

Hannah Pauly

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To the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society:

When I first arrived on Sanibel, I was nervous. I was moving to a new, unfamiliar part of the country right out of college with limited work experience. Little did I know that this place would soon feel like home. Those that work for J.N. “Ding” Darling NWR and the Wildlife Society welcomed me with open arms and made me feel like I belonged. The experiences that this internship has given me are unbelievable. Working on the education team has given me newfound confidence in myself and my work. Sara especially pushed me to believe in myself and trust in my abilities. From developing new programs to leading field trips to creating online video series, this position has pushed me outside my comfort zone and helped me develop my skills in way I never imagined.

One of the best and most rewarding experiences I have had at “Ding” was getting to interact with the children; seeing their faces light up when they would experience something new made all of the hard work and effort worth it. I’ll never forget what it was like to share those eye-opening experiences with them, whether it was seeing a manatee or alligator for the first time, having them taste the salt of a black mangrove, or getting the opportunity to take them on their first beach trip. Without the funding from our wonderful supporters, our field trips would never be possible. We are so lucky to have the “Ding” family and their recognition of how important these experiences for children are.

Saying ‘Thank you’ simply does not convey how appreciative I am for this experience. I know that working on the education team with Sara at J.N. “Ding” Darling NWR has made me a better person, and for that I will always be grateful. I am sad to leave, but excited to visit in the future. Thank you everyone!

Kind regards,

Hannah Pauly
