Provide an overview of the organization/research project and a summary of your responsibilities, tasks, and/or projects.

Harpeth Valley Animal Hospital is a small animal hospital in Nashville. At the animal hospital, they take appointments for dogs and cats if they need a check-up and shots or if they are sick. Aside from this they also do surgeries. While I was there, I did the duties of a veterinary technician. This meant that I helped wherever I could in the hospital. I helped hold the animal while they were being examined, weighed animals, helped with preparations for surgeries, and filled prescriptions. In addition, I was able to watch the surgeries that they performed there. I also was able to scrub in on a surgery!

During your internship, what did you accomplish or how did you make a difference? In what ways did you grow in your professional and technical skills?

During my internship, I accomplished learning skills involved with the position. I was thrown right into the veterinary clinic, which was awesome. I learned how to take fecal samples and temperatures, give subcutaneous fluids, fill prescriptions, and properly hold an animal. I also learned a lot just by watching surgeries and asking questions along the way. I grew professionally just by communicating with clients and my supervisor, as well as establishing a friendly relationship with the other workers at the hospital. Technically, I definitely grew because before going into the internship I haven't had any real life exposure to a medical environment so any skill I learned was new. Dr. Hurst did a great job of walking me through everything, as well as giving me space to do things on my own, like filling prescriptions and taking temperatures.

Describe a problem that you helped to solve at your internship. What skills or knowledge from your education at Sewanee helped you address the problem?

One problem I solved at my internship was brought about when a dead opossum with a baby opossum attached was brought to the animal hospital. The animal hospital does not take in wildlife
nor does it have the capability or knowledge of taking care of these types of animals. However we took it in and I helped to discover a place where we would be able to take this baby opossum. Luckily we were able to find somewhere and although it was an hour away, I helped by driving this baby opossum to this wildlife rescue location. I talked to the owner of the wildlife rescue once I got there and she told me a lot about what she does and how she came to starting the wildlife rescue. What I learned from Sewanee that was able to help me with this problem was honestly to make the most out of every situation and learning experience that you encounter.

In what way were your teamwork skills strengthened?
My teamwork skills were strengthened because as I was interning, most tasks involved more than one person and if I ever saw someone alone I would try to jump in and make it easier for them. I saw that most people who worked there would do the same. One time I heard that one of the kennel staff called in sick that day, leaving only one worker to walk all of the dogs and clean the cages. Even though working in the kennel wasn't really included in my internship description, I decided to help in the kennel for an hour. She was really appreciative, as were the dogs who needed to be walked. So, I think by the end of the internship I was not scared to jump in and help someone.

How did your internship affect your career plans?
My internship affected my career plans by introducing me to medical practices and surgeries. These things interested me as something I would want to do as a career. Surgeries were my favorite part and are something I would like to continue to be apart of.

In what ways did your internship cause you to encounter people of different backgrounds from your own? What steps did you take to communicate effectively with such persons? What did you learn from such persons' perspectives?
Some people that I worked with in the hospital came from a different background than my own. I didn't need to take any different steps than I would to communicate with any other person. Communicating with someone should not depend on their background. I think I learned a lot from every person that worked there. I learned that health insurance is not an everyday commodity and some people are not fortunate enough to be able to have it, and this can affect their lives in many ways, while some people, like myself, have health insurance and have never given a thought about it. I learned that it's ok to admit that you need help or do not remember doing something. I learned to appreciate the little things.

Words of thanks to your internship funding donors:
Thank you so much for providing be with the funding so I was able to go to Nashville and intern this summer. It was an amazing experience and one I will never forget. I was able to learn so many things as well as scrub in on a surgery.