and exciting place I'd ever been to; but, I knew that if I found a way there, really great things would start happening for me.

Throughout the course of the summer, the city seemed to get smaller and smaller in comparison to the mammoth image of the city I'd had when I was younger. While part of this was figuring out how not to get lost on the subway, a lot was due to the warmth and support of the IRTS community. Every IRTS event, every conversation with an IRTS alum, every connection with my peers in the fellowship made the media industry and the city seem smaller and less intimidating. Before this summer, I thought that getting into the media industry was something of a pipe dream. IRTS has made me realize that a strong support system and a good work ethic can make any challenge much smaller.

Rachel Bouley

IRTS Summer Fellow sponsored by Hubbard Broadcasting

Interned with WCBS-TV News

This summer was a life-changing, career-shaping experience that I will forever be grateful for. It seems like a dream looking back on it now; living in safe, clean and free housing in the heart of New York City, allowing me to focus on networking and professional development rather than paying the rent on time. All of our events were amazing, and it gave me such a deeper understanding of the media industry as a whole. I got to go behind-the-scenes at places I couldn't dream of visiting; Good Morning America was the best day of my life. I grew up watching that show, it's what inspired me to become a broadcast journalist, and there I was taking a selfie with Michael Strahan and chatting with Amy Robach, just incredible! Being a part of IRTS revitalized my inner confidence and desire to achieve my dreams, and through networking and my information interviews, I realized there are so many different paths you can take to reach your goals and make a difference in this world. I can't wait to be a part of the IRTS family for the rest of my life and serve as a mentor and friend in the future.

Emily Bowman

The IRTS College of the Holy Cross Fellow sponsored by Crown Media Family Networks

Interned with Tremor Video Marketing/Communication Team

I could not have asked for a better 'next step' after graduation than the IRTS Fellowship. My incredible networking and internship experiences this summer opened my eyes to so many opportunities within the media industry that I had never before considered and offered me valuable direction in my career path. The fellowship allowed me to spend the summer learning and exploring the industry so that now, I feel confident and passionate about my decision to pursue a career in media. On top of that, my peers in the fellowship quickly became not only good friends, but people from whom I could learn and grow. Every interaction I had this summer, from informational interviews to friendships formed while exploring New York City, has shaped my career goals and helped me develop as a young professional. I am incredibly grateful for this unique and terrific opportunity - thank you so much!

Imelda Burgan
The Thomas S. Murphy Fellow sponsored by ABC National Television Sales
Interned with ABC National Television Sales

Echoing the statement of many fellows that have gone before me, IRTS has truly changed my life. As someone who always had a passion for media but lacked the access and network to break into the industry, IRTS provided me with a solid foundation to bring my dreams to fruition. Over the course of nine weeks, the fellowship opened my eyes to a wide range of sectors within the industry as well as companies on the cutting edge of media and technology. I also formed an incredible and lifelong bond with the other fellows, each of whom shared my passion.

In addition, my internship at ABC National Broadcast Sales provided me with a host valuable and transferrable skills. Moreover Debra O'Connell, my supervisor Daria Nachman, numerous former fellows, and members of the Board offered me their valuable time. They provided wonderful insights, shared personal narratives, and offered unwavering guidance. My IRTS experience culminated with the opportunity of a lifetime for me work at one of my dream companies, Fullscreen Media.

I am forever indebted to IRTS. Lauren, Joyce, and Katharine are truly my guardian angels and I cannot thank them enough for seeing my potential and giving me the confidence to forge my own unique path. I'm proud to say I am now part of the IRTS family and cannot wait for the opportunity to provide mentorship to future fellows.

Casey Carty
IRTS Summer Fellow sponsored by Turner
Interned with Turner Ad Sales

The most interesting thing, for me, about the IRTS Summer Fellowship is that not only was it a life changing experience, but it was one that I never could have predicted. When I sat down and thought about how I wanted my career path to take off after college and the steps I would take to get there, I had no idea IRTS even existed. I thank my lucky stars every day that I found it.

IRTS allowed me to enter a group of people with so many of the same drives and passions I had. It allowed me to be unabashedly ambitious and opened doors to make my dreams come true. The experiences we had this summer taught me, shaped me and inspired me. The people I met shared their dreams and pushed me to fight for mine. I will never forget this incredible summer, in this incredible city. THANK YOU IRTS!

