



# achieve

*...opening a world of possibilities*

## MY BUSY SUMMER

After the conclusion of several AP exams, standardized testing, and my class finals, I was looking forward to a summer of relaxation. Without a doubt, my summer experience this year was one of the most grueling yet memorable I have ever had.

My summer internship was at the California Academy of Sciences, where I was able to work in both the Geology and Planetarium departments. In Geology, my main project was keeping an inventory of their meteorite collection. I found a variety of perplexing and interesting things, such as a random tooth in the collection and whole shelves devoted to a single meteorite crater, Canyon Diablo in Arizona. In the Planetarium, my main task was to film live-action demos to aid any new Planetarium presenters. A definite highlight was Asteroid Day, when the Planetarium was dedicated to showing off the meteorites in the museum. Of course, I ran into some familiar specimens that I had inventoried in the Geology department, including Canyon Diablo. Asteroid day was challenging because along with filming the demos, I had to interact extensively with the guests to assist the other staff. This meant I had to overcome my introverted personality for six hours. Despite the challenges, I enjoyed my time at the Academy.

Along with my internship, I also participated in the **achieve** College Boot Camp. I went to the **achieve** office twice a week to work on my personal statement, find my college fit, and several other factors to consider when going to college. Accompanied by these visits were multiple homework assignments. I now have a completed personal statement and a list of about 20 colleges, including many prestigious universities. I also gained

more knowledge about college financing. I am not sure which school I would like to attend, but thanks to the **achieve** Boot Camp, I have a better idea of what that place is and how I am going to get there.

Lastly, I had the pleasure of attending an all-expense paid summer program at the University of Chicago. The program's emphasis was on the "true" college experience, which meant more freedom, but also a college-style class with an abundance of work. The class was a seminar focused primarily on poetry from minority poets and movements. Although poetry is not my expertise, I was intrigued with the class as we read and deciphered various poems in various styles, from the inspirational messages of Langston Hughes to the cryptic texts of Sonia Sanchez and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha.

Aside from the class, we were able to explore parts of Chicago. My favorite destination in Chicago is the Field Museum. As a man of science, I marveled at the many unique exhibits, especially Sue, the most complete Tyrannosaurus Rex fossil ever discovered. I also took a stroll down memory lane through none other than their meteorite exhibit. My internship at the Geology department concluded about a month before this excursion, yet all my memories immediately reawakened at the first glimpse of a fragment of the infamous Canyon Diablo.

That was a crash course on my busy summer break. Looking back, I realize it is truly incredible that in the middle of all of that, I was still able to do my taxes



Jamar Kittling  
ARHS '20



## COLLEGE TOUR

**achieve** juniors tour Bryn Mawr, Haverford, Lehigh University, Swarthmore, University of Pennsylvania, Ursinus, and Villanova University

## SUMMER OF GROWTH

This year I had the opportunity to intern at the Jewish Community Center of San Francisco. I was a counselor at two camps for children, the Musical Theatre and Flavors of the World. Each day began with a meeting with the other counselors, going over basic rules and ways to improve the experience for the kids. Whether it was learning how to calm an argumentative situation or making sure that each kid with allergies had an epi-pen, I learned that every bit of information given was vital. I greatly underestimated how difficult it would be supervising so many young children. Remembering names, grabbing their attention to practice choreography, singing along with them, and being with them for multiple days was an incredible yet draining experience. This internship made me think of my parents and how I acted as a seven year old, and it gave me a deeper understanding of the word "responsibility."

In the final week of my internship, I switched to the Flavors of the World camp. There, I worked with older kids, ranging from 12-14 years of age, and I learned how to make different cuisines from around the world. The camp activities consisted of creating a shopping list, buying ingredients, reading the instructions, and repeating the same the next day. Remaining focused was important because one mistake would ruin the whole recipe, specifically adding WAY too many cups of baking powder. If you are wondering how it tastes, just think of soap in powder form. These mistakes pushed our group harder to improve the next time we made something and made me think of how I improved as a person throughout my time there.

