A LETTER OF GRATITUDE

By Emily Chu (Oakville, Ontario)

DEAR MENTOR, TEACHER, AND COORDINATOR,

Please accept this letter as a thank you for enrolling and supporting me for my placement in the On-Line Research Summer Co-Op at the Foundation for Student Science and Technology. It has been an incredible month and I want to express my gratitude to you and the foundation for allowing me to pursue such an opportunity.

I have learned many skills while on the job during my placement. First and foremost, I have become an exponentially better researcher and analyzer. It was through all of the readings and research I had to conduct that I became much better at reading articles, pulling important ideas and concepts from them, and relating them to real life. I was also able to improve my independent work skills as I was tasked with managing myself and my responsibilities alone, and that pressure forced me to work and manage my time effectively. There were also many things I enjoyed while working at this placement. My favourite thing was formulating my own research proposal; the entire process really helped me find out what I was passionate about. It was through all these lengthy readings that I could pick and choose what topics I wanted to research further, and NGOs and women’s rights were my top two choices. I have always been someone that had been good at everything but never amazing at one thing, so to be able to find out a few things that really interested me and things I wanted to keep talking about was really an awesome growing experience for me as a person.

It is hard to believe that my experience at this placement will not be continuing for another month. This experience has made this summer my most valuable yet, and I wish to express how grateful I am for being presented with this opportunity. Not only did this placement allow me to hone skills that will be extremely valuable in my final year of high school and university, but it also allowed me a chance to reflect and figure out what I want to with my life. As with every teenager, career choices at this age change every day, but this placement has made them much clearer and put them into perspective for me. Once again I would like to thank everyone involved for creating a great environment to work in. Thank you to my mentor who provided me with some great material and topic choices that fit well with me, and thank you to the co-op coordinator and my co-op teacher for being so helpful and responsive with any of my questions. It has been a summer I will never forget.

Thank you so much,

Emily Chu

RESEARCH CO-OP PROGRAM STUDENT TESTIMONIALS

By Fatma Sheikh and Melanie Manning (Oakville, Ontario)

The Online Research Co-op Program has been an amazing opportunity allowing me to develop a number of skills that will help me in my future studies. I initially enrolled in the program in order to fulfill the requirements of my SHSM, however the experiences and skills I have learned are far more than I imagined. I spent the month researching Biomechanics & Physiology, Spine & Spinal Musculature, and Injury & Rehabilitation under the guidance of Dr. Stephen Brown.

Through reading a variety of papers and studies, I was able to develop skills to further my understanding of inquiry-based research. In addition, I was able to develop skills like statistical and data analysis and professional communication. Each week was an amazing journey, in this research co-op there is so much to be learned. If I am being honest, every skill I learned could be used in my future endeavours. I want to be at the forefront of medical research and this co-op was just a stepping-stone into what I want to do for the rest of my life. This co-op allowed me to experience the field and more importantly understand more about the field.

I would recommend this program to high schools students who are motivated, academically driven and are eager to learn. If you are in class learning about a topic, and you think “I really want to learn more about that,” then I would 100% recommend this program. You get to work one on one with a
mentor, who is experienced in the field. They know the ins and outs, and they will help you gain valuable information. I personally was able to learn a whole lot of information from my mentor, gain some valuable tools and someone that I know I can contact in the future for advice and guidance.

My biggest advice to any student who is taking part in this program is to put your best foot forward. The more effort and time you put in to this co-op, the more you will gain. Never be afraid to ask questions or to try new things because ultimately everything you do will help you develop critical skills for your future. This was perhaps one of my favourite courses thus far in high school, and without a doubt I would encourage all high school students to participate in this program. There is so much to learn, and throughout your journey there are people to help you along the way. Good luck to everyone who has participated in the research co-op and to future participants. I hope that your experience is as good as mine.

Fatima Sheikh

Author of Success for Teens, John Fleming once said, “Whenever you face a choice, you can take a simple positive action or you can take a simple negative action. Simple actions, repeated over time determine the life you lead.” In our education, simple actions contribute to our success and determine the overall outcome. I did not consider sitting in a classroom and not stretching the boundaries of my learning for four years a positive action, so I decided to become involved in various co-operative education programs specifically the Summer Mentorship Program (SMP) at the University of Toronto. Through this program, I significantly developed my emotional intelligence and research capabilities, broadened my community and global perspective, additionally I unlocked a network of qualified and capable individuals. At the SMP, I explored every health science career under the sun and explored numerous faculties at the university, but nursing was the faculty that truly grabbed my heart. I went on to shadow Denah Smith, a nurse practitioner at Taibu Community Health Center in Malvern and realized the great impact nurses have in the health care system. After graduating from the program in 2014, I have become a Student Trustee, advocating for over 70,000 students in my region, a vice president for the SMP Alumni Society, and a paid research intern at SickKids through the STAR program. It is incredible to believe that my achievements began with simply applying to the SMP. The small actions really do make a tremendous impact! Thank you for the amazing opportunity, hope to hear from you soon and read the upcoming fall journal!

