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Internship Attended: Yale School of Public Health, Dr. Yong Zhu

Year: July, 2014

It would be an understatement to call the summer internship programs offered by the Great Neck Breast Cancer Coalition mere “opportunities”, for these programs provide once in a lifetime intellectual and social experiences that are hard to find anywhere else. This summer I spent about one month at the Yale School of Public Health under the guidance and skill of Doctor Yong Zhu. It was truly a privilege to be able to learn and research under the leadership of such an influential member of the breast cancer research community.

So, what exactly do you do for one month at an Ivy League Campus, with no parents, in the hip center of Downtown New Haven? First and foremost, I researched, *a lot*. For the first two weeks my time spent in the lab was somewhat of a scientific immersion. My roommate, Jacob, and I began watching students perform various lab procedures, read up on new and upcoming scientific studies, and attended lab meetings and lectures. We instantly became a part of the scientific culture at the school, and I personally loved every minute of it. By week 3, Jacob and I had gotten to the point where we were allowed to perform actual cell work, and began experimentation on one of the most aggressive breast cancer cell lines- Triple Negative, also known as cell line MDA-MB-231.

However our time at Yale was not all research and lab work, every day entailed a new adventure and experience. Whether it was playing Quidditch at Yale’s old campus, dining at one of the many trendy restaurants in New Haven, or going to a picnic at Lime Park, this summer was full of good times. In fact, one of the best things about this experience was the people I met along the way. In the lab I became great friend with another high school student doing summer research. In addition to her, I also became close with masters and doctoral candidates at the lab.

As a lab group we all usually shared lunch together (courtesy of the many delicious food carts in New Haven) and we even had a Public Health School picnic which was a great way to end our last week at the lab. In a sense everyone acted as a mentor and friend to us, so while we may have been the new kids on the block, it didn't take long for Yale to feel like home.

Out of all the things that this internship allowed me to experience, a taste of "college life" had to be the best. To put it simply, dorming is absolutely amazing. There is something special about being allowed to live on your own, make your own decisions, and make new friends in every place you go. To experience dorming before college is great, mainly because you can get a preview as to what is in store for you in the future. Also, it is such a fun way to spend your summer. Most students waste their summers away on benign television shows and video games, or go on vacations to tropical islands and foreign countries- however this opportunity allowed me to have a great time, while learning and making use of my time.

All in all, it would be remiss to undermine the purpose of this internship, and that would be to increase awareness and research on breast cancer. As an alumni of this program I can honestly say that I am now much more knowledgeable on the topic of Breast Cancer, especially at the conclusion of the Breast Cancer Conference in San Francisco. At this conference I was inspired by a group advocating the use of "Photovoice," a community project that combines social media and daily encounters to bring about change. In addition to this I learned about the great strides advocates, institutions and researchers are taking all over the country to fight breast cancer.

With such great experience and knowledge under my belt, I am left with nothing by gratitude and reverence for the leaders behind the Great Neck Breast Cancer Coalition, Laura

Wienbrug and Lisa Levine. In hindsight, I can honestly say that this program has given me an experience that will never be replicated, and has made an immense impact on my life.