

Staff Spotlight

Kevin LaMonica – summer intern



What led you to the Begun Center?

Ever since I was young, I've always liked making my voice heard and now, I am a passionate activist within my community, continuing to speak up through my participation in my school district's Superintendent's Student Advisory Committee and Ohio's 11th Congressional District's Youth Advisory Council for Congresswoman Marcia L. Fudge.

But following the death of 17 students and teachers at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, the committees and calls to my senators was no longer enough. So, in that spirit of making my voice heard, I became one of the organizers of the March For Our Lives

here in Cleveland, Ohio.

Ever since, I have been outspoken about the much needed reform of Ohio's and the nation's gun laws through serving on panels at various forums including an event at the City Club of Cleveland on school safety, as well as various speaking engagements including at St. Dominic Church in Shaker Heights, OH and the Federated Church of Chagrin Falls.

My work on gun violence prevention led me to Dan Flannery, the director of the Begun Center, who has also been speaking out recently on the issue of gun violence.

What are your future plans?

I plan to graduate high school, then attend a 4 year university to major in international relations. After completing my education, I hope to work in the government because I want to improve the lives of others and create a more just and equitable society.

What do you like to do in your freetime?

I really like to read (when I can find the time). I'm currently reading *The World As It Is*, a new memoir of the Obama White House by Ben Rhodes, former Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications under President Obama. I also love listening to music, watching TV (*Madam Secretary* on CBS is a personal favorite), and going out with friends.

If you were given \$1000 and had to spend it on something fun for yourself, what would you buy?

I would probably use the money to travel. I love going to new places all over the world and experiencing new cultures. Traveling is such an enriching experience that's also a lot of fun.

Who is one of your role models and why?

Brittany Packnett is definitely one of my role models. She is an activist (like me) and she was heavily involved in the organizing of the protests in Ferguson after the shooting of Michael Brown. She now continuously speaks out against racial inequality in the United States and actively works to create a more just society.