

THE STORY GOES | BEING AN INTERN | SOFIA & AUDREY

MOLLY: Hey! It's Molly, and I'm with SA2020, and this is The Story Goes, a collaborative partnership between SA2020, the local nonprofit that drives progress towards a shared vision of a thriving San Antonio, and KLRN, your public television station. We got together to tell the more complete story of San Antonio, so we've spoken to people from nonprofit organizations and the City of San Antonio, who are just like (quiet voice) quietly, (normal voice) and sometimes loudly changing the way we do our work here in our community. And this time, well we decided we also wanted to showcase some rock stars, who aren't running nonprofits, but who basically are, as interns. (AUDREY quietly laughs) Um, and that's what I thought would be a really cool opportunity, not only for them to come in and talk about their work as interns, but to also more specifically talk about college, and high school, and mostly because I don't remember, it's been a very long time. [\(1:02\)](#)

SOFIA: Yeah, just life as a teenager.

MOLLY: What does that even feel like anymore? And um, Sofia and Audrey are interns at SA2020, but they've interned for multiple years through multiple programs, and we are going to talk about that. But we know in San Antonio that we don't have a jobs problem. We are consistently hearing these stories that are hitting us in the media and with politicians generally that (mimics) "We have a jobs problem." And it's no, we have a super low unemployment rate, our underemployment rate is a challenge, um but we actually have a workforce problem. So we have a bunch of jobs and not the workforce necessarily to fill those jobs and what might we be doing better as a community to help our homegrown workforce get into those jobs. You two, I mean I believe the children are our future. You teach them well, you let them lead the way. Whitney Houston said that originally, and I just like to repeat it because why don't we talk more about Whitney Houston?

SOFIA: She's an icon. [\(2:05\)](#)

MOLLY: (admiration sigh) Uhh, I love her so much.

SOFIA: (overlapped) Legendary, yeah.

MOLLY: Sofia, talk to me about—you're both eighteen now.

SOFIA: Yeah

MOLLY: Audrey just turned eighteen!

AUDREY: Yeah, three, four days ago?



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MOLLY: You're like *officially* an adult.

AUDREY: Yeah, I can vote! (2:18)

MOLLY: You can vote which is so important.

AUDREY: (overlapped) Yeah, I'm already registered.

MOLLY: I love that you're already registered. Um eighteen years old, both just graduated from high school. Sofia, where did you graduate from?

SOFIA: I graduated from Thomas Jefferson High School.

MOLLY: (loudly) *Jeff!*

SOFIA: Yep! Go mustangs!

MOLLY: That's nice, and where did you graduate from Sofia? (SOFIA gasps)

AUDREY: (quietly) Audrey.

MOLLY: Whoops, Audrey

SOFIA: Oh no!

MOLLY: See this is the problem, see I'm just like they're both interns, they are not separate identities.

SOFIA: (overlapped) We are just one!

MOLLY: It's just one in general. Audrey, where did you graduate from? (2:45)

AUDREY: I graduated from the International School of the Americas, which is a public magnet on LEE High School's campus.

MOLLY: Okay, so like on the northeast-ish side of town. And it's tiny, ISA inside?

AUDREY: Yeah, I graduated with like 115 other students.

MOLLY: Okay, I know (in reference to Sofia being shocked).



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SOFIA: I graduated with 300- something, yeah.

MOLLY: Yeah, it was a bigger—to be fair, I graduated, a minute ago, um and I think there was 700 people in my graduating class. I mean, I grew up in Corpus, and it was like five high schools. Unlike here where there's, I can't remember the exact count, but I think each one of the people who graduated with you (in reference to AUDREY) could have gone to their *own* high school and graduated as a class of one. *That's how many* high schools we have here. You then decided to go off to college, but stay here, in San Antonio. I want to talk to you about why you chose to stay in San Antonio and fulfill this college destiny. Why did you decide to go off to college? Right, we know that our college enrollment numbers in San Antonio are really low. What was it that compelled you to go to college? And I realize that these are big existential questions. But I feel like you both have also spoken beautifully, not only in our office, but generally. You've written blogs for SA2020, you've spoken very specifically about it. Why did you decide, "Hey, I'm *definitely* going to go to college?" I like that you both look at each other. Either one, jump in! (SOFIA giggles) [\(4:12\)](#)

SOFIA: Um, I guess I'll go first.

