

Dear Class of '55,

Thank you for making this scholarship opportunity available. I have always lived in Iowa, and the opportunity to travel to the Bahamas to conduct my senior BMB research project in marine biology allowed me to experience science in a different environment. By being able to travel I was provided with a greater appreciation for the interdisciplinary intersection of science, history, and anthropology. While on the trip we snorkeled everyday to familiarize ourselves with the different types of fish and coral. In addition to snorkeling we visited the spot where Christopher Columbus landed on San Salvador and saw the ruins of the English Loyalist plantations. I enjoyed speaking with the locals and seeing the sites of the island. Although there were few buildings, it was refreshing to see how happy people could be with limited supplies.

On the island I noticed one dentist's office, which stood out to me because someday I would like to be a dentist. I unfortunately did not ask any of the locals about this dentist's office or their dental experience, but I did notice poor dental hygiene amongst some of the individuals. I am not sure if the poor dental hygiene was due to the lack of dentists on the island, but to be honest I never considered working on an island, and the idea of a lack of dental care available on an island never occurred to me.

This trip has opened my eyes to other cultures and has given me the idea that following my post-graduate education and graduate education, I may want to explore a job in an area that is lacking dental care. It may not be in a tropical place, but if it is I know I will enjoy snorkeling and identifying the marine life I learned about in my free time. It is a wonderful opportunity to travel and I feel that this trip provided a capstone to my liberal arts education at Cornell.

Thank you,

Shaina Nelson

