Since 2008, ANS has collaborated with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Eastern Regional Research Laboratory in Philadelphia and placed several WINS as interns. This year, Rabiyatu Jalloh, Rayne Green, Stephany Alcantara and Michelle Huynh participated, and at the end of the summer presented what they learned to the USDA staff and the WINS II at the USDA’s Federal Women’s Program activity commemorating Women’s Equality Day. What follows is Rabiyatu Jalloh’s experience:

As I was walking into USDA for my first day, I wasn’t nervous I was excited, other people had told me how much fun it was. The first day I worked with an analytical chemist named Dr. Steve Lehotay who has been working there for a long time. He explained to me what analytical chemistry is and why it is important in the work he does. Then he showed me how to pipette. We had a contest to see who could do it better - we tied. By the end of the day I really enjoyed my time working with Dr. Lehotay.

The next week I worked with another analytical chemist name Dr. Marilyn Schneider and we did an experiment that was going to help her with a study that she would be participating in, this fall. We worked with beef samples; we injected a drug into the beef, then we extracted the drug from the beef. It was a really long process but it was so much fun! I really enjoyed working with the equipment in the lab.

The following week I worked with Dr. Alan Lightfield and we did an experiment with M&M’s and markers so that I could learn about chromatography, which in simpler terms means separation of colors. I separated the M&M types which was peanut and regular. Dr. Lightfield then showed me how to do TLC (Thin Layer Chromatography) by taking a sheet of special paper making little dots with the different types of markers and placing in a liquid inside a glass container. After a certain amount of time we could see the colors of the different markers separating into different color components. It was a very fun experiment.

I next worked with Dr. Guoying Chen on finding antibiotics in milk. We prepared the samples, and in order to detect the antibiotics we had to use a spectrometer. Dr. Chen showed me the piece of equipment that he designed and built which he wasn’t even an engineer. It taught me that you could do anything you put your mind to.

After working with Dr. Chen, I worked with Dr. Yelena Sapozhikova another chemist, and we worked with polyphenols and antioxidants. We prepared samples of color, also by the M&M types which was peanut and regular.
MAYA Summit 2013

The 2013 Mid-Atlantic YouthALIVE! (MAYA) summit was held in Pittsburgh, PA. This year’s theme was “Communicating the Environment”. After a long, 5-hour drive, the WINS entered the Andrew Carnegie Museum of Natural History. Just as we walked in, Mahogany, Deneisha, Jayde, Jada, and I were immediately separated into different groups. Although I was anxious and relatively quiet at first, my peers were friendly and welcomed me into their group.

The first day, we had to prepare a presentation. The WINS girls were allowed to stay together, and from the past two days we decided to teach people about safe drinking water. After an hour of rehearsal, we held a mock talk show in the Earth Theater. It was fascinating to see how each group had such different ideas for the presentations; they ranged from skits to raps to narratives. We concluded the night with an exchange of gifts and contact information.

The second day we zipped all around the city! One highlight was our visit to the Children’s Museum, where we got to see interactive art exhibits that were meant for kids. Of course, we enjoyed them too! The “gravity room” was my favorite spot in the museum because it was so surreal. After some tours of Pittsburgh’s urban gardens, we boarded a bus to the Allegheny River. There we tested water samples, learned about watersheds, and discussed why it’s important to keep our rivers clean. To continue the theme of “communicating the environment”, we headed back to the museum to end the night with Wall-E.

The third day, we had to prepare a presentation. The WINS girls were allowed to stay together, and from the past two days we decided to teach people about safe drinking water. After an hour of rehearsal, we held a mock talk show in the Earth Theater. It was fascinating to see how each group had such different ideas for the presentations; they ranged from skits to raps to narratives. We concluded the night with an exchange of gifts and contact information.

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The first activity was to build a sculpture representing a “newly cleared commercial space”. We each had so many different ideas; it was refreshing to be able to talk to other students and see different perspectives on the same task. That served as our introduction to some environmental issues. The second part of the summit’s theme was communication. Later on that night we had a theater workshop that taught us how to make learning fun for other kids. After some tours around the museum, we concluded our first day at MAYA.

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My USDA Internship Experience (cont. from pg. 1)

My time at USDA has been a very unique experience, I feel blessed to have been given this experience. I have learned the outline of analytical chemistry and how it relates to agriculture. I honestly can say that I enjoy science more than I did before and this has encouraged me to consider majoring in Chemistry for undergrad. Thanks to all of the people at USDA and WINS for giving me this extraordinary opportunity. I will forever be grateful.

Rabiyatu Jalloh, WINS II

10 Things I Learned in WINS I

As part of a lesson, we asked the girls to write down in their journals 10 things they have learned in WINS I that have really impacted them. Nixa Soto was kind enough to share them with us.

1. The littlest things can impact the water in such a big way.
2. I learned that we take most things in our life for granted.
3. I use over 2,000 gallons of water per week.
4. It is impossible to clean up an oil spill 100%.
5. Some landfills get about 80,000 tons of trash per week.
6. We go way over the limit of the foods we are, and are not, supposed to eat.
7. Over 92% of the US Energy that we use is nonrenewable.
8. If miners died, their male children had to take over.
9. Some people in the world live with or under $2 a day.
10. People in some countries need to work for everything we have at our fingertips.

Rabi demonstrating how to use a pipette during her USDA presentation on her internship experience.

Happy Birthday!

September
1st - Gere Johnson
10 - Imani Jackson
15 - Deja Paylor
28th - Cecile Smith

October
2nd - Alicia Vazquez
3rd - Aurea Stephens
6th - Nixa Soto
19th - Zania Jones

November
7th - Sandy Tang
17th - Kajae Pannell
18th - DaJeanne Martinez
18th - W’Anna Cooper
26th - Jacqueline Ng

Nixa Soto (left) and Jaidah Murray during a WINS I visit to the Parkway.

Rabiyatu Jalloh, WINS II

Sandy Tang working the lines collecting water samples from the Allegheny River in Pittsburgh.

Sandy Tang (right) working the lines collecting water samples from the Allegheny River in Pittsburgh.

The WINS participants at the 2013 MAYA Summit, from left: Tiffany Allen, the Academy’s Early Childhood Educator, Deneisha Cook, Jada Parril, Jayde Hammond, Mahogany Davis and Sandy Tang.

Nixa Soto (left) and Jaidah Murray during a WINS I visit to the Parkway.