MOLLY: Okay.

SOFIA: I decided to go to San Antonio College, um—

MOLLY: (excitedly) Community College! Shout out!

SOFIA: (matches energy) Yeah!

MOLLY: As somebody who went to community college, I'm like (sing-song voice) yeah! Shout out!

SOFIA: Um, well it's very important to me to continue my education that way I can teach what I do to other people. As you know, I'm passionate about art. And you know like, sort of like, that culture, if that makes sense. But it's always been a part of me and a part of my school life as well. [\(4:48\)](#)

MOLLY: Art has?

SOFIA: Yes, art. I started doing art when I was about eight years old. From then on, I just carried on. I thought I might not be good at math or science—

MOLLY: Shout out



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SOFIA: Yeah. But I am sort of good at reading and writing, but mainly art.

MOLLY: Tell me what kind of art you picked up at eight years old. Why were you like, “Hey, I’m going to art?” (ALL giggle) I turned that into a full verb! [\(5:21\)](#)

SOFIA: Yeah, yeah! Um, so really what happened is that my parents got divorced, so it was just sort of this weird thing that happened. So, everyone, what we knew, sort of dissipated. So, we were trying to find ourselves again as a family of, let me see. One, two, three, four now!

MOLLY: Yeah, like a different family unit.

SOFIA: Sort of like, functioning in a different way, and finding a new schedule, and a new routine to like find ourselves again, as one unit. So we spent more time alone, mainly because we were trying to find ourselves, be in center, um and so I really picked up art. Mainly because there was just a watercolor set laying around, and so I was like that looks fun!

MOLLY: Ah, you just *picked* up watercolor?

SOFIA: Yeah, watercolor! (MOLLY laughs) Like a watercolor palette.

MOLLY: I’m literally looking at you because I feel like I’m a pretty creative person, but I would never just be like, “Oh yeah I’m just going to pick up this watercolor.” That’s hard! (ALL laughing)

SOFIA: Yeah, water coloring is hard. I still don’t know how to professionally do it, but it’s really fun. [\(6:37\)](#)

MOLLY: And now what kind of art do you do?

SOFIA: Now I do digital art. Yeah, on ProCreate on my iPad, given to me by Clubhouse to Career.

MOLLY: Nice.

SOFIA: Yeah, um it’s funded through Bank of America.

MOLLY: Clubhouse to Career funded you’re – what is it?

SOFIA: My iPad.



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MOLLY: You're iPad, okay. (laughs) That just made me sound so old. (mimics old person voice) "I'm like what did they buy you, girl?"

SOFIA: Nintendos.

MOLLY: (laughs) You playin' Mario Brothers on the computer? (7:05)

SOFIA: Yeah, um so, you know, I just found out that art is something that I could pick up and call my own. You know, my other sisters have their own thing, and I have my own thing going on as well. So it was like finding your—

MOLLY: Your niche. Your thing. When you say that you want to go off to, when you were like, "Hey, I want to further my career because I wanted to teach others this love of—" You want to be an art teacher?

SOFIA: Yes.

MOLLY: And that's been *the thing* you want to do?

SOFIA: Since around like eighth grade, I was like there is a field for this. So, actually I've had a lot of good art teachers, but some of them, they were kind of like meh. They were just kind of there just to be there, I guess. Really what I want to do, I want to incorporate other studies into my art. Instead of just doing an art piece, I would just ask them to write an essay, MLA format double spacing, so that way they can get situated with what they're going to use later. You know, because when I went to high school and when I started to do AP English, I didn't know what MLA formatting was because no one taught me really. And so, when I got to the ending of my junior year, they were just like, "Oh, you need to do this."

