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This summer I had a wonderful experience and gained a wealth of knowledge by working as a Public Health Service COSTEP with the Spirit Lake Tribe in North Dakota. All PHS COSTEPs are assigned projects to complete during their internship, and my assignment was to become familiar with the 2009 FDA Food Code and assist in health inspections on the Reservation.



For me, this task has been amazing. Instead of doing secretary work or taking out the garbage, which I've heard were tasks assigned to some students during internships, I've been able to get out and actually practice the



profession of Public Health. Under the wing of very experienced Public Health professionals, I have learned the science and art of working with people to achieve a healthier environment. I have completed over 40 inspection reports of food establishments and many pertaining to building and playground safety. I have also become more familiar with the FDA code book than I ever would have expected, and I have reinforced this knowledge by educating food service staff on how to be safer while on the job.

In addition to performing inspections, I have been involved with Health Education efforts in the community, as well. I recorded two radio announcements that addressed proper disposal of cooking grease to protect

sewage systems along with how community members could protect themselves against the West Nile virus. The significance of the latter became apparent when the first case of West Nile in North Dakota was reported shortly after my radio broadcast.

Through all of these experiences, I have realized that I'll never stop learning about Environmental Health. I was encouraged to become a member of the Local and National Environmental Health Associations and have been fascinated by the literature that comes along with such a membership. These associations, along with the people whom I have built a working relationship, will help strengthen and maintain my knowledge in the field and will provide a greater potential for success in my Public Health career.

Although fully explaining all of my experiences would be impossible to accomplish this essay, this summer has been very humbling and has left an indelible impression on my life. In this way, my time as a PHS COSTEP not only reinforced my education, it also taught me a lot about working with others and has changed the way I see the world.