Kahlita Finger
IRTS Summer Fellow sponsored by Facebook
Interned with Facebook

There are no words to express my gratitude for the IRTS Foundation Summer Fellowship. This summer, I worked at Facebook, which prior to the program, I could only dream of. This program forced me out of my comfort zone, presented many new opportunities, and provided me with an unforgettable experience. In addition, I gained a host of new connections, a bunch of new friends, and even bigger family. Thank you to all of the IRTS Board Members for helping to make the fellowship program possible and our dreams into reality! A super huge thank you to Alvin (and Maureen, his assistant) for answering my random pings, finding time to meet up, and helping me with my intern project! It truly meant more than you'll ever know! IRTS has definitely made an imprint on my heart and I am forever indebted.

Faith Gamble
IRTS Summer Fellow sponsored by Facebook
Interned with Facebook

THANK YOU! This summer has been a dream. As I sit here on my last day at Facebook I keep pinching myself to see if it's real. I can't believe I had the opportunity to intern in New York City and build connections with wonderful people in the media industry. I've always knew I wanted to work in this industry, but being from Ohio I had no clue how I would do it. This fellowship has opened me to so many opportunities and I will be forever grateful for them. Please let me know if you all need anything! I am heading into my senior year, and want to continue strengthening my connections with the IRTS community. I owe so much to all of you, and appreciate your dedication and hard work on the IRTS Board!

Lanier Gray
IRTS Summer Fellow sponsored by Jason Krebs & Debra O'Connell
Interned with Freeform Ad Sales

I cannot express enough how much the IRTS Fellowship means to me and all those the Foundation touches. From the very beginning, everyone from Joyce to Lauren to Board Directors stressed the idea of collective uplift for those in this industry. Every single interaction I had this summer was one step closer to the community they spoke about that encompasses genuine support and inclusively. I owe my optimistic view of the industry and my professional development to this fellowship. I learned valuable skills at my advertising sales internship at Disney ABC Television Group that I know I can apply to any position in the media industry. More importantly, I developed lasting friendships with fellows and made new connections with professionals that will guide my personal journey and my career going forward.

Cole Johnson
The University of Iowa/Jerry Feniger Memorial Fellow sponsored by Friends of Jerry Feniger
Interned with Townsquare Media

My summer within the IRTS Fellowship was something that I will never forget. My journey about finding the fellowship is a little different from everyone else's. I first learned about the program from my internship coordinator when I was a freshman in college. Since then, I have been working to build up my resume to be ready for the application process. When I got the call from Lauren, I was ecstatic! I honestly couldn't believe that all of my work had finally paid off and that I was moving to the greatest city in the world.

This program not only met my expectations, but greatly exceeded them. One thing that I didn't expect to encounter was the vast network of media professionals I was going to meet. I not only met some incredible professionals, but I made friends with some of the brightest people. The 2017 Fellows made the city feel just like home and that is not an easy feat when you come from a small town in Iowa! My summer had some challenges that I didn't expect and those friendships with the other fellows are what made everything easier.

I just wanted to take a moment and thank the IRTS Board for helping oversee such an incredible program. This program truly changes lives. I would also like to thank Lauren, Joyce, and Katharine for always being so helpful in assisting me on my journey. Finally, I would like to thank Ashley Schwartz and Andy Meyer for being two of the most incredible bosses.

Thank you everyone for giving me this opportunity. I cannot wait to see how this program grows and how it helps the next class of fellows.

Jackson Kurtz

IRTS Leibner Cooper Summer Fellow sponsored by Leibner Cooper Family Foundation

Interned with CBS National News

Where do I start? I guess back to that the warm February day when I found out I was going to be an IRTS Fellow in New York City. The excitement was unbearable for a city that I have been trying to get to my entire life. I couldn't wait to meet like-minded people and take in the city. Little did I know, that I was going to be rubbing shoulders with some of the media industry's top professionals, along with other 32 incredible fellows. A group of extraordinary individuals with different racial, social, and economic backgrounds with common goals to change the world. We made lifelong friendships that will forever change the course of our lives. As I finish my last week of the summer, I can only think of how remarkable our time together has truly been. I reflect back on Orientation week, when we all felt overwhelmed, scared, and unsure of what we got ourselves into. However, we did not throw away our shot (Hamilton reference) and the opportunities we had to network, attend meetings, and explore the city have been life-changing. We had the opportunity to connect with some of the top executives in this industry, at companies such as CNBC, Google, Facebook, ABC's Good Morning America, Spotify, Complex, United Talent Agency, NATAS, Nielsen, and Unilever. I am more than grateful to have these experiences. I cannot thank Lauren, Joyce, and Katharine enough for choosing such passionate, and kind individuals, all aspiring to be future leaders in the media industry. To all the fellows, I love all of you and I will see you all back in the city soon.

