Journal Entry #1

Although the beginnings of my project have been stressful, I have already learned a lot. Deciding on the type of experience I was looking for was the easy part. I have a strong love for animals and their environment, so I knew I wanted to be working for a non-profit animal or environmental agency. I have three cats at home and want to go to college for environmental sciences to learn how to best help animals in their natural habitats. I have also acquired many technological skills here at Mansfield High School and wanted to put those skills to use. In looking for a non profit organization that needed and wanted my help marketing their mission, I have worked on my communication skills and I have learned that I was naive to think that everyone would be banging down my door looking for my free help. I have learned that finding a position takes work, including communicating clearly and effectively, letting potential mentors know what I can do for them and in the process how they can help me.

To begin with I emailed and contacted about fifteen to twenty different animal rescue leagues and ocean animal rescues. At the beginning I received many emails back from people but most said they could not help with what I was looking for. One organization The Animal Rescue League of Boston wrote back to me saying that they have availability for weekly volunteers but no internship opportunities for the moment. This would not have worked for me since I am already a weekly volunteer at the Mansfield Animal Shelter. Since this I have been in contact with a women from Save the Bay named Cindy Sabato. We haven't met yet but have been emailing back and forth to figure out if she would be able to help me out. She asked me lots of questions about the type of projects I am hoping to work on and how much time and commitment I am willing to invest. We have finally figured out a date to meet which is next Tuesday at her offices in Providence. As promising as this seems I am keeping my options open and have continued to contact other groups and contacts including Detective Wright who used to work at the New England Aquarium and Ms. Kenny’s friend who is a volunteer at many animal rescue places. My dad also has a friend who along with several other volunteers runs a poodle rescue. This last option is also a strong possibility and I will be talking with them in the next week to see how I might help them spread their mission. I am hopeful after this Tuesday I will have found my mentor.

Even though I have yet to find a mentor, I feel my project is progressing. At the beginning I wasn’t receiving any emails or calls back from anyone. Now between Save the Bay and the poodle rescue I feel I am on my way to making some strong connections not only in finding a mentor, but in making connections in the field I love. In this next week I am looking forward to meeting and talking with both organizations in order to find the right fit. Although I am nervous to meet with them, the experience this past month of having to talk with many different people has taken me out of my comfort zone and shone me, I can talk to potential “employers” with confidence and that my enthusiasm, dedication, and skill set are valuable assets that I can put to use not only in the school setting, but in the real world as well.

For the year to come I am really excited which direction this project takes me in and if it will help me decided if this is what I want to pursue in college.