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JRCOSTEP Summer 2015
California State University of San Bernardino
Sacramento Area Office
California

My name is Kianoosh Behdinian and I am junior at California State University of San Bernardino studying Environmental Health Science.

My JRCOSTEP experience was outstanding. Joining the Commissioned Corps is a goal which I am very interested in pursuing after I receive my Bachelor of Science degree. The USPHS and Indian Health Service (IHS), Sacramento Area provided an outstanding internship opportunity during the summer of 2015. I heard about JRCOSTEP program from my professor Dr. Mian, who invited LCDR Sam Rudnitsky, Food and Drug Administration, to one of our club meetings. LCDR Rudnitsky's recruitment speech peaked my interest and prompted me to learn more about JRCOSTEPs. The possibility of traveling for an internship got me very excited and I was pleasantly surprised a few months after submitting my application, when CAPT Gordon Tsatoke, Director, DEHS, California Area Office, IHS, called me. Shortly after I reported to the IHS office in Sacramento, CA. I was a bit nervous going into the office on my first day, but everyone was very welcoming and friendly!

My first week in the office was mostly spent going through orientation, learning about the USPHS, IHS, completing lots of training such as food safety and rabies virus. My second week was spent at the office in Escondido, CA near San Diego to do a rabies virus vaccination clinic with CAPT Brian Lewelling, District EHO, IHS, and COL James Cummings, DVM, U.S. Army Veterinary Corps. At this event we were able to offer free rabies vaccinations along with spay/neuter surgeries to many tribal communities. Upon my return to Sacramento I started doing food inspections with LCDR Sarah Snyder, District EHO. During the inspections, I was trained to look for risk factors. While in Redding, CA with LCDR Molly Madson, District EHO, I was able to teach a food handler training, and help conduct temporary food venter inspections at the Hoopa festival. Later in the summer we did some focused HACCP training looking at sushi preparation facilities.

I learned about injury prevention, how to do seat belt observation surveys, and funding opportunities for tribes. I participated in several inspections of healthcare clinics in Fresno, CA to help a tribe become accredited by the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care. I was also trained to conduct pool and spa inspections. During my COSTEP I also inspected casinos, childcare centers, playgrounds, and afterschool programs with LCDR Aaron McNeill.

I learned about environmental health and myself throughout these last 12 weeks. I have grown as a professional and an individual. The work I have done was rewarding and it is very satisfying to know that I have helped make a difference in the lives of others. My experience this summer affirmed my resolve to pursue a career with IHS. It has been an incredible experience and I recommend a JRCOSTEP to anyone that is interested!

