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## **Elisha Garcia (Lakeville, Mass.)**

A senior at Coyle Cassidy High School in Taunton, Mass., Elisha Garcia is thinking about college next year. He is interested in marine science, and found his choice of schools to consider greatly expanded after spending part of the summer as a high school intern at the Woods Hole Science Aquarium, the nation's oldest public research display aquarium and part of NOAA's Northeast Fisheries Science Center in Woods Hole, Mass.

"I really liked the hands-on activities, and it was much more laid back and relaxed than I expected," Garcia said of his experience as one of nine high school summer interns. "It strengthened my interest in marine science, and especially working with sea turtles. I am going to look at schools that offer strong marine science programs, and heard about some of them this summer."

Garcia participated in the Aquarium's Careers in Marine Science Seminar July 27 to August 7. The career seminar students get training in marine animal husbandry and basic aquarist chores, hear presentations from scientists working in a variety of marine fields, go on collecting trips, visit other Woods Hole science institutions, and go on field trips to the New Bedford waterfront, Whaling Museum and Buttonwood Park Zoo and Nantucket's Maria Mitchell Association Aquarium. The seminar is designed to give students an idea of what people working in Woods Hole do, and how different areas of science contribute to the larger effort to understand the marine world and to manage marine resources wisely.

"The collecting trips were my favorite thing to do," he said. On August 5, the group went to Woodneck Beach in Falmouth to collect specimens for the Aquarium's touch tanks and to explain what they caught to members of the public who sign up to join the group.

Garcia also liked the visit to the Buttonwood Park Zoo in nearby New Bedford, one of many field trips the interns make as part of their exposure to various aspects of running an aquarium and caring for animals. He also learned

about public education and outreach by participating in collecting trips for the public to local harbors and through the Aquarium's touch tank and harbor seal education efforts.

Along with the other summer interns, Garcia performed the daily chores of running an aquarium, like cleaning tanks and feeding the fish. While it wasn't his favorite activity, he understands that it is all part of the operation. He enjoyed giving talks about the Aquarium's two harbor seals, LuSeal and Bumper, during the two daily public education programs.

"It was cool to be able to get close to the seals, much closer than most people ever do, and learn about them," he said of the experience. "Running an aquarium and caring for marine animals is a lot more fun than I realized."

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Related links:

Woods Hole Science Aquarium: <http://aquarium.nefsc.noaa.gov/>

Aquarium Blog: <http://whaquarium.wordpress.com/>