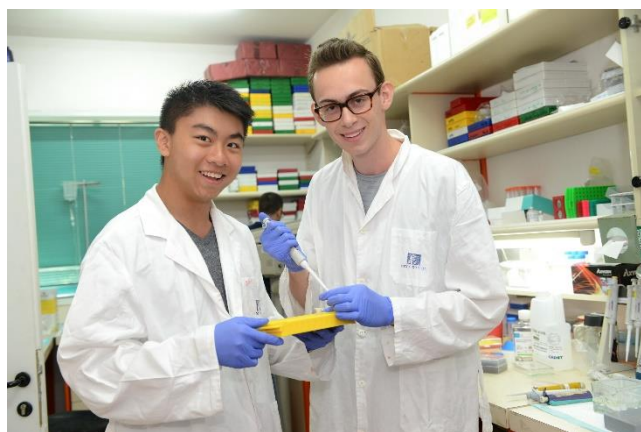


Post Trip Report of the Weizmann Institute of Science Award by Jonathan Ni, 2016

These four weeks in Israel have been among the greatest experiences of my life, and I am sure that this summer will be remembered as the highlight of my teenage years.



As someone who is interested in neuroscience, I was glad to be placed in a project relating to neuroimmunology. My partner, who is from Canada, and I explored the differential



characteristics of the brain's choroid plexus, a topic that greatly fascinated me. Working under the guidance of a PhD student, I learned a lot about working in a lab, from correctly using micropipettes to growing cell cultures. Under his mentorship, I conducted scientific research in a novel area in neuroimmunology that may even lead to a breakthrough in the field. I have greatly broadened my scientific interests, and I have found my passion for scientific research. I admire how the students at Weizmann are encouraged to pursue basic research to

quench curiosity rather than to achieve a specific end. I am amazed how the sciences at Weizmann are integrated. A computer scientist and a neurobiologist can work together on a study, despite them being from two completely different fields.

While I enjoyed the lab work, I think the best part of the program was the people. I have met people from all over the world, and there is nothing more inspiring than seeing such passionate and ambitious people in one place. I found it amazing how many lifelong friendships were made as a result of a shared passion for science. I now have a place to stay wherever I travel in the world. This program truly gives its participants the once in a lifetime opportunity to meet such a

diverse group of people. As a result of this program, I have begun to think globally - about my life, my professional endeavors, and my interactions with the people around me. I am eternally grateful to have had the chance to participate in this program.

Although this is not my first time in Israel, it has definitely been the most comprehensive. The first time I came to Israel, I swam in the Dead Sea and visited Jerusalem with my family. I was an outsider coming in to enjoy the tourist attractions that Israel had to offer. This time, however,



I had the unique opportunity to experience Israel as an insider. I learned so much about the Israeli culture and history. A future visit to Israel is currently in the making. I have fallen in love with the country and the campus, and I am sad to be leaving.

As the program comes to a close, I am left with a bittersweet feeling. I am sad to say goodbye to all these amazing people, but I am extremely happy to have been able to participate in this program. To quote a famous adage that perfectly describes the situation: “Don’t cry because it’s over. Smile because it happened”.

The academic, social, and cultural aspects of this program has made this summer the best summer of my life. From waking up at 5:00 AM to go hiking to sleeping under the stars in the Negev Desert, I have formed memories that I will hold dear to me in the years to come.

