

# Me Myself & NASA

by Megan L. Gage

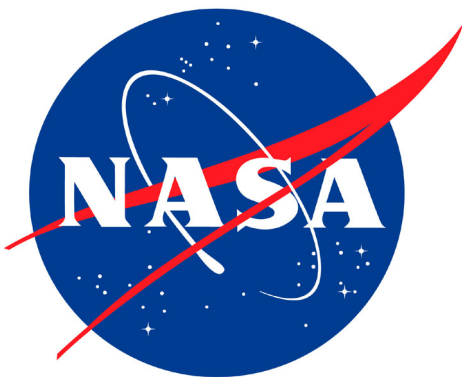


This summer, the lab has become a second home!

I have always been an active learner. From a young age, I became involved in various organizations created for the sole purpose of advancing the education of children like myself. One of these programs, the Dr. Frank S. Greene Scholars Program, gave me various opportunities to develop a thirst for knowledge and a love for science. As a member of this community group, I was introduced to MESA (Math, Engineering, Science, Achievement), and it was MESA, in turn, that has led me to NASA.

As a member of MESA, I participated in various events and competitions that collectively taught me how to think critically in order to solve problems. Essentially, it taught me to think like a scientist. Looking back on my time in MESA, I can distinctly see the difference the program made in my life.

This summer, because of



MESA, I was given the incredible opportunity to work as a research intern in the astrobiology department of the NASA-Ames Research Center. I have been working with instruments I had never heard of, studying compounds I could only dream of, while working to solve a problem that has gone inconclusively answered since the world's formation: How was life created?

Being able to work this summer at NASA has allowed me to broaden my view of the organization itself. Many think that NASA limits itself to the manned exploration of space, yet this aspect of NASA is arguably one of its least important. When not sending humans into space in a way that seemingly defies physics and logic, NASA employees can be found organizing flight patterns for airports nation-wide, researching the effects of zero-gravity on life forms, calculating how many planets may possibly hold life, or testing newly designed equipment to facilitate the exploration of space, manned or otherwise. These are simply a few of the problems NASA works to solve. Even with the elimination of human space exploration from NASA's programs,

it can be assured that they will stay busy as ever, working to expand our knowledge of the universe.

This summer has definitely been one I will remember. It has provided me with an opportunity to gain valuable insight and experience in the lab. I will take my newfound knowledge with me as I enter the world as a scientist. This internship has been an incredible opportunity and I would like to thank MESA, the Greene Scholars Program and NASA for making this a dream come true.



Just a few of the instruments utilized this summer