Summer is synonymous with relaxation for many students, and most importantly, getting away from school. But this summer was different for me. Instead of leaving school, school followed me, and I embraced it. This internship made me realize what I have to look forward

to as I progress in life and the many surprises in store for me along the way. Most importantly, I learned the importance of keeping an open mind to new experiences.



Daniel Chan-Artiga  
ARHS '21

## SERVING OTHERS

I have been given the privilege of volunteering at Mercy Retirement & Care Center in Oakland. My role is to assist in leading exercise and writing classes on Saturday mornings. I have met some amazing people and have gained so much wisdom during my interactions with them over time. One person in particular is from the Philippines and is about 84 years old. She was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, and I was gifted with the opportunity to meet her. Every week, she forgets who I am. But by the end of the day, she calls me her best friend and tells me her secrets.

While volunteering at Mercy, I have seen the decline of residents as they age. I have grown to appreciate

the community around me and to use the health and abilities God has given me to help better the lives of others. And I have learned so much through volunteering; I have learned that people, no matter their situation, just want to be treated kindly and given the respect and attention they deserve. On countless occasions, I just sat with strangers, absorbed their stories, and put them into perspective. I am very passionate about volunteering, and I want to continue serving people throughout college and beyond.



Saia Lorenzo  
HNHS '20

## TEACHING EMPATHY

My summer experience was amazing and memorable. My name is Daniela Rodriguez and I had the honor of working at the Lawrence Hall of Science alongside three **achieve** family members. The Lawrence Hall of Science makes science and engineering entertaining and accessible to children of all ages through a variety of exhibits. I had the pleasure of working in the Ingenuity Lab, a hands-on environment that introduces the engineering design process by presenting a challenge and providing the opportunity to design, build, and test your own prototype.

The Ingenuity Lab has different activities each month. My supervisor introduced the idea of having an activity that promotes empathy, and she came up with the idea of building a prosthetic hand out of everyday materials. The idea came from a little girl named Sophie, who was born with only her thumb and pinky on one hand. The engineers at UC Berkeley made her a 3D printed prosthetic hand that Sophie was able to control using her wrists. This hand cost around \$50, while a hospital prosthetic hand can range from \$15,000 to \$100,000. The idea of introducing empathy to an activity teaches many kids that there are others who are not as fortunate as they, and there are many ways to help those in need.

Building a prosthetic hand out of cardboard, straws, string, tape, and scissors is both challenging and exciting. For about two weeks, I helped facilitate the activity. I loved watching the kids get creative and seeing their faces light up when their designs worked.

Since the "Prosthetic Hand" was a new challenge this year, my supervisor asked me to gather feedback from the parents. After collecting data, I spent about two hours a day processing, coding, and analyzing it and determined the percentage of people who were likely to recommend this activity to other families. Then I wrote a report about the feedback. It surprised me how much work there is behind the creation of a new activity.

Working with children is fun and entertaining, but at times children have a short attention span and are difficult to keep focused. But as the days went by, I learned to interact and communicate with the children in a way they understood. Talking to a five-year-old is very different than talking to an adult, and I had to do both. I also learned many things about myself. Going into the internship, I did not really consider engineering as a career choice, but I enjoyed the design process; it was fun to create something from scratch. Working at the Lawrence Hall of Science made me realize that engineering is a career option I will definitely consider.



Daniela Rodriguez (HNHS '22), third from the left with **achieve** students Josiah Lucas (SJND '22), Lara Ramirez (HNHS '19), and Lorenzo Magwili (SJND '22)



## PREPARING FOR THE REAL WORLD

When I was a little kid, my teachers would always tell our class, "You guys have to be ready for the real world." This summer I was able to experience the real world. I worked in a normal job setting for the first time in my life, and this opportunity taught me a lot about social, communication, and computer skills. More importantly, it taught me about myself.