MOLLY: And it's important?

SOFIA: Yeah. So, I had to learn it by myself and learn you know how that whole thing goes. I want to introduce my future kids to how to function and how to incorporate art into their other areas. (8:53)

MOLLY: We've talked about this before, I love having an interview where it's like I know all these things about you, and we've had these conversations. But I also took out a nugget just then, which makes me feel like a complete slacker. Um, and that is this idea of, "Hey, I don't want to just teach art. I want to give life skills and other educational tools inside of art. It just speaks to what art is capable of doing for students, generally, which I appreciate. I'm going to punt over to you, Audrey. You, went through ISA, which is a project- based learning group as



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well, right? Not your typical, you go to seven classes and the bells rings, there is collaborative group work and that kind of thing at ISA, correct? [\(9:38\)](#)

AUDREY: Yes, for sure.

MOLLY: And ISA also links some of their work to SA2020.

AUDREY: Yeah, they did. I, just my senior year. The senior year students had gone through three years of project-based learning, and that is usually created for us. We are super fortunate to go on travel trips, but our senior year after going through those three experiences, we create our own. So we planned a whole trip to DC in small groups. My topic was transportation. We looked at SA2020's data looking through what are the gaps in a cause area, and again I looked at transportation—so there's a lot.

MOLLY: (jokingly and overlapped) There are *no gaps* in transportation in San Antonio, Texas. (AUDREY & MOLLY laugh) [\(10:16\)](#)

AUDREY: Yeah, so we put together a project and thought, how can we make an impact in this cause area? We met with a bunch of experts in Washington, DC., so I went to the US Department of Transportation, and then I came back, took all that information and came up with a plan for what a local policy we could implement here.

MOLLY: Have you given that policy to any lawmakers in San Antonio?

AUDREY: I haven't, but I definitely know I should! [\(10:42\)](#)

MOLLY: You know, you know some people who can make that happen?

AUDREY: (laughing) Yeah.

MOLLY: This is me, wink, winking. Hey, let's have this conversation. Um, talk to be about then why you decided, a. Why San Antonio? Why did you decide to stay here for college? And where are you going, and what do you want to study?

AUDREY: Okay, so yeah, I'm going to Trinity University in the fall. I'm *very* excited. Um, like Sofia, I come from a single parent household with three other siblings. And I was super fortunate to have, my mother is an educator, so she's just a big proponent of just like learning—

MOLLY: Those teacher moms.



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AUDREY: Yeah, they're *crazy*. (MOLLY & AUDREY laugh) Yeah, but I love her. So I always knew that pursuing education and just a love for learning is something I'm very good at. I went through a college search process, and I got into some schools outside of San Antonio, and I visited them, but I felt like just because of the connections and internships I had previously, it made me feel I have something more to give here, and I'm not ready to leave, or maybe I won't be, because I have a passion for serving my community. I've learned that through mentors and lessons I've learned at ISA. So at Trinity, also through those internships that were civic based like working at the City of San Antonio and now at SA2020, yeah. So I'm going to be an urban studies major and a math minor. I'm not really sure where the math plays in, I just really love math.

MOLLY: I love that. (AUDREY laughs) It's so outside of like who I am as a human, where I'm like I know math is so important, and also make friends with people who do math. (AUDREY & MOLLY laugh) I love that you sort of, in these different spaces, come together in an internship that allows you to meet people from across the city, and realize, to me-- I know it sounds so silly that I'm going to make this connection, but we just did StrengthsFinder today, and we know that I make connections. The idea that SA2020 came together to basically show that people *across* the community, no matter where you come from or who you are that we can come together when it comes to common goals. Um, and actually make those goals happen if we are working together, and I think what intrigues me about internships is that you consistently land in a place where it's like maybe this is going to work, and maybe it's not. In the process of that, you then meet people that you probably would have never met, if you had not taken an internship and found yourselves in a small little office together. The two of you have so many commonalities, not just that you order the same food every single time—(13:17)

