

SUMMER - Making the Most of It

By Cindy Harlan and Kim Simpson

School's out! It's time to put away those backpacks and discover summer activities that enrich a child's life. Making the most of summer can be exciting, and best of all, it can be found right in our own back yard.

Summer offers adventure for all ages. Day camps teach young children about the arts, athletics, space, sailing, technology, the outdoors, karate or cooking. Depending on a child's readiness, older campers might try away-camp and even consider being a counselor or CIT. Local churches have vacation Bible school and libraries provide reading and extracurricular programs. Tammany Trace is a great summer affair where bikers can enjoy the amenities from Abita Springs to Lacombe. A trek to New Orleans offers seekers entertainment and education at the Children's Museum, Audubon Zoo, Aquarium or historic tours. Middle and high school students may find summer jobs as camp counselor, swim instructor, coach, babysitter, lawn keeper or dog walker. Consecutive summer employment can often lead to promotions and pay raises.

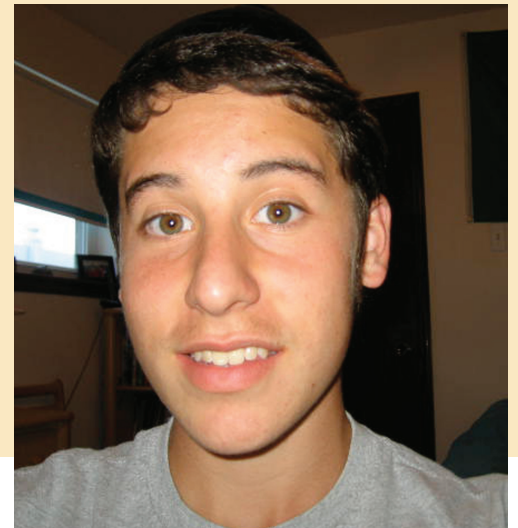
When students are wondering where to get started with their summer enrichments, they should think depth, not breadth. Instead of compiling a broad list of activities, they should expound on what they are already involved in and look for opportunities to increase their responsibilities. Max Vizelberg, a rising senior at Haynes Academy for Advanced Studies in Metairie, has his sights on being a Veterinarian. Max has volunteered at Chateau Veterinary Clinic for two summers to fulfill his community

service requirements and to glean insight into the field of Veterinary Medicine. Upon completion of his service hours, Max was offered a paid position at the clinic this summer, exemplifying his dedication and hard work. Max will also job shadow at Southeast Veterinary Specialists to gain a deeper understanding of the specialized fields of Veterinary Medicine such as surgery, oncology, radiology, internal medicine, dermatology and physical rehabilitation.

Max was awarded the Fein Fellowship where qualifying students receive scholarships for college preparatory workshops to selective university-based summer programs at Brandeis, Harvard, Notre Dame, Stanford, or Yale. Max selected to attend Yale University's workshop in June.

Additionally, Max plays and travels extensively with the elite soccer team, Lafreniere Gamblers.

Summer experiences can tell a story about a student's passions and interests, and they should pursue activities that support them. Claire Geary is a student who has created a story while pursuing her own creativity. Claire will be a senior at Mandeville High School in the fall. She also attends NOCCA, New Orleans Center for Creative Arts, where she furthers her passion



for the arts, particularly visual arts. In addition to her academics, Claire serves the community by volunteering at Caritas, an organization in Covington that provides assistance for the health, education and welfare of orphaned and disadvantaged children. Claire was awarded a grant for a summer enrichment at Caritas which enables her to design and implement an art curriculum for the children there. She has chosen to teach sculpting through the different techniques of working with clay, such as handbuilding, slabbing and glazing. Claire selected sculpture because, "working with clay lends itself to creativity in artists of every age," she said. Claire is proud to be an integral part of the Caritas mission to bring a future and a hope to less advantaged children.

Claire will also hone her own talents and skills this summer as she attends The School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. SMFA is a unique institution, dedicated to educating artists and developing students' creative investigation, imagination, and vision. Through Claire's summer program, she will foster her studio practice while enhancing her coursework. Claire hopes to pursue her passion for the arts throughout

her collegiate academic endeavors and her summer experiences reinforce her commitment to her educational and professional desires.

Victoria Myrtle, a rising senior at University of Georgia recognized her interest in medicine, particularly genetics, early in her education. In order to reinforce her dedication to a career in medicine, Tori recently participated in two internships at Ochsner Baptist and Children's Hospital in New Orleans. Both programs offered Tori vital, real life experience that helped to cull her passions. At Ochsner Baptist, Tori worked with art and healing, ministering to the elderly through projects that bring art into the health care arena to revitalize patients and their families, doctors and health care providers. At Children's Hospital, Tori shadowed Dr. Lacassie, a genetics specialist, where she researched and co-authored a thesis on pediatric genetic disorders. Her work will be published in conjunction with Dr. Lacassie's.

Tori also recently returned from a medical mission trip to Costa Rica with the Foundation for International Medical Relief for Children. FIMRC provides access to medical care for underprivileged and medically underserved

children around the world. Her experience in Costa Rica led her to apply for an ambassadorship with FIMRC. Tori experienced first-hand how her pursuits can be a catalyst for positive change within the medical community and her passions were renewed because of her extracurricular experiences, "it all came to life for me," she exclaimed. She looks forward to returning to her academics at UGA in the fall.

Summer enrichments are critical to real-world experiences and for exploring a child's interests. Meaningful and productive summer experiences can lead to great references that can help forge alliances, tap into a child's passions and potential, and steer them toward right college and career choices.

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