

RAM SCHOLAR INTERNSHIP LARIMER COUNTY

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

Ram scholars is a program with the Human Development team and the Agriculture Education team. It is a program where college adults with intellectual disabilities take college courses, learn how to be a worker, with an end goal of getting an internship and entering the work force.

During the six-week summer internship the Ram Scholars are able to work at CSU's Agricultural Research, Development, and Education Center and get hands on experience working in different areas of agriculture they could work in. The areas of ARDEC the Scholars assist are agronomy, livestock, research, and education.

The program teaches the students about agriculture, but also how to be an effective worker. The students are able to explore their different interests in agriculture by working with ARDEC staff.

INTERNSHIP GOALS

- Work with ADREC staff to be able to plan hands on tasks for the Ram Scholars to complete.
- Provide a positive and safe work experience for the scholars
- Teach the students about different areas of agriculture
- Demonstrate to the scholars what it means to be a good worker
- Provide scaffolding to better help the Scholars build their knowledge.
- Enhance my teaching skills for those with intellectual disabilities

HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO YOUR EDUCATION

As an education major this internships gave me a chance to work with a group of students, I hadn't had the privilege to work with yet. It enhanced my teaching skills both in and out of the classroom.

Being an agriculture literacy student I was able to use my knowledge to provide an out of classroom education experience for the six-week time we worked at ARDEC.

WHAT YOU DID

Before the Scholars started, I began to plan out the first orientation day. I worked with the human development team to work on the best practices, routines, and language to use during the summer internship.

I then started to work with ARDEC staff members to start developing a task list of things they can help the staff complete. I shadowed ARDEC for multiple days to think of creative work we could do. I then worked to make a rough schedule of tasks to complete during our work blocks.

Once the scholars started, we followed a set schedule to model how their future jobs will function. We would have a work block, then a 15-minute break, followed by another work block, which led into our lunch. After lunch they had one more work block to finish. At the start of each week, I would meet with ARDEC staff to set an exact schedule for that week.

We had a wide variety of things that we did over the summer some are:

- Our Ram Scholar garden where we planted our own fruits and vegetables. Accompanied with weekly weeding.
- Helped the agronomy unit with irrigation tasks like digging lead ditches and pulling old irrigation pipe up.
- Help livestock by weekly cleaning their chute barn and getting to watch vets in action.
- Helping CAMS Ag Academy with various tasks for their on the road summer.
- Cleaning livestock holding pens, using a power washer.
- Helping the wheat research team by thrashing individual wheat heads to use the seeds for CSU's research.

While the scholars would work, I would act a peer and work beside them, modeling certain tasks to work on them working independently. We would work as a team and follow our team agreement to make it a healthy working environment.

For our last week we moved to the shop and started a project. Nathan Clark and Tristen Holland worked together to design a wooden shoe cleaner with a platform to step up on, two shoe cleaning brushes attached, a metal scraping bar, and a handlebar across the top to help with stability. Each scholar got to build their own shoe cleaner. The project included cutting wood, measuring, assembling the cleaner together, and using the plasma cutter to cut out the metal parts.

WHAT YOU LEARNED

This summer I was able to gain so much knowledge and wonderful experience working with the Ram Scholars.

Professionally, I was able to work closely with ARDEC staff, helping my professional communication skills. It also helped my planning and organization skills to grow. The summer also taught me more about the best education practices for those students with intellectual disabilities. It also helped me grow as an educator outside the classroom by having to explain agriculture and the tasks we were completing in a new way.

The six scholars that I had the privilege to work with this summer each taught me a separate lesson that I will always remember and be able to look back on.

- Alec taught me that I can do hard things, even when I think I can't.
- Hunter taught me that sometimes all we need is a laugh to feel better.
- Reece taught me that asking questions is the best way to gain knowledge.
- Gavyn taught me there's always a positive in a negative.
- Jesse taught me its always important to be thankful for what I have.
- Ryan taught me a smile can always brighten a day.

PICTURES

