

## **Kyle Hobson, Old Dominion University**

### ***SUPEH Intern, Summer 2010***

In the summer of 2010, I was given the incredible opportunity to take part in the Summer Program in Environmental Health (SUPEH) at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia. During the internship, I was able to explore a variety of subject areas encountered by environmental health professionals and learn from experts in the field. The program's dynamic design of providing both office work and field experience enabled me to see both sides of the environmental health profession and helped me to appreciate how much work goes into protecting the health of our nation.

Our first field experience was the opportunity to shadow an environmental health specialist at a local health department. For 2 days we accompanied staff from a metro Atlanta area health department and assisted with food establishment inspections, land use surveys, and recreational water inspections. This experience was valuable because it allowed me to see how diverse the job of a local government-level environmental health specialist is. Later in the internship we were able to shadow a public health entomologist with the Georgia Department of Health who taught us how to set traps for mosquitoes and explained the importance of this work. Obviously this is a very important environmental health function in areas that are affected by West Nile virus and other mosquito-borne viruses that cause encephalitis. Lastly, my favorite field experience was shadowing the CDC's Vessel Sanitation Program in Port Canaveral, Florida. For 2 days, the SUPEH interns accompanied members of the U.S. Public Health Service while they inspected two several-thousand-passenger cruise ships. Although the work was rather demanding and tedious at times, it was an incredible experience and I am truly grateful to have had the rare opportunity to partake in it.

In addition to the field experiences, I was given the opportunity to work on a federal project during the internship. My goal was to work with CAPT Mark Miller of the U.S. Public Health Service to update and to revise an environmental health training module for a program CDC does in collaboration with the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The goal of the training—called Environmental Health Training in Emergency Response—is to better prepare environmental health specialists to respond to environmental health issues during a disaster. It is amazing to think that a project that I worked on will be presented to people in my profession all over the country.

SUPEH was a wonderful opportunity to network with and learn from experts in the field of environmental health. The field experiences during this program provided me with the chance to apply the knowledge that I learned in the classroom to a real-life setting. Additionally, the project that I was given to work on in the office gave me the opportunity to be part of something that can help improve the health and well-being of the entire country. Our supervisors (LT Jasen Kunz and LCDR Justin Gerding) and the senior staff of the Environmental Health Services Branch did a wonderful job of running the SUPEH program. I am truly thankful to have been able to experience working with the CDC through this program.