

**ENS Justin Milton**  
**Jr COSTEP Summer 2011**  
**East Central University**  
**Fort Defiance Indian Hospital**  
**Fort Defiance, Arizona**



I am a senior at East Central University in Ada, Oklahoma currently studying Environmental Health Science. My JrCOSTEP experience was with Indian Health Service (IHS), Office of Environmental Health (OEH) in Fort Defiance, Arizona. I first heard about the Commissioned Corps and the JrCOSTEP program at East Central and I was immediately interested in the opportunities that might be available through this program. After doing a little bit of research I decided that the JrCOSTEP program was something I wanted to pursue.

I started in late June, my first day was a Monday and we wasted no time getting started. My first day consisted of observing a kitchen survey of a local school's summer feeding program and later that same day I went along on a survey of a day care. That first day was very exciting and also a little bit overwhelming as my preceptor and I discussed some of what I would be doing that summer.

I arrived halfway through the rabies clinic program in and around the Fort Defiance area where I quickly learned how to properly fill a syringe and the fine art of administering rabies shots to dogs and cats of every shape and size. The rabies clinics were a great success after it was all said and done over 1,400 animals had been vaccinated.

One of the other highlights of my time on the Navajo was getting to help out with The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Life Preservation Summit and The Tsaille Youth Art Project in Tsaille, Arizona. The event was partly sponsored by IHS Many Farms OEH and the two day event was aimed toward suicide prevention and giving the community information about identifying and helping those at risk. Seeing the outreach of so many different professionals and community leaders was amazing and the kids had a great time with the artist.

One unique opportunity that I was able to observe was an environmental assessment of a home with two confirmed hantavirus cases. Another very interesting component of environmental health I took part in was an institutional health x-ray and ventilation survey of a hospital in Crownpoint, NM. I was also able to experience a lot of other aspects of environmental health including community water and wastewater surveys, group home surveys, enteric disease patient interviews, injury prevention data collection, and food service surveys.



As the summer progressed I learned more than I could have hoped for from my mentors on the Navajo and also by the real world experiences I gained. My confidence built throughout the summer and I was able to contribute more and more as time went on.

Being in a place as beautiful as Arizona, obviously the work experience wasn't all I enjoyed this summer. I was able to have my family join me one weekend to see the breathtaking Canyon de Chelly and the Pueblo ruins within the Canyon. The scenery was amazing from the rock formations such as the near by Window Rock to the mountainous areas filled with pine trees that

seamlessly transition from the desert like terrain. I also made a trip to Flagstaff, AZ and on the way visited Meteor Crater an impact site that is almost a mile across.

My JrCOSTEP experience was unforgettable and I had a lot of fun throughout the summer. It gave me a real world understanding of so many aspects of my chosen career field. The knowledge I gained this summer will without a doubt benefit me in my future career. After I graduate at the end of this year I plan on pursuing a career as a full

time environmental health officer in the Commissioned Corps. I would recommend JrCOSTEP to every college student interested in the Commissioned Corps or to anyone interested in a great learning experience. The opportunity to experience so much in such a short period of time is hard to come by, not to mention you'll have a great time!

