



## **Jade Hardwick**

Humanity has always looked up to the cosmos. Whether we search for planets, constellations, predictions, or extraterrestrial life, outer space never ceases to intrigue us. When I was younger, I would place my telescope in the backyard and look inside to peer at the galaxies through the small piece of lens. I always knew I wanted to study the universe. As a participant of the AnnieRuth Foundation Summer Internship Program, I had the opportunity to undergo a six-week internship experience at the Museum of Science and History.

Indeed, I was able to expand my knowledge about the cosmos, but I also improved my visitor engagement skills. In one way, I worked at the front desk and gift shop, which taught me how to efficiently complete tasks. For instance, I had to multitask with the cashier in the gift shop while handling its inventory, a challenge that improved my time management and organization.

In another way, I assisted in operating the planetarium. From setting the audio and visuals to answering questions from the audience after every show, I learned how to utilize the planetarium theatre to interact with people of all ages and backgrounds, especially younger children. Seeing their eyes widen in wonder as the universe unfolds above them is one of the best moments to experience. Before this internship, I did not know much about early childhood education, but working here has revealed how fun it is to inspire young minds. Now I can see this as a career.

In numerous ways, I am thankful for the opportunity that the AnnieRuth Foundation's Summer Internship Program gave me. Receiving hands-on experience in a professional field has taught me invaluable lessons that are challenging to find in a textbook. Besides visitor engagement, for example, I learned the difference between work and personal friends and how to keep yourself motivated despite work antagonism. This experience was very instrumental in preparing me for my future professional and personal success.