

Catherine Bartenstein
EPA: Sunwise Program
Executive Summary

With the financial support of the Tonya Internship Fund, I was able to work as an unpaid intern in the Office of Air and Radiation within the Environmental Protection Agency. The Office of Air and Radiation oversees the air and radiation protection activities of the agency. It is divided into divisions and within the divisions, there are various programs. I worked with the Sunwise Program in the Stratospheric Protection Division (SPD). The Stratospheric Protection Division's mission is to heal the damage done to the ozone layer and reduce incidences of negative human health affects related to the depleting ozone. The SPD does this both through international relations and through domestic education programs and outreach. The program that I worked with, the Sunwise Program, is one of the domestic education programs. Its mission is to help educate schools and communities about various ways they can protect themselves against the sun's damaging UV rays.

With the program, my main job was to process registrations for teachers that had signed up at conferences. When I arrived they were back-logged over 4 months. I am proud to say, that when I left the, the only registrations yet to be processed were the ones gathered at the most recent conference. In addition to the registrations, I had multiple side projects. I worked on a mail merger, assembled promotional items, presented at a summer program, and, most importantly, created an informational page on shade protection that will be added to the Sunwise Program's webpage. Although most of my jobs were tedious, I came to appreciate how desperately they needed the help.

Despite my fairly mundane duties, I did learn a lot this summer. I now have an incredibly intimate understanding of how the bureaucracy of the EPA works through the meetings I

attended. The meetings were by far my favorite part of my regular schedule; I loved seeing what the higher-level employees were doing and how they interacted. I also was able to attend a congressional hearing on June 10th, which gave me an insider's glance on the workings of congress. It was also a learning experience to simply be on the bottom of the food chain, especially when we went to headquarters (I worked in a smaller building located at 1310 L Street). The experience I gained through work is invaluable and the chance to live on my own in DC for ten weeks was really a once in a life time opportunity.