SOPIA: Exactly. (AUDREY laughs)

MOLLY: You order the *exact same things* when we go to lunch. But also, your upbringings, how your households were, your desire to give back civically. I want to talk about your internships, generally. Both of you have come into internships in a different way, and both of you have been doing internships for a minute. Um, Sofia, you said Clubhouse to Careers earlier, that's through Family Service, right? You've been involved with Clubhouse to Careers for how long? (13:49)

SOPIA: Um, this would be my second year. Last year, I was sort of their guinea pig. Yeah, so they're like figuring it out.

MOLLY: So this is a brand new program for them?

SOPIA: Yeah, basically. So, last year I was with Maria Roblado, who was *so nice*. She saw something in me that I didn't at the time. She saw a lot of perspective that I didn't see quite yet. I praise her a lot because she did send me to Boston. She put her neck out for me, to



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nominate me to go to the teen summit in 2018. Um, and so there we talked about global issues and what's happening in our neighborhoods, how we can change it to better—not only for our communities, but for ourselves. That sort of led me to be like I really could get into this. This sort of made my teaching career or future really concrete in what I wanted to do in the future. So C to C has really given me a lot of opportunities to reach out to other people and see what I can do with my skills. Not necessarily on pen and paper, but digitally. That was never an option for me before that whole program. Um so, it's more of like getting opportunities for free. You know, I didn't see a lot of that when I was growing up. So the fact that it was offered to me for free to go on all these field trips and seeing all these programs that I can access online at the Teen Tech Center at the neighborhood place, it was so awesome! It was like something I had never seen before. [\(15:47\)](#)

MOLLY: Yeah, that's amazing. I have a question for you on that, but I have a feeling *you* are also, Audrey, are going to say something that you can both answer anyway. So Audrey, you talked about you had been at the City of San Antonio as an internship, was it always in your brain, "Hey, I want to go into public service?"

AUDREY: Um, not really-- not on a local level. I think when I was a freshman, I remember doing projects in my WorldEng, we combined World Geography and English because ISA believes those are so interconnected like you can't really separate them. Through that I had really awesome teachers—Bradley Dehart and Kyle Anderson. We watched this TED Talk, and it was about the Dangers of the Single Story, and we learned about climate change. So I thought I would go and do a lot of international diplomacy, stuff like that. But then when I became a sophomore, I got appointed to the Youth Commission. Through that, I started to meet a lot of people because we would go to events and want to talk to young people. There I met, MOVE Te-- MOVE San Antonio at the time, but MOVE Texas, and I became an intern with them. I went to a lot of events with them as well, and that's where I saw Councilwoman Ana Sandoval speak for the first time at a civic event, and I just thought she was so awesome, so I got really brave and introduced myself to her. She offered to let me go shadow the Council offices, and I was like, "Oh, this is super cool, and I'm learning about what the City does, what are City leaders do." And so through that, I just started to follow them around a lot, and then eventually I saw that—

MOLLY: But not like in a creeper way. (ALL laugh)

AUDREY: No, never!! I saw that the HR department and SA Works partner together to have internships at the City in lots of different departments based on your passions. I got placed with Council, there is only two spots for that, so I feel super fortunate to have gotten one.

MOLLY: That was amazing!



