

# Explosions, influenza: summer of a lifetime

**By Alex Miller**  
STAFF WRITER

Anxious. Excited. Nervous. Intrigued. All of these feelings rushed through my body when I got the news: I was accepted as a summer intern at the Museum of Science and Industry.

Reporting to my first day of work, I was unsure of what to expect. What would my coworkers be like? What about all the information I didn't know? What if the kids at the museum didn't like me? Needless to say, all my worries were gone within a few minutes on the job. The F3s (the full time guest programs team) were extremely welcoming and helpful. They were also extremely enthusiastic, a nice addition to the early Monday morning.

We started the week with tours of the museum, as well as seeing everything the museum had to offer. Looking at the seven programs we were supposed to learn over the course of the summer, we were a little intimidated. We split into groups and started to learn about life at the museum.

The first program I learned was Bangs, Flashes, and Fire. This was a daily chemistry show where we talked about combustion reactions, produced a luminol reaction, did flame tests, created a fire that looked like a dragon's breath, and exploded balloons. As a first program to learn, it was extremely intimidating that we started off with one in the middle of

the rotunda for groups of up to 200 people at a time. The first time I did it was one of the most intimidating experiences of my life. I stumbled over my first few words and did my best to project an aura of confidence. Soon, I wasn't pretending anymore. After a few weeks, the chemistry show was one of my favorite programs just because it was so much fun!

Next, I learned a show called "Poop Happens." Basically, it's a journey through the digestion system, starting with your mouth and ending when "poop happens." This was an interesting program, as it required you to develop a character. There was a quirky librarian role, Mrs. Lotta Poopay, and a student presenting the project. Both required different skill sets including the ability to project a lot of energy into the audience and to learn about how to communicate with a more exaggerated version of yourself. That was extremely nerve-racking during the actual practice and character development, but when it was time to perform the show for museum guests, it just turned into having fun.

The Flu and You and Dissect an Eye at MSI were more laid back environments. For groups of 20 to 30 people at a time, you would run an interactive lab to help people understand more about how viruses spread and how the eye works. As a civil engineering major, I didn't know much about either of these things, but they challenged me to go outside my comfortable limits and learn about something outside

my chosen focus of science.

Happy Brrr-thday was a really fun program. We used liquid nitrogen to celebrate a famous scientists birthday daily. Honestly, I was a little intimidated to act like a professional capable of handling a material that had a boiling point of -321°F. With all the safety training and practice they gave us, however, I was comfortable enough with the program to have a lot of fun while running the program.

One of my favorite programs this summer was Earth Revealed. In a side corridor of the museum that few people ever ventured into was a 6-ft in diameter carbon sphere constantly projecting different images. I ran a program on it about the possibility of life on other planets. We looked at the capabilities of each planet to maintain life and talked about the plausibility of other forms of life out there in the universe. This was an amazing program because it allowed you to have personal conversations with the guests and debate a little about controversial topics such as life in outer space. Everyone had a different perspective on that and it was intriguing to hear about all of them.

The program that scared me the most was MSI Hospital. We would run a 40 minute program teaching museum guests about our human patient simulator, Stan (D. Ardman). First talking about what a doctor does, we would take vital signs of Stan while he was normal and healthy. We would then put Stan through a medical emergency and ask museum guests

to figure out what was wrong with him. Not only did you have to run a robot while interacting with museum guests, but you also had to be able to answer some tough questions that guests would have about various medical problems. Knowing virtually nothing about medicine myself, I started training for this program terrified of what guests would ask. As a program that you performed with a partner, however, and training from the F3s on how to answer questions without offending people, Stan ended up not being so scary after all.

Overall, this summer was exhilarating, challenging, and one of the best summer's I've ever had. I grew so close to each of my fellow interns, its weird to only see them every few days around campus.

To get involved with this incredible partnership yourself, apply to volunteer at the museum either during fall or spring semester. Every volunteer will then be eligible to apply for the summer internship if they spend at least 4 weekend days over the course of the semester volunteering.

For anyone who enjoys learning about science, spending time with other people, and challenging themselves, MSI is the place to be. Yes, you will go outside your comfortable limits, but you'll also look back on how much you've grown and realize that that was the experience of a lifetime. I know for me it was an incredible experience that I will never forget.

## Curious about work study? Financial Aid is here to help

**By the Office of Financial Aid**

The federal work study program allows students to work on campus or for a community partner and be paid, in part, by the Department of Education.

If you are eligible for federal work study for the 2011-12 academic year, the Office of Financial Aid awarded it to you in your aid package this year. There are several ways to find a job on campus. One of the most common ways is by utilizing Nacelink, which is managed by the Career Management Center. This tool, found on the Career Management Center's website (<https://iit-csm.symplicity.com/students/>), allows students to create an account and search for job postings. Not all jobs are federal work study jobs so all students can use this tool to look for campus jobs.

If you do have federal work study and are still looking for a job this year, consider

a community service position. IIT has partnered with numerous schools & non-profits in the area to utilize federal work study funds to pay students to work for these agencies.

All jobs are posted in Nacelink, where you will find instructions on how to apply and whom to contact. Currently, the following agencies are looking to hire IIT students: Chinese American Service League, Center for Higher Development, Edge Alliance, Perspectives Charter School-IIT Math & Science Academy, Perspectives Charter School-Calumet Tech High School, the Young People's Project and James Wood Elementary School. Apply today!

For questions related to the community service positions, please contact Kelli Goers in the Office of Financial Aid at [goersk@iit.edu](mailto:goersk@iit.edu). Kelli does not do any hiring, so check Nacelink to apply, but she is happy to help with any questions about the process.

Happy Job Searching!

## Preparing for the Journey of a Lifetime

**By Toby Causby**

Sponsored by the IIT Leadership Academy

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Learn more about the presentation and register at [LeadershipAcademy.iit.edu/schedule](http://LeadershipAcademy.iit.edu/schedule)

**Date & Time:** Saturday, October 1, 2011  
10:00 am - 2:00 pm (Lunch provided)

**Location:** HUB - Armour Dining Room

Remember this event is only open to IIT, Shimer, and Vandercook undergraduate students.



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