

Kate Bruining | ICCF

My name is Kate Bruining and I worked at ICCF as an assistant to my boss, Sheryl Baas.

I enjoy reflecting on my encounters with people of all different backgrounds. Whether it was while working at a site or picking up orders; meeting new people gave me great insight on the diverse community in the Grand Rapids area.

On a particular site, me and Dane were painting a handrail when a group of a dozen young children ran down the road near us. After a few more passes, a very young girl started to sing along to the music we were playing. Soon enough, more joined in her singing and two teenagers and a band of young children had been formed.

This was such a memorable experience for me, seeing how easily community comes together and can be formed. I see more love in the world, and more opportunities to create bonds and friendships. This reflects directly to the book we read over the summer, Tattoos on the Heart. The book is a collection of stories based on the author's experience in the gang community. He experienced threats, oppression, push back from the community, and gained so many meaningful relationships with gang members.

I worked at ICCF from June to the end of July nearly every day, and yet it never felt like work to me. I felt welcomed into a family of people purely focused on the goal of bettering others' lives. My experience at ICCF was like no other and will forever be a chapter of my life I look back on with gratitude.