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AUDREY: So I spent the summer with them, and through that I made connections with City Councilman Courage, which I actually live in District Nine, so I spent my whole senior year working in his office. (18:04)

MOLLY: Okay, so you, both of you spoke about this idea of being brave and taking the opportunities that are sort of put in front of you, and I so hope it doesn't sound like (funny voice) "Tell me, little youngins what this is about?" But I feel like there is a component of, like something that is innate inside of a person, or is it something that can be learned to take the opportunities in front of you? I think about being eighteen years old and being in community college in Corpus Christi and working at the GAP—also I still wear it, it's fine, I'm obsessed—um, and realizing there were moments where you could take the risk, or not. The only things that can happen if you take the risk is somebody says no, right, and then you're like okay, and go on. What is it? Who, is their somebody that instilled bravery, or opportunity or the idea to take risk? Is it something you were just born with? Where does that come from for y'all? (19:03)

SOFIA: Um, for me it came from my family. Only because they like to take initiative, and they're just so headstrong. They just go in it, they just sort of do it because all the opportunities they did had, they had it because they had no other choice. So, it was more of like taking it and seeing where you roll with it next. And so that's sort of like how I operate in my daily life, too. You know, life throws you curve balls, and you can do something about it. You can either duck or hit it. You know, there's always something to solve that problem. I was taught that, too. There is always a solution to a problem. Um, so for me I instilled that in my life. Mainly because of the opportunities that I was given because they had no other choice. I was very privileged to grow up the way I did with you know these opportunities *now*, rather than not having them at all. It's just more of just like take advantage of everything, you know. You never know what someone else is going through. They don't have the same opportunities as you. So, you know just take advantage of it. (20:39)

MOLLY: So you're also saying there is a responsibility that if the opportunity presents itself, take it.

SOFIA: Yeah, so yeah. It's very important to my family. If there is a job, and you need the money, then you will take it. That's what my family taught me. You know, do everything that you can to just sort of take opportunities, take risk, and sort of reach your goals to be the person that you want to be.

MOLLY: Audrey, Audrey, are you like ditto? (ALL laugh)

AUDREY: Yeah, and I also grew up watching A Cinderella Story with Hilary Duff, and the main quote, the main message of that ---



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MOLLY: (excited) I am obsessed that you just said that. Go! [\(21:17\)](#)

AUDREY: You know that the main message of that is “Never let the fear of striking out keep you from playing the game.”

MOLLY: What! Hilary Duff is like a poet and a prophet. (AUDREY laughs)

AUDREY: And Jeanne Russell is completely awesome, and I met her through the San Antonio Youth Commission, and she has just been a mentor since. My story with getting into the Youth Commission is that I was really disconnected from San Antonio, like a lot of young people are unfortunately, and I just realized that I need to make a change because this is not a good way to live if I’m going to be here a couple more years—this was in high school. Um, and so yeah, so it kind of came innate, I just took that risk to be on the Youth Commission. And then I met Jeanne and she is completely awesome and had a lot of faith in me and the other young people on the Commission—and just young people in general. Um that made me realize I need to pay it forward and just like use my experiences to provide that for other young people.

MOLLY: You mentioned Jeanne Russell, and I want to make sure we tie it back. Jeanne Russell is also the Executive Director of CAST Schools, which you’re also doing an internship for, correct?

AUDREY: Yes! [\(22:25\)](#)

MOLLY: Full circle. Like the circle of life, it’s all Lion King. Alright, you both said something that I think is super important—we are consistently, and I mean we, adults, are consistently put in front of young people and are asked, “Hey, adult. What can young people do to fill in the blank?” And I try desperately to flip the question to say: What can adults do to open up opportunities, to give you spaces where you may not have had spaces before? Just like flipping the question from it’s *your* burden to it’s *our* burden, too. And I want to know, we try to end our podcasts with a calls to action, and I want to know from your perspective, what can adults do to 1. Provide more opportunities and 2. What would you say to somebody who is thinking maybe I want to host an intern, maybe I’m not ready for that? What is your piece of advice? [\(23:26\)](#)

SOFIA: I definitely say, what you did for me in this internship, is that you should treat them as an adult. You should give them opportunities to grow and learn in their strengths, but in their weaknesses as well. You know, a lot of kids in my school are very bad with deadlines and making sure their agendas are filled and are actually crossing off things they need to do. I noticed that kids in my school are sort of bad at that, besides the top ten kids. You know, um I think it’s really important to tell interns, tell employers of interns that it’s important that it’s important to let them know what’s going on and what the whole workspace is going to be and



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what you expect, what this and that means. Just give them an itinerary, you know? And don't just check it out, explain everything.

