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August 19, 2009
SS09.11E

Elizabeth Kelly (Andover, Mass.)

For five weeks this summer, Elizabeth Kelley of Andover got to work with marine animals up close and personal. One of nine high school students from Montana to Massachusetts who were also interested in learning more about the marine environment, Kelley spent much of her summer as a high school intern at the Woods Hole Science Aquarium, the nation's oldest public research display aquarium and part of NOAA's Northeast Fisheries Science Center in Woods Hole, Mass.

The annual internships provide students with the opportunity to work with a professional staff caring for a collection of about 140 species of fish and invertebrates common to the continental shelf from Maine to North Carolina, two harbor seals named LuSeal and Bumper, and sometimes sea turtles held for rehabilitation and eventual release. The interns learn about marine animal husbandry, aquarium operations, conservation, and public education. They are also trained to serve as assistant naturalists on public collecting walks to local harbors and estuaries.

"I love animals and have two cats. Helping to care for the animals at the Aquarium this summer has been amazing," Kelley said of the experience. "I have learned so much, and made many new friends from all over the world." It's hard to pinpoint one favorite part of the program, but if I had to it would be the people."

Kelly began her summer internship at the Aquarium July 6 and also participated in the Aquarium's Careers in Marine Science Seminar July 27 to August 7. The career seminar students get training in marine animal husbandry and basic aquarist chores, hear presentations from scientists working in a variety of marine fields, go on collecting trips, visit other Woods Hole science institutions, and go on field trips to the New Bedford waterfront, Whaling Museum and Buttonwood Park Zoo and Nantucket's Maria Mitchell Association Aquarium. The seminar is designed to give students an idea of what people working in Woods Hole do, and how different areas of science contribute to the larger effort to understand the marine world and to manage marine resources wisely.

A junior at Phillips Academy in Andover, Kelly has many interests beyond marine science and animals. She plays squash, has been a member of the school's tennis team since her freshmen year, and is a ranked U.S. Tennis Association player in New England. She is a board member of the yearbook, a pen pal with third grade students in Lawrence, and participates in ARC, a community service program for mentally challenged individuals of all ages. In October she will start a project at Phillips Academy to help Family Service of Lawrence, an organization that helps less fortunate children and families build skills for a successful life.

"I am excited by new experiences and opportunities to make a difference," she said of the internship. "I had an amazing summer at the Aquarium and am so glad I came. I will definitely be back in summers to come."

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Related links:

Woods Hole Science Aquarium: <http://aquarium.nefsc.noaa.gov/>

Aquarium Blog: <http://whaquarium.wordpress.com/>