

UCSC High School Summer Internship

Monte Vista Christian School student presents research at Moscone Center

Alex Wayne, an Aptos resident and Junior at Monte Vista Christian School was among the presenters at the American Geophysical Union semi-annual meeting at Moscone Center in San Francisco on December 18 - an event attended by over 20,000 Earth and space scientists from around the world. "I really enjoyed learning about and getting to share the research my mentor, Elissa Olimpí, is doing", said Wayne. He had the privilege of serving as an intern under the auspices of the UCSC High School Summer Internship (HSSI) program last summer.

The program, which is funded by National Science Foundation (NSF), selects dedicated youth to spend at least 6-8 weeks working in different science laboratories assisting in research projects, supervised directly by graduate students, post docs or other researchers. The research areas are critically important to local economy. Alex Wayne assisted in researching bat activity around California's Central Coast. "It was fascinating to learn about bats. They are invaluable to our ecosystem, saving our farmers about \$23 billion a year in pest control products. The program gave me insights into scientific research, from reading academic papers to actually catching bats in the field."

The program was created by Dr. Adina Paytan, currently a professor at the UCSC Institute of Marine Sciences. Born and



Abbey Chrystal



Adina Paytan

raised in Israel, she spent several years traveling in India, Nepal and hiking the Himalayas before obtaining her double major in Geology and Oceanography. Dr. Paytan first created the high school internship program while working at Stanford University's department of Geological and Environmental Sciences, later replicating the highly successful program at UCSC.

Working closely with Dr. Paytan is program coordinator Abbey Chrystal, a Ph.D. student in the Earth and Planetary Sciences Department, whose main research interests lie in using environmental isotope systems to understand current and past climate change.

Building on their knowledge of the scientific research and extensive professional networks, Dr. Paytan and Ms. Chrystal invest their time and passion in building a pipeline of future scientists. "Our program enables graduate students to serve as mentors and prepares high school students for college, strengthening the partnership between UCSC and local high schools," said Abbey Chrystal, who also coordinates the crucial partnership between HSSI and the National Bright Students Training as Research Scientists (Bright STaRS) program. Bright STaRS provides a dedicated forum for about 100 students to present their research to the scientific community, as well as learn about research and career opportunities in the geosciences. This program is held in conjunction with the widely attended annual AGU (American Geophysical Society) Fall Meeting in San Francisco.

"Spending the summer as an intern at UCSC was an unforgettable experience for me," said Wayne, "Participating in the AGU event

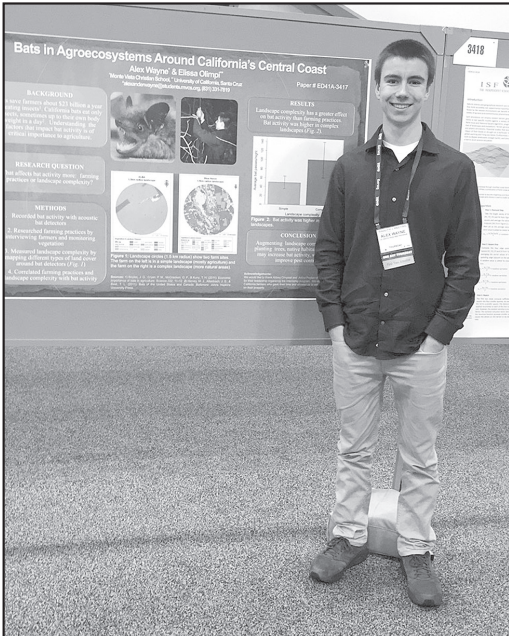


introduced me to an entirely new part of the scientific process, which is sharing the results of research with other members of the scientific community. It was really an honor to present my mentor's research, along with my own small contribution to her work. I also attended the annual Luncheon with the AGU leadership and many

distinguished scientists. As a 16-year old, I feel extremely lucky to have had this experience, and I know that it wouldn't have been possible without HSSI." ■

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To learn more about the HSSI program, go to pmc.ucsc.edu/~apaytan/outreach/page_hsintern.html



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