

Spanning the globe

Summer spent researching, traveling, giving back

BY AMY BRYSON

Taking a trip to Japan, volunteering at the local hospital to complete the mandatory community service hours, holding a summer job at the local grocery store to earn extra cash and participating in an educational research program at Duke are all popular ways students spend the summer before their senior year. In the last few months of school, students began making plans for the summer. Then, as the graduation ceremony came to an end, each student left NCSSM to not only return to their homes across the state, but also to spread out across the globe for their various summer activities.

JASON HAWKINS

With a required 60 hour community service project due by the end of the summer, senior Jason Hawkins turned to the familiar Topsail Island and took an internship at the Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center.

"My family has been going to Topsail Island [since] before I was born, so I've been to the hospital a couple of times," Hawkins said. "I was planning to volunteer there for a couple of weeks anyways, so I decided to work there for my community service as well."

Hawkins worked an 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. shift doing various tasks for the center July 9 - 22.

"We feed the turtles, clean the tanks, give certain turtles soapy baths followed by a badadine bath, which helps any damage to the shell caused by removing the barnacles, give tours, then give some of the turtles shots and clean their wounds," he said.

Hawkins chose this type of work because of his love for animals and his interest in marine biology, making his community service project very enjoyable.

"I have loved it," he said. "The turtles are so amazing and I love working with them. It's amazing to see how the animals have their own personalities and how they interact with people. You even get used to the smell after a while. [This opportunity has taught me] that I absolutely love animals, and I'm pretty sure I'll be working with them in the future. Plus I now have a huge understanding of sea turtles."

ANGELA SARNIE

Since the eighth grade, senior Angela Sarnie has been going on mission trips with the Grace Youth Group, and this summer she traveled with 43 other seniors and 12 adult leaders to Miguel Alemán, Mexico to work with Faith Ministries.

"During the day we mainly built houses, but that consisted of many steps— digging the foundation, pouring a concrete floor, laying blocks for the walls, tying rebar to hold up the house, pouring the roof," Sarnie said. "At night, we held a vacation bible school for the kids in the neighborhood."

Working in 112 degree weather under a blazing sun July 2-9, Sarnie's group built houses for those with unmet needs.

"On Thursday night, the church had a dedication ceremony for the families that received houses that week," Sarnie said. "It was really moving to see that you were being used to answer the



Photo courtesy of Angela Sarnie

Angela Sarnie and Grace Youth Group leader Jeff Wooten stand in front of one of the homes their group built in Miguel Alemán, Mexico this summer.

prayers that these families have been praying for years."

Sarnie did the same mission work last year in Mexico with her youth group, but found her role this year to be slightly different, allowing her to get more out of the trip.

"A friend of mine and I were asked to write the devotional guide for the trip," she said. "It was a humbling experience to be

MEGHAN DWYER

While the majority of NCSSM students were attending graduation, senior Meghan Dwyer boarded a plane and flew across the Atlantic to start her summer vacation. Along with three friends she met through the Duke Talent Identification Program (TIP) and the family members of one of the girls, she spent two weeks traveling through Italy, Switzerland and France with a full schedule of touring, relaxing and fun.

"Our typical day would start with breakfast in the hotel, followed by some sightseeing or a museum trip, lunch at an outdoor café," Dwyer said. "Then walking around the city or doing some shopping before stopping for gelato, going back to the hotel to get ready for dinner, going out to dinner and then going out for the night."

As a first-time European traveler, Dwyer found she learned a lot about the European culture, but also took in the sites and enjoyed the relaxing time.

"[Some highlights of the trip were] staying with [one of my friend's] grandparents in a rural beach town where nobody knew English, rock climbing in the Swiss Alps, going on a gondola ride, shopping in Paris and Florence, climbing the Eiffel Tower, and going to the Moulin Rouge," she said. "It was a really amazing experience."



Photo courtesy of Allie Landry

Allie Landry extracts genomic DNA from mouse tail tissue at her lab bench at the Jackson Laboratory.

DORIAN BRITT AND ALLIE LANDRY

The counseling department introduced a large number of summer camps and research experiences to the junior class as great options for their summer plans. One of these programs was The Jackson Summer Student Program in Bar Harbor, Maine.

Participants spend the entire summer, June 11 to Aug. 15, working Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the Jackson Laboratory research facility on a summer research project to be presented during a research symposium at the end of the program. Several students, including seniors Dorian Britt and Allie Landry, took up this opportunity and spent their summer in Maine.

"I thought this program would be a great summer experience," Britt said. "I thought it would be a good opportunity to live in Maine for nine weeks in a three story mansion, and be able to complete a research project unique to me and that would later help make some scientific advancement. The program would be a wonderful learning experience and would help me to advance myself on an academic level."

Britt and Landry were accepted into the program after completing a general application, writing an essay, obtaining two teacher recommendations and submitting their school transcripts.

Britt spent the summer using bioinformatics to identify genes that are associated with complex phenotypic traits in the mouse. Landry's summer goal was to find the gene that has a mutation causing mice to develop a novel neuromuscular disorder, named SJD. While the program demanded a lot of work, it also allowed time for fun activities.

"Even though we work Monday to Friday, on the weekends we are free to do a lot of fun and interesting activities," Britt said. "I especially enjoyed our camping trip to Katahdin Mountain. It was my first time hiking and camping and I had a great time."

Landry also found ways to take a break from work.

"[We did] a lot of outdoor activities ranging from swimming in the ocean or lakes, biking around Acadia, white water rafting, kayaking and hiking," she said. "One of the best experiences was my hike up Mount Katahdin. The terrain was very rocky and steep; some places were nearly vertical. We crossed Knife Edge, which, as the name implies, is a very narrow ridge between two peaks. The trip was very tiring, but very satisfying and fun to accomplish."

Overall both said they enjoyed the knowledge, skills and memories gained through this program.