The organization I worked with is called the Jewish Community Federation. The JCF partners with agencies to offer support to underserved communities. I worked with the people running the Jewish Teen Foundation. The Jewish Teen Foundation is unique because it is comprised of teens who are inspired to serve and give back to their communities, as is taught to us by the **achieve** Program. My job was to research different groups

and provide the team with information about which ones needed the most support. In the fall, the program coordinators and teens will choose which underserved community they will support the following year.

I also helped the Federation with data entry. The JCF works with many donors, so keeping their database current is essential to the Foundation's success. I worked with a software program called Raiser's Edge, which helped me acquire many vital computer skills and knowledge.

Perhaps the most important impact my experience at the JCF had on me was the social skills I acquired. In that environment, I met a lot of people, and I was able to form good relationships. The staff members and my teammates were kind

and welcoming. Working with and learning from new people not only improved my social skills and forced me to go outside my comfort zone, but it also taught me a lot about myself.

This summer was a great learning experience for me. I have developed and grown as a person. I learned so much about the real world; you actually have to live it and experience it to understand it. I feel that having internship opportunities like these, and being partnered with organizations like the JCF, are crucial for **achieve** students to become successful in the future.



Alazar Hailu  
SJND '21

## BONDING

"Don't let the fear of striking out keep you from playing the game." On the first day of the **achieve** Freshmen Orientation, we participated in a fun icebreaker; we drew a picture of a refrigerator, and each of us wrote or drew something important to us on the refrigerator. I decided to write this quote, which can be interpreted in many ways, but to me it means never give up. Push yourself and do not let fear stop you. Ever since I heard this, it has stuck with me, and I strive to have that attitude.

Later that day we climbed the 450 stairs to Coit Tower. On the way up, I bonded with Samantha because both of us were so tired, but we pushed through and finally made it. We saw a gorgeous view of San Francisco, and it was all worth it.

On the last day of orientation, we went to the Mission District. We saw amazing, inspiring and heartwarming murals in Balmy Alley. My favorite mural was filled with powerful, impactful and revolutionary women. The mural included Malala,

who fought for a girl's right to an education in her country. She never gave up no matter the obstacles she faced. I love how this mural depicts women building each other up. It shows that women are more than objects. We are powerful, and we can make the world a better place. We can lean on one another instead of tearing each other down. This mural makes me feel proud to be a woman; it makes me feel empowered. Most importantly, it makes me want to accomplish my goals and thrive.

This summer I was able to bond with my **achieve** brothers and sisters from the Class of 2023 and visit new places. I am grateful for having been given the opportunity to experience this marvelous adventure of being a part of our loving **achieve** family, and I cannot wait for more.



Sheily Melgar  
HNHS '23

## COLLEGE BOOT CAMP

This summer was long anticipated, not only because I was ready for my junior year to be over but because I would get to start the **achieve** college process, or as we **achievers** like to call it, College Boot Camp. I was really excited but also a bit nervous to begin this process because it meant I was getting ready to leave for college in about a year. And even though I want to go, I do not know if I feel ready to go.

All the rising seniors worked with **achieve** staff and volunteers over the summer. We each researched as many as 50 colleges before narrowing our lists down to about 20. From there, we chose the ten to which we will be applying. To help narrow down the list, we made our "fit sheets" to find those colleges that would be the best fit for each of us. Preparing these fit sheets was super important. It is pretty much just a spreadsheet listing the things we want our schools to have and then scoring them based on how the different colleges meet our requirements. Additionally, we researched scholarships and attended a college fair.

We also started filling out the Common Application. Writing the essay for the Common App was one of my favorite parts of the college process. There are seven prompts to choose from, and I chose, "What topic, concept, or idea makes you lose all track of time?" I liked the question because when I think of something that makes me lose all track of time, it is the idea of how humans exist and coexist on Earth.

The college process is still ongoing and we will not be finished until we actually register for college. So far, I have been enjoying the process and everything that goes along with it.



