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I am a 2021 AnnieRuth Foundation Summer Internship Program Award Recipient. My career aspiration is biochemistry. As a result, my internship took place at the Florida Department of Health in Duval County's (FDOH) Environmental Health Department. During the internship, my instructor was Mrs. Andriena Hollis, a five-year septic tank inspector for the FDOH. While performing each inspection, Mrs. Hollis thoroughly explained the inspection process for future reference. I appreciated Mrs. Hollis' leadership as she demonstrated the upmost integrity, precision, and accuracy in all of her inspections.

While shadowing Mrs. Hollis, I was able to learn so much about Earth's soils and how each region of Jacksonville contains different soil types. For example, soil on the Northside of Jacksonville is more likely to be moist and wet, while Southside Jacksonville might have oyster shells and dry, sandy soil. I also learned that placing a septic tank requires the location of the soil's "*seasonal high water table*" (estimated highest elevation of ground water that rises during an average wet season). One way to find it is "*modeling*"; modeling is a chemical process that takes place when soil has sat in the presence of water for a certain amount of time. The result of modeling can cause some of the soil to change color (white, orange or red), thus contrasting the bulk of the soil sample. Another method is "*ribboning*", which means rubbing the soil in your fingers which causes its texture to mimic Play-Dough. During inspections, I was put in charge of finding the benchmark, determining the color of the soil, counting the number of chambers, measuring certain distances from the septic tank, making sure the pipes were level, and documenting any information collected from the inspection. I even learned that the environment, alone, can tell you what kind of soil you will encounter. For example, oak trees would be an automatic sign of the soil has a very high seasonal water table.

As an aspiring Biochemist, I really appreciated this experience because I plan to use my degree in biochemistry for a career in agriculture. When learning about agriculture, it's important to know about soils and how they pertain to plant life, even the environment. Learning about the diversity and chemical processes that occur in soil was not only helpful, but truly fascinating. With this knowledge, I want to grow more durable versions of the plants we have now for consumption and for the benefit of the Earth.

Overall, participating in AnnieRuth Summer Internship Program has really prepared me for my future. I soaked up so much information during the business seminars; all the speakers had something valuable to offer. Being selected as an Award Recipient and completing my experience at the FDOH was truly amazing! I hope that many more students will take advantage of the amazing opportunities offered by the AnnieRuth Foundation.