Ariel Leconte

The IRTS Neil Postman Memorial Fellow sponsored by Jack Myers

Interned with MediaVillage

During our first week in the IRTS program, we sat across the room from the IRTS Board of Directors; nearly eighty individuals, each giants of the media industry in their own right. We sat and listened to them shower us with praise and unending faith in our abilities. At that moment, I held back tears because I was listening to industry leaders promise to support my dreams in this journey and the reality of where I now stood began to set in. I have had more ups and downs in my career and life path than I care to count and completing my master's degree, I believed, would be one of my greatest accomplishments; but as it turns out, being one of the thirty-three IRTS Fellows this summer was even more rewarding. IRTS has pushed me to believe that more is possible for me than I'd previously imagined. It gave me the gift of perspective, exposure, and support in a way that I can't possibly imagine getting anywhere else. Being a part of and learning from IRTS, I can say with full conviction, has changed my life and I don't know that there will ever be enough ways for me to say thank you for everything that it's given me.

Robert Lemus

The IRTS Thom Casadonte Memorial Fellow sponsored by Bloomberg

Interned with Bloomberg Media

This summer was something straight out of movies. An opportunity I thought I could never achieve. I grew up believing that NYC was my dream destination. It was where I wanted live, work, and spend my life. IRTS and Bloomberg changed my life, and made my dreams come true. Thanks to IRTS, I was able to get experience that no other internship or program could've possibly offered. The network I made is almost unimaginable, and surreal. I hope that in a year, when I graduate, that I can continue my dream in NYC and pay back the IRTS Board and administration for the opportunities they granted me. I truly owe my entire experience to them.

Nick Lewandowski

The Perry Sook Fellow sponsored by TVB

Interned with TVB Business Development Team

IRTS brought me the best summer experience of my life. I'm reluctant to say there's another foundation in this industry that is backed by such distinguished board members who truly care about preparing the bright minds of tomorrow. Whether it was coffee with a recent fellow alum or breakfast with Frank Sgrizzi, it was incredible to have such access and stimulating conversation with media inspired individuals. These conversations had me hanging on to every word uttered as I wanted to soak it up like a sponge. I cannot wait to work alongside the industry's best and brightest.

Melanie Lockett

IRTS Summer Fellow sponsored by ESPN

Interned with ESPN TV Ad Sales

Being a part of the IRTS fellowship was an amazing opportunity for me. I can honestly say that this summer has been one of the best summers of my life. This program surrounded me with thirty-two other fellows who were all motivated and driven. During my time in this fellowship I was also able to meet and sit down with different executives, each of whom helped me gain new insights on the media industry as a whole. I learned how important it is to build and maintain relationships in the industry. I am truly grateful and appreciative for this network and the experience the IRTS program has given me.

Samantha Mayhew

The IRTS Ari Bluman Memorial Summer Fellow sponsored by GroupM

Interned with GroupM Broadcast Media Team

This summer was truly (and I don't use this word lightly) life-changing. I learned and grew an incredible amount and I owe it all to IRTS. I am still stunned by how welcoming everyone involved with the fellowship has been. I now have a firm path for what I hope to pursue after graduation and I am beyond excited to continue being involved with IRTS. I cannot thank each of you enough for making all of this possible.

Melanie Mueller

IRTS Summer Fellow sponsored by Horizon Media

Interned with Horizon Media Multicultural Brand Strategy Team

I cannot put into words how thankful I am for IRTS and all the amazing people I had the chance to meet. I had the best summer of my life and am still in shock that I was selected to be part of such a life-changing program. IRTS opened so many doors for me, and I am so grateful for all the opportunities it gave me this summer and for the rest of my career. I met some of the most passionate, driven and kind people in the world who inspired me to make a difference in this world with their stories and determination. Everyone associated with IRTS always had a helping hand and went above and beyond to make sure all the fellows got the most out of their summer experience in New York. I cannot thank you enough IRTS, Lauren, Joyce, Katharine, Horizon Media and everyone who made this summer so special and memorable.

