

**Madison Mendiola, 12th grade
Providence School of Jacksonville**



Seeing my mother, who was a nurse working shifts from 6 in the morning to 6 at night, was admirable to me. I wondered what would motivate a person to be so tireless in their pursuits. I wanted to follow her path and join the medical field. I decided on becoming a forensic pathologist, as it touched fields of law, forensics, and medicine - all of which interested me from a young age. After discussing it with my family, they were proud to help me achieve my goal, and helped me find the AnnieRuth Foundation.

As a 2021 Award Recipient, I was able to participate in a six-week virtual learning experience hosted by the First Coast Black Nurses Association. The nurses and doctors that I met during this experience have dedicated their life to medicine and were every inspiring. It was a great experience to learn about the paths they took to reach their current destination (various branches of medicinal practices). Another part of the experience offered by the AnnieRuth Foundation was a Basic Life Support (BLS) certification (hosted by CEO and Nurse Eunice Mathis). The training focused on basic life support and emergency care, highlighted *why* the medical path is so important- it saves lives. Both experiences taught me what to do in order to be successful in the medical career, along with an understanding of why I want to be successful in this field.

As a participant of the AnnieRuth Foundation's Summer Internship Program, I learned the basics of taking my first steps into a professional career. I learned some of the nuances of becoming a responsible person, which extended past what I could learn from school. From the importance of how to present yourself, to the skills needed to be a thoughtful and educated individual, the AnnieRuth Foundation, and its guest community leaders, provided an insightful view on the steps that are critically important for my future.