Lissete Trinidad  
MHS '20



FRESHMEN ORIENTATION

**achieve** class of 2023 on their Mission District Mural Tour



## 2019 Summer Internship Providers

- Achieve Foundation
- Arthur J. Gallagher & Co.
- Baker Avenue Asset Management
- Berkeley Art Center
- Berkeley Repertory School of Theatre
- BRIDGE Housing
- California Academy of Sciences
- Center for Creative Land Recycling
- Center for Independent Living
- Children's Hospital Oakland Research Institute
- Clorox
- DFS
- Eureka – Girls Inc. of Alameda County
- Exploratorium
- First Republic Bank
- Fortress Investment Group
- Gerson Bakar & Associates
- Holliday Development
- Jewish Community Center of SF
- Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund
- Jewish Family & Children's Services
- JVS
- KQED
- LBA Realty
- San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
- TEF Architecture and Interior Design
- Telecare Corporation
- UC Berkeley Art Museum & Pacific Film Archive
- UC Berkeley Botanical Garden
- UC Berkeley College of Letters & Science
- UC Berkeley Haas School of Business
- UC Berkeley International House
- UC Berkeley Lawrence Hall of Science
- UC Berkeley Recreational Sports
- UC Berkeley University Development and Alumni Relations
- UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland Research Institute
- UCSF Global Health
- UCSF Volunteer & Guest Services
- Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center

## ALUMNI CORNER



Esther Lee  
MHS '14, Babson College '18

Until **achieve**, my life felt like it was on autopilot. Growing up in a traditional, conservative Korean family, my voice, thoughts, emotions, wants and needs were never considered. Due to a 20-year family feud triggered by my birth mother's suicide, I was subjected to abuse and neglect, and have always been desperate to please others. The growing eagerness to please others cultivated a craving for control over my own life. **achieve** was the turning point, giving me the opportunity and tools to make an unequivocal decision to start fighting for myself.

From the moment I became part of the **achieve** Program, I found ambition. I had mentors who cared about me, a supportive peer community, wonderful cultural experiences and summer internships. As a rising senior in high school, I was given the opportunity to have a summer internship in the Marketing Department at First Republic Bank. This internship was pivotal and fueled a desire in me to pursue a career in marketing.

I am an operational and strategic thinker with an intuitive sense of what tasks need to be done within projected timelines to achieve my goals. With every decision, I consider all the potential costs and benefits in order to determine a plan. Once a plan is made, I concentrate on executing my goals with a single-minded determination. With this in mind, I prepared every potential executable plan to set myself up for a successful career in marketing... only to have it blow up in my face once I began college.

Attending Babson, an all-business college in Wellesley, Massachusetts, I was shocked that my perception of business and marketing completely contradicted the reality I found in my business courses. Disappointed and lost, and suffering from analysis paralysis, I shut myself off completely throughout college. I always considered my artistic talent and personality to be my strongest attributes for my potential success in a marketing career, so I found the thought of transitioning to another area of business completely arbitrary and potentially regretful. I continued to go through the motions, marching stoically towards graduation. In the meantime, I continued to intern at First Republic Bank every summer, honing my skills in marketing and learning everything I could about the banking business.

As college graduation approached, I made a pivotal decision to jump at the opportunity to start a job in finance at First Republic Bank. Through the support from **achieve** and my FRB mentors, I realized a newfound passion. Currently, I am preparing for the June 2020 CFA (Chartered Financial Analyst) Level 1 exam, which is globally known as one of the most difficult three-level finance exams.

Reflecting back, I realize it was not the fear of failure that prevented me from making the transition from marketing to finance sooner; it was the choice not to risk failure. I realize that I will not always be able to predict the timeline between milestones in my career. However, when I set certain expectations for myself and how my life should manifest, I am limiting the possibilities of luck and wonderful surprises. Revisiting one of **achieve's** basic values of not being afraid to "go outside my comfort zone," I found a new level of confidence in the idea of taking a chance and betting on myself. A leap of courage is all it takes. I am finally in charge of my own life and I love it!!



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**achieve** students attend Cabaret at SF Playhouse.