Shad Murray

The Mark Mackenzie Memorial Fellow sponsored by Friends of Mark Mackenzie

Interned with CBS Radio Integrative Marketing & Events Team

After running across a Facebook post from a 2013 IRTS alum, with a link to the 2017 IRTS application, I decided I would step out of my comfort zone and apply. I had no idea what IRTS was or what it entailed. After researching it on their website for about an hour, I knew this fellowship program was made for students like myself. I never in a million years expected to be back in New York for another summer, and I never in a million years would've thought so many strangers truly cared about my success and growth as much as the IRTS Foundation did. This summer was the best summer of my entire life and I will forever be thankful that IRTS selected me out of thousands for this once in a lifetime opportunity. Thank you so much to Lauren, Joyce, Katharine, the entire Board of Directors, Mark Mackenzie, Friends of Mark Mackenzie, and all of the former IRTS alumni for making this summer possible!

Michelle Nwokedi

The IRTS University of Pennsylvania/Lou LaTorre Fellow sponsored by Bruce Lefkowitz

Interned with Fox Networks Ad Sales

I still can't believe I was chosen to be a part of this remarkable fellowship alongside 32 other inspiring individuals. Now that I am at home relaxing, I have taken some time to reflect on this summer. To say I am lucky and grateful to have been a part of IRTS is an understatement. My main goal for the summer was to learn as much as possible. I wanted to learn all about the industry as well as about different companies. Through all of the networking events, informationals, interning at Fox and conversations with the other fellows, I have learned more than I could have ever imagined. So, thank you. Thank you IRTS Board Members. Thank you, Lauren, Joyce, and Katharine, for choosing me to be a part of this fellowship. Without IRTS, I would not have as much confidence as I now do going into my Senior year. I am so excited to see where life takes me, and can't wait to start my career :)

EJ Paras

IRTS Summer Fellow sponsored by Google

Interned with Fullscreen Integrated Marketing and Video Labs Teams

My acceptance into IRTS is my proudest achievement so far to date. I hadn't even the smallest idea of what doors it would open for me, what opportunities would be presented to me, and above all, what amazing people I would meet, talk to, and befriend throughout the experience (that frankly has just begun). I really believe in the mission of IRTS: access, education, and diversity. Around me throughout the experience was a group of eager young people from different racial, geographic, and socioeconomic backgrounds united together with common goals and interests: to create; to innovate; to make a difference; to change the way we all see the world. I can speak for myself when I say that I knew I had these goals, however lofty they may be; I wasn't sure how I'd be able to accomplish them, but I knew I'd have to work to reach those goals. IRTS was the goal and the place to be a part of, but even though the summer fellowship recently finished, this is only the beginning. I know I have to keep grinding, hustling, and working relentlessly to make it and survive in the industry, but it's something that I believe each of us who's been through the whole shebang this summer can do. The numerous exclusive events and visits with major companies; the various influential figures and industry titans; the close mentoring, reachability, and openness of all the professionals I've had the privilege of meeting this summer... priceless and invaluable. I'm entering my senior year of college enlightened -- practically a new person, but at the same time, it was a part of me that just had to be unearthed, and IRTS was that enabler for me.

The fact that each Fellow this summer was sponsored is a marvel in itself, and a testament to everyone's faith in IRTS. Every person I've encountered through IRTS is so driven and successful; we can only hope to continue this trend!

I'd love to thank the IRTS Board of Directors for continuing to support the Fellows year after year. My fellowship was sponsored by Google, so I have to first thank Tara Walpert Levy. I'm so grateful to have learned more directly about the industry from Antonious Porch, Darius Myers, and Gail Tifford -- future opportunities already seem more attainable with Gail offering to look over my resume and giving me pointers/advice for an upcoming interview. I only hope to return the favor to a young rising professional in the industry down the road; I'm indebted to this program and only wish that it continues for years to come in order to really build the future media leaders.

Board & Fellowship Acknowledgements from 2017 Summer Fellows

Sharon Park

IRTS Summer Fellow sponsored by Viacom

Interned with Viacom Marketing Insights & Strategy Team

From hearing about IRTS to now, at the completion of the summer, the whole premise of the Fellowship still feels too good to be true. Thankfully, the summer was actually that incredible. To be in NYC, a city that seemed slightly impossible and unattainable in the mind of a nonnative, backed by some of the most successful industry professionals, was an experience I won't ever take for granted. Thank you for enabling me to create goals I never would have known existed, let alone thought I wanted, by being a part of this community. Thank you for sharing your experiences, stories, advice, and time. Words couldn't describe the feeling of possibility I have after this summer.

