

**ENS Ashley Brown
Jr COSTEP Summer 2009
Eastern Kentucky University
Navajo Area Indian Health Service
Shiprock, NM**



Hello, my name is Ashley Brown and I am a senior at Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond, Kentucky. I will be graduating the summer semester of 2010 with a Bachelors degree in Environmental Health Science. I first heard about the Jr COSTEP internship with the USPHS in my introduction to Environmental Health Science class. After looking over the application and talking with a few commissioned corps officers, I knew this internship would be an excellent opportunity for me.

On May 18th, I arrived at my duty station which was the Office of Environmental Health and Engineering. There I introduced myself to my preceptor Patricia Ramirez, and she introduced me to the rest of the staff in the office. I was really lucky to have started working that day because I had the opportunity to participate in a hands-on research project with Dr. Bender, a local veterinarian for Navajo Nation.

I also participated in the annual rabies vaccination clinics that OEH provides free of charge to communities throughout the Navajo area. This was an entirely new experience for me because the sheer volume of dogs and cats that were showing up at these clinics was insane! My favorite part about these clinics would have to be the personal one on one interaction with the community, and also getting to pet all of the animals! After we had completed the clinics I have to admit, I was a little disappointed that they had finally come to an end. The largest clinic I participated in was really busy and we vaccinated over 120 dogs in approximately two hours.

Another huge part of my summer work load was conducting food service surveys of all of the kitchens which prepared food for the summer feeding program school sites. In some cases the food would be prepared at an elementary school's kitchen and would then have to be transferred to the site where the food would be eaten, which in most cases was a chapter house. Some of the surveys I performed were at the school where the food was being prepared and those weren't as difficult. The food surveys are what I feel like broadened my career. I went to each of these sites and performed all of the necessary tasks and steps and afterwards I would type of the report and send it to the school. Having my food hygiene class this past spring semester really paid off because I used skills I learned from class every time I conducted a survey at a feeding site, or in a kitchen.

I tried to get involved in the community as much as my schedule would allow, and I ended up working quite a bit with the San Juan County Partnership. SJCP has teamed up with Montana State University and together they have delivered positive messages throughout Shiprock, Farmington, and other surrounding areas. Toward the end of my internship, I visited most of the chapter houses in the area, and talked to several local business owners about positive message ad

campaigns, and how they raise the spirits of both the younger and elder natives. I really enjoyed this because I believed in the ads and I felt that I was responsible for putting a smile on someone's face for a few moments.

This summer wasn't always about work. I did a lot of exciting outdoorsy things, which I had never done before. I had the opportunity to spend a weekend at the Grand Canyon, and on the way back I drove through Monument Valley, Utah. I also checked out Mesa Verde, Canyon de Chelly, and Albuquerque. I got to see a lot of things I feel like I would have never had the chance to see if I hadn't taken this internship. I would recommend this internship to anyone who wanted to broaden their professional career, and who didn't mind being out of their ordinary world for a few months. It was an amazing experience, one that ended too soon. Thank you USPHS for allowing me to come aboard and jump start my career as a sanitarian.