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Environmental Education Intern
Mustang Island Conference Center
August 26, 2014
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This summer I was fortunate enough to work at the Mustang Island Conference center as the environmental education intern. My role of this internship was to participate in the family camp which occurred on the weekends in all different jobs as well as my specific job which was to educate the families in any environmental topic of my choice. During the camp was in session, I worked at the beach, setting up and taking down, cooking in the kitchen, arts and crafts, and participating in everything else as needed. Then on our off days, which occurred Monday thru Wednesday, the other environmental education intern and I did our research or took classes. Our role as environmental education interns was to come up with different lessons to teach the kids each week during camp. We decided to do one outdoor activity and one indoor education activity.

This summer was a great way for me to practice working well with another teacher. The other intern and I worked together to create lesson plans for the children off of the research we had done. We worked very well together and it was a good experience to help show me my strengths and weaknesses while teaching and how to work with a coworker and each take a role which played to our strengths. It was very eye-opening and helped me realize how when we each play to our different teaching style, they complement each other to create a successful lesson for the children. Also working in the other camp positions helped show me that I am able to step up and help become a leader. I used to be the type of person who always needed

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instruction or direction before doing a job but throughout the summer, I learned how to just look around and ask what needs to be done and the best way to do it. This job helped give me the confidence in myself to know that I am able to step up and do a job well done without complete instruction. The internship this summer also helped improve my communication skills. We were always interacting with families and so I got better with being social with strangers. This skill will really come in handy when I am trying to network for jobs. I enjoyed talking to all of the different families and learning their story and sharing my own, it helped give me the confidence in myself to speak up and talk to people that I really did not know.

This experience was very interesting because the whole environmental part of the job was up to us. We could get involved with whatever we wanted, however there was no real good direction on how to get involved in ongoing projects in the area. We contacted many professors at the local Texas A&M University, however many never got back to us or they already had interns for the projects they were working on. There was also supposed to be a project that would take place at the conference center and we were really counting on that and that never came together. It was very frustrating because we only had about 10 weeks to try and get involved in projects in the area yet everyone already had the workers they needed or they did not have a project going on. I wish we were able to get in contact with the professors before the summer began so we would have had a better chance of getting in with a summer project. However, it was a great opportunity and we were able to teach different classes and become certified in many different things. I learned a lot about different things that I would never have

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expected, such as becoming certified on cleaning up oil spills. I wish we were able to make more of an environmental contribution and play a bigger part on a research project,

This summer was a time for me to explore the field of environmental education more, I had taken a class on it before but this was an amazing time to use what I had learned in the classroom in real life. I have never done much with environmental research before so that was a new experience and it was interesting, but I really enjoyed the teaching part more. One of my considerations for a career is to become a teacher and this was a way to explore a different side of teaching, something I may not get many opportunities to do again. Including the environment was really great and I loved to see how involved the kids would get with all the different activities and how they had a lot of fun learning with us. After this summer, I am still very interested in becoming a teacher and this helped show me good ways to incorporate the environment into different lesson plans. I really enjoyed this opportunity to be able to try out different lesson plans while working with the environment and am interested in continuing with this type of work after college. I would be more interested in just working in an elementary school as a teacher however, with the resources I gained from this internship, such as becoming Project Wet certified, I would be able to help incorporate the environment more into the curriculum.

This summer was a great experience to see a new part of the country and really have the freedom to create our own lesson plans for the kids at family camp. It was not quite as much

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research as I had expected, however, it was still a great time and I did gain many new skills and certifications which will help me later on in life. This summer was a great summer full of teaching and learning and I am so thankful to have the opportunity to work at such an amazing place with so many great people.