Alexandra Patterson

IRTS Summer Fellow sponsored by Turner

Interned with Turner Ad Sales

I have had an unforgettable experience as a fellow in the IRTS Summer Fellowship Program. I interned at Turner and learned about ad sales, social media advertising, and branded content. I worked with inspiring and helpful individuals and had hands-on experience in the media industry. Orientation week was an intense immersion into the vibrant media world. All of the events and companies that we had the opportunity to visit showed the diverse offerings within the media industry. I am grateful for all of the people who scheduled time to speak with me, those who offered career advice, the relationships that were formed, and the willingness by all that I met to help. This summer I was able to build my networking skills and develop as a person and as a professional. Thank you to the past fellows, IRTS Board Members, host companies, Lauren, Joyce, Katharine, and Turner for an inspiring and transformative summer.

Sharmin Rahman

IRTS Summer Fellow sponsored by Simulmedia

Interned with Simulmedia

A simple thank you does not merit what IRTS has meant to my professional career.

Midtown Manhattan was my backyard this summer--although I was born and raised in Brooklyn, the city continues to amaze me--not the skyscrapers and fancy building, but the people that fill this place with life. I was able to meet many of these amazing individuals through IRTS, individuals who were passionate about media, creative content, news and more at places like CNN, HBO, Google, and Facebook. In addition to all the networking opportunities that were handed to me, I was immersed in a 9-week internship at Simulmedia, a start-up in the industry that is taking media planning and buying on another level with its revolutionary technology. I was able to talk to former fellows and board members about my research project, all of whom had a strong willingness to help and provide their insights.

I had multiple informationals a week where I was able to learn the various aspects of the media industry. Orientation week, panels, and one on ones I had with executives such as Rahul Chopra, Gail Tifford, Alan Cohen and more, allowed me to gauge the careers paths one can take in the industry. It has been three weeks since the fellowship has ended--and I still have meetings scheduled with board members. The IRTS fellowship was not a temporary endeavor, it was an opportunity that has resulted in an infinite number of open doors for the rest of my career.

Thank you Lauren, thank you Joyce, thank you Katharine, thank you Board Members! Thank you for believing in all of us and continuing to push us beyond our limits.

Treasure Roberts

IRTS Summer Fellow sponsored by Rajah Maples

Interned with NBC Nightly News with Lester Holt

After a four-step application process that lasted from October to March, I was fortunate enough to become an International Radio and Television Society (IRTS) Fellow. As a part of the summer fellowship program, I had the wonderful opportunity to intern at NBC Nightly News with Lester Holt. The day I received the call from a NBC Nightly News producer informing me that I got the job was the day that changed my life forever.

Two-months spent in New York, the city that never sleeps, opened my eyes to bigger opportunities. Working at NBC Nightly News helped me grow as a journalist. I was able to pick the brains of media professionals like NBC News correspondent Rehema Ellis and even the famous Lester Holt. Receiving advice from those who were once in my shoes inspired me to continue reaching toward my goals.

I delved into several fellowship activities including tours and presentations. I networked with several people from companies like Spotify, Facebook, Google, Nielsen, Fox and many more. I was even given my fifteen seconds of fame on the Good Morning America show. Everything I experienced this summer has changed me for the best. I am forever grateful for this opportunity I received and plan on maximizing every skill I learned going forward.

Thank you so much to the IRTS board and everyone who had a hand in making this possible for my fellows and I. You all are truly selfless and wonderful souls. As I continue to grow and begin excelling in my career I will never forget to advocate for this exceptional fellowship program.

Lauren Smith

The IRTS Leslie Moonves Fellow sponsored by CBS Television Station Sales

Interned with CBS Television Station Sales

Thank you so much for all that you all did for us this summer. It's rare that we can get the time to talk to people of your position. We appreciate your honesty and advice. Thanks for giving us the tools to dream bigger.

Dymond Spells

The IRTS Summer M. Redstone Fellow sponsored by CBS Television Station Sales

Interned with CBS Television Station Sales

From June until now, IRTS has truly changed my life forever. This program has brought out the best in me not just professionally, but even more so personally. Through IRTS I was able to strengthen my courage and build my confidence. Before this program I probably would've never stepped out of my comfort zone to do informational interviews with top executives. I remember my first informational meeting and how nervous I was to even ask Rashan Lindsay a question. Fast forward to my last informational with Debra O'Connell, and my confidence had improved so much that I couldn't stop asking questions.

