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CONTACT: Scott Heiberger
heiberger.scott@mcrf.mfldclin.edu
715-389-7541



National Farm Medicine Center hosts two student interns

The National Farm Medicine Center hosted two students as part of a national summer internship program providing practical experience in the field of occupational safety.

Ivanna Pereyra, Salisbury University, and Taylor Arnold, University of Memphis, spent eight weeks in Marshfield, Wis., working primarily on *Seguridad en las Lecherias*, a project that is testing culturally appropriate occupational safety and health training for immigrant dairy workers.

Pereyra and Arnold came to the Farm Center as part of the Occupational Health Internship Program (OHIP), an initiative of the Association of Occupational and Environmental Clinics <http://aoec.org/ohip/>. Competition for internships was keen with just 34 positions nationwide for more than 400 applicants.

“This has been a wonderful opportunity to have fresh young minds among us who can offer new perspectives and can ask questions that don’t occur to us but have relevance to our work,” said Matthew Keifer, MD, MPH, director of the National Farm Medicine Center, a program of Marshfield Clinic Research Foundation. “We hope that Ivanna and Taylor benefitted from their experience here as much as we have benefitted from their presence with us.”

Marshfield was the only rural location among nine training sites nationwide, and *Seguridad* was the only project focused specifically on agricultural safety and health among 17 projects.

“This is our first year as a host site,” said the Farm Center’s Iris Reyes, MPH, who coordinated the work of Pereyra and Arnold, “and it has been a great opportunity for NFMC to help train the next generation of health and safety professionals.”

The design and testing of *Seguridad* is a collaboration of the Farm Center, Migrant Clinicians Network and the Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center, which provides funding through a grant from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

“Our placement with NFMC and the *Seguridad* project gave us valuable inroads into the dairy industry,” wrote Pereyra and Arnold. “We were able to talk to numerous Hispanic workers, participate in safety trainings, and sit in on interviews and meetings with farm

owners. Hearing multiple perspectives and having access to the various facets of the industry allowed us a much more nuanced view of the worlds of agriculture and occupational safety and health, and the complexities involved in merging the two worlds.”

“We greatly appreciate this experience,” Pereyra and Arnold wrote. “It opened our eyes to the way that food is produced and the labor-intensive tasks involved. Working with both Hispanic laborers and farm owners helped put a face to the industry. We have a renewed respect for the people that work hard and take great risks in order to put food on the table.”

Pereyra and Arnold presented results of their internship during a national Occupational Health Internship Program videoconference on August 7.

Pereyra is from Montgomery County, Maryland. She has bachelor’s degree in sociology from Salisbury University. In the upcoming year she will be applying to graduate school for public policy and hopes to apply her degree to help those less fortunate.

Arnold grew up in southwest Missouri. He has a bachelor’s degree in anthropology and sociology from the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, and is currently attending a Master of Arts program in applied medical anthropology at the University of Memphis. His research interests include topics such as migrant health, labor, health disparity, and tuberculosis.

For information on the National Farm Medicine Center, go to <http://www.marshfieldclinic.org/nfmc>.

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