Melanie Manning

TRADUCTION PAR SARINA LALLA

Le programme de recherche coopérative en ligne a été une expérience incroyable qui m’a permis de développer un nombre d’habiletés qui m’aideront dans mes études. Je me suis inscrite au programme afin de remplir les critères de mon SHSM. Cependant, l’expérience et les habiletés que j’ai acquises par le biais de ce programme sont dépassé mes attentes. J’ai passé le mois à rechercher en Biomécanique et en physiologie, en anatomie et en musculature de la colonne vertébrale, et fractures et réhabilitation sous le mentorat de Dr. Stephen Brown.

En lisant une variété de papiers et d’études, j’ai pu développer des capacités de comprendre de la recherche basée sur une question scientifique. En plus, j’ai pu développer mes talents d’analyse statistique et communication professionnelle. Chaque semaine était une aventure incroyable, dans cette recherche coopérative il y a tellement de choses à apprendre. Honnêtement, chaque qualité que j’ai développée est utile pour mes futurs exploits. Je veux être à la tête du monde de la recherche médicale. Cette expérience coopérative était un début de ce que je veux faire pour le reste de ma vie. J’ai pu m’expérimenter dans le domaine et comprendre plus à propos du monde de la recherche.

Je recommanderai ce programme à des étudiants du secondaire qui sont motivés, qui travaillent fort à l’école et qui sont prêts à apprendre. Si vous êtes en se en train d’apprendre une matière, et tu penses: «Je veux apprendre davantage sur cela», alors je recommanderai ce programme. Tu peux travailler individuellement avec un mentor qui a beaucoup d’expertise dans le domaine. Ils connaissent les hauts et les bas et vous aideront à cueillir de l’information extrêmement importante.

Mes conseils aux étudiants qui essaient ce programme seraient d’essayer votre mieux. Plus vous investissez...
de temps et d’effort dans ce programme, plus vous allez acquérir des connaissances. N’ayez pas peur de poser des questions ou d’essayer des nouvelles choses, car ultimement, tout ce que vous ferez vous permettra de développer des habiletés critiques pour votre avenir. Ceci a été mon cours préféré du secondaire, et j’encouragerais sans doute tous les étudiants à y prendre part. Il y a tant de choses à apprendre, et à travers votre expérience il y a des outils qui vos serviront. Bonne chance à tous les participants. Je vous souhaite une expérience aussi valable que la mienne.

Fatima Sheikh, été 2015

L’auteur pour Success for Teens, John Fleming, a déjà dit: «Quand on fait face à un choix, on peut faire une action simple et positive ou on peut faire une action simple négative. Des actions simples, répétées sur une longue durée de temps, déterminent la vie qu’on mène.» Dans notre éducation, des actions simples contribuent à notre succès et déterminent notre sort. Je n’ai jamais considéré que m’assoir dans une classe et ne pas étendre mon éducation plus loin pour quatre ans de temps comme étant une action positive. J’ai donc décidé de m’impliquer à travers des programmes d’éducation co-opératives variées, notamment Programme d’Été de Mentorat (SMP) à l’Université de Toronto. À travers ce programme, j’ai développé mon intelligence émotionnelle et mes capacités de recherche et élargi ma perspective globale et communautaire. De plus, j’ai découvert un réseau d’individus qualifiés. À la SMP, j’ai exploré toutes les carrières en sciences de la santé qui m’étaient disponibles et j’ai exploré plusieurs facultés à l’université, mais c’est la faculté de soins infirmiers qui a saisi mon coeur. J’ai pu ensuite suivre Denah Smith en stage, une superinfirmière au Centre Communautaire de Santé Taibu à Malvern et j’ai réalisé l’impact que les infirmières avaient dans le système de santé. Après avoir gradué du programme en 2014, je suis devenue une représentante étudiante, défendant les intérêts de 70000 étudiants dans ma région, une vice-présidente de la Société d’anciens du SMP, et une stagiaire payée à Sick Kids à travers le programme STAR. C’est incroyable à croire que mes accomplissements ont débuté uniquement avec mon admission au SMP. Les petites actions ont vraiment un énorme impact!

Mélaine Manning, été 2015

As a high school student, being motivated to study hard was a struggle, and I lacked passion for the school subjects. I had ambitions about becoming a doctor, but somehow I lost my direction.

By grade 11, I heard about the Student Mentorship Program (SMP) at the University of Toronto. I found out that the program offered minorities and Aboriginal students an introduction to the Health Sciences Program, so I invested all my energy toward applying and was accepted. Suddenly, the success I felt sparked a passion in me to work harder. My cultural understanding deepened and I started to believe that becoming a doctor was achievable. SMP gave me many opportunities to expand my horizons with the Student Advancement Research Program (StAR) and Discovering Public Health (DPH).

Working through the StAR Program opened a wide range of work and academic activities. I learned the value of team building and the importance of connecting with my co-workers in the lab and StAR interns. As a part of the STAR Program, I worked on a project in the lab that really helped me to understand how to use PubMed. All of the articles I found on PubMed were very interesting and I learned a lot about Pediatric Tuberculosis, which was my research project. Incidentally, I also ended up learning about my own health history; I never understood why when I was tested for tuberculosis (TB), it would always return a positive test result. I had no idea that it was linked back to my birth in Luxembourg. Luxembourg is a country that vaccinated all babies against TB with the BCG vaccination. Though the prevention of TB through BCG is not proven, it explains why I test positive when I do not have TB. Overall, I have loved my experience with STAR and will truly miss everyone once I leave. Thankfully, because of the networking skills I learned at