



# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

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## ROBERT SCHOFNER RESEARCH & ENGINEERING APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM ALUMNI

I'm a rising high school senior hoping to major in Biology with a focus on Global Health when I graduate.

### WORDS OF ADVICE

Be curious, be passionate. Through this and other AEOP programs, you will gain a deeper connection to your unique purpose. For me, authentic research is clearly a service for the common good.

### BEST THINGS ABOUT THE PROGRAM

I had the opportunity to work as a microbiology research assistant in the Shaw Lab at the University of South Florida. There I researched the molecular mechanisms of disease causation in the major human pathogens that cause two thirds of all hospital acquired infections. Utilizing the research skills I cultivated as an apprentice, I produced and presented a scholarly academic paper to successfully complete my AP Capstone Research course [College Board Innovative Diploma Program] during my high school junior year. Evidence-based research in a laboratory setting truly offers a path to humility as it requires perseverance.

### HOW PARTICIPATING IN AEOP INSPIRED YOU TO ADVANCE IN STEM

My mentor, Dr. Lindsey Shaw, and the Infectious Diseases Society of America [IDSA] have made it clear that the development of a new drug to halt the spread of uncontrollable antibiotic-resistant pathogens must be a research priority. Thanks to AEOP, I was exposed to an area of study I now want to explore further. I am very interested in compounds that inhibit bacteria in a protective biofilm but are nontoxic to immune compromised humans. Essentially, I want to help discover and develop drugs to combat decades of overuse and misuse of antibiotic drugs. I can now see my future being tied to a career combating antibiotic-resistant bacteria and working in global partnerships supporting antibiotic resistant research efforts.

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