MOLLY: You want to know the why behind everything?

SOFIA: Yeah, exactly. Cause I have done work in past internships and you know um not in my field, not in my interest as well. But you know they needed the work done, and so I did it.

MOLLY: Which happens to be fair in every job. (24:56)

SOFIA: Yeah.

MOLLY: Even as a person who is running an organization, I do stuff all the time that I don't want to do. (25:00)

SOFIA: Yeah, you know so interns are known for doing—

MOLLY: Yeah, the grunt work.

SOFIA: Yeah, pretty much. But you know, also incorporate special projects, and special projects that actually help them grow and learn and aspire to be better.

MOLLY: Yeah, okay, that's a good one. There's a moment there where I almost started to get the giggles because (MOLLY laughs) Audrey's microphone has slowly been lowering to the ground—

SOFIA: Oh yeah, I noticed that!

MOLLY: She's basically just lying on the ground at this point trying to make sure you can still hear her. We've got you, we can hear you.

SOFIA: She's basically playing limbo right now. (MOLLY laughs) (25:35)

MOLLY: It's so good. Audrey, what is your advice?

AUDREY: Uh, I have two things. One of them I remember hearing is that it's not about giving a voice to the youth because we recognize that young people have always had a voice, it's just about creating those spaces. I also think something that has been important to me is, uh, just someone, or people instilling or talking about, even if I don't feel like I'm an expert on such and such topic, I am still an expert on my own experiences. I think sometimes young people are afraid to talk about something because "I don't know enough," like uh, they're constantly being told like oh well I haven't done such and such, or researched such and such, I haven't been to



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college, but again we have experiences in education, we have experiences in a lot of different things that make us experts.

MOLLY: Of course, yeah.

SOFIA: We have twelve years of experience.

MOLLY: I mean to be fair, you have eighteen years. It's just that first part is, "I kind of know what blocks are." (MOLLY laughs) But yeah, that is such an important piece that you say, "Hey, we already have a voice, bring us in, tell us why we are doing something, and we are ready to go." And the second component, and I think that is great advice for anybody, not just interns or adults, but like you have your own experiences to basically speak to. You are an expert in your own experiences, which I appreciate a lot. Y'all I know you had weeks and weeks to prepare for this podcast. It was not just the hour before we started it. It was not. It was weeks and weeks.

SOFIA: (laughs) It was not at the team meeting.

MOLLY: It's fine, it's fine. I love that you have been in our organization, and that you pivot along with us all the time, but more specifically I think you've made us better as a team. That's very clear. We've been better at articulating and communicating what we do and what we need. This is Sofia's last week with us, kind of. Wink, wink.

SOFIA: Yeah, on Thursday.

MOLLY: We know it's going to go on a little longer.

SOFIA: I'll be volunteering my time with SA2020 in the near future. (MOLLY laughs)

MOLLY: Yes! We've got some paid stuff for you. We will talk about it later.

SOFIA: Cool, cool.

MOLLY: I appreciate you so much for doing this podcast. We always sign off with some type of whisper because we have to have something, and we usually do it without even meaning to. You listen to the podcast more than anyone else because you're helping us transcribe it. So, I'm going to make you whisper something. (whispers) Alright, so now's the time to whisper some kind of amazing thing.

SOFIA: (whispers) Make sure your interns know what they're doing. (ALL laugh)

AUDREY: (normal voice) I don't know how to top that. (MOLLY laughs)



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MOLLY: (still whispering) You can just say, “I don’t know how to top that.” (28:19)

AUDREY: (whispers) I don’t know how to top that. (ALL giggle) (28:23)



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