I wouldn't trade this experience for anything in the world. Thank you again for this wonderful opportunity!

Michael Tatar

The IRTS Brooklyn College Fellow sponsored by Scott Herman

Interned with WCBS Radio 880 AM

This summer of the IRTS Fellowship was nothing short of spectacular. As illuminating and informative as the company visits and media speakers were, I also learned more about myself. Prior to IRTS, my place in the media industry was sort of like an unassembled jigsaw puzzle. This summer allowed me to put those pieces together. I learned to live on my own, maintained a job in the media, had the opportunity to learn more about myself, and spent time with individuals who had the same passion and desire to find their own place in the industry. Additionally, I had the opportunity to nurture my strengths and identify my weaknesses through informational interviews with top media professionals. My puzzle may not be 100 percent complete, but this summer fellowship blessed me with the confidence, fortitude and knowledge to find my rightful place in the industry and to blossom and thrive. Years from now, I will remember this summer as when my media career truly began, and I have IRTS to thank!

Erin Torres

The IRTS Joanne Mercado Memorial Fellow sponsored by Nielsen

Interned with Nielsen Partnership Team

My summer as an IRTS fellow was a time of learning, growth, exploration, and excitement. It has exceeded all my expectations. Not only was I able to visit offices, like Facebook and Spotify, and learn from some of the very best in the media industry, I was able to do it all while surrounded by equally motivated individuals who were also passionate about the work the industry is doing. Through all those experiences, I was able to build bonds with my peers and relationships with every person I met through IRTS. This summer has cemented my decision in pursuing a career in the media industry and has made me excited to see what the future has in store.

Many thanks to all the members of the Board of Directors for their words of encouragement at the Newsmaker Breakfast, because those words motivated me and framed my outlook for how much I could learn and accomplish in the weeks to come. Also, a big thank you to the Board of Directors for taking the time out of their schedule to meet with us and provide us with an inside look at their area of the industry. Your insight and advice has proven invaluable not only for career exploration, but also as we begin our professional careers and begin our job searches. Many thanks to all of you for the work you put into IRTS and for making this summer experience possible for all the fellows.

Eric Uzick

IRTS Summer Fellow sponsored by Fox Networks

Interned with Initiative

As fellows, we are all grateful to the board for giving us this opportunity to learn and grow in the city. The amount of professional advice and experience that is given to us is unparalleled. But for me, and I'm sure many other fellows, the experience means much more to us than an opportunity to fortify our future careers. For me, New York represents both the media industry as well as the physical embodiment of how big and full of opportunities the world is. Going to our respective colleges and growing up in various parts of the country, we often forget how much of a bubble we all live in. This fellowship is a reminder of how big and amazing the world is, and how a little hard work goes a long way to letting us experience that world to the fullest. I used this analogy quite a bit during the fellowship, but I think it rings pretty true to all of our experiences--the fellowship makes our world a much bigger, better, and beautiful place, expanding our opportunities and perspectives, and for that, we are all incredibly grateful.

Becca White

IRTS Summer Fellow sponsored by Turner

Interned with Turner Entertainment Ad Sales

Growing up in Tallahassee, Florida, I always felt like a "big fish in a small pond" and had dreams of moving to New York. However, I had no connections in the Big Apple and, even after applying for 70 internships in the city, struggled to find a placement. I can confidently say that the day Lauren called me to tell me I was accepted into IRTS was the happiest day of my life. I am forever indebted to IRTS for this opportunity. My experience at Turner and my informational this summer solidified my future career goals and gave me the confidence (and connections) I needed. I plan to return to New York next summer after graduation, and I already cannot wait! Thank you again for everything you do, both for your respective organizations and for IRTS. This foundation has such a massive impact on the lives of so many students. I will never forget this summer, and I credit any and all future successes to the IRTS Board of Directors, Lauren and Joyce. Thank you!

Ariana Yaptangco

The IRTS City College of New York Fellow sponsored by Betsy Frank

Interned with ELLE Magazine

This summer has been an incredible opportunity to learn and grow within the industry. I was so fortunate to meet industry professionals that have my best interest at heart. Additionally, I have made lifelong friends that support each other wherever possible. As I move forward in my career, all the contacts and relationships I have made will definitely help me reach my goals. I know the IRTS summer fellowship was a rare and special time in my life, and I truly enjoyed every minute of it.