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██████████ My name is ██████████; I'm a junior at ██████████ High School in ██████████ California. Outside of school, some of my favorite activities include surfing, exploring, traveling, hanging out with my friends and family, going to the beach, and almost anything outdoors. Academically, I'm a consistent honor roll student with a ██████ GPA. I work hard and strive to challenge myself with advanced classes while exhibiting the same effort in my extracurricular activities. I am a three-sport varsity athlete at ██████████ (soccer, track, and cross country) on top of being a year-round club soccer player. My lifelong experience on sports teams has led me to develop advanced teamwork skills and become extremely comfortable collaborating with others. Throughout high school, I have worked hard to manage my time as I balance homework, sports, social life, and babysitting.

As I have discovered in the past couple of years, I am drawn to topics in STEM. My favorite subject in school has always been science, and I constantly find myself looking forward to my science classes every day. Whether it be physics, chemistry, earth science, or biology, science always captivates me.

As a young kid, I lost my grandmother, grandfather, and step-grandmother, all from cancer. However, it wasn't until around 6th grade that my interest in cancer research began. Unfortunately, my godfather, great aunt, and uncle were all diagnosed with cancer that year. After battling cancer for many months, they all passed away later that year. Watching my family come together to face such a devastating disease inspired me to want to learn more about it. As the years went on, cancer continued to intrigue me when choosing school project topics.

At school, I was assigned a school project known as TAP (Take Action Project); where students were instructed to choose an issue and take action to make a difference. Due to my experience, I chose to study cancer and cancer treatments. While researching different therapies such as radiation, chemotherapy, and surgery, I came across immunotherapy.

Immunotherapy is a relatively new type of treatment being applied to cancer patients. It interested me because instead of injecting sick patients with toxic chemicals or treating them with sickening radiation, it focused on using your body's own abilities to fight off cancer. As I researched more and more, I realized that not many people were aware of immunotherapy and its success nor did it have much funding. Only 6% of grants requested get funded by the government. I discovered a nonprofit organization aimed to fix this problem, with a very unique

story and motto. A teenage boy named Errol McDowell was inspired to start a nonprofit (Cancer-A-GoGo) after his diagnosis of medulloblastoma. Cancer-A-GoGo works to support immunotherapy and other pediatric cancer therapies. I found his unique fundraising methodology extremely compelling. Instead of asking everyone for \$100, \$50, or even \$20, they asked everyone for a \$1 donation. If everyone in the US could donate just \$1 they would be able to raise \$325 million. We selected Cancer-A-GoGo as the foundation to research and donate our earnings to.

I partnered with a good friend of mine who shared the same motivation as me. We visited the Parker Institute for Cancer Immunotherapy to learn more about immunotherapy and to brainstorm fundraising ideas. While at the Institute we met with their PR director and several scientists. Meeting with the scientists was fascinating, as they explained the background of immunotherapy, why they target T-cells, their methods of injection, and the different types of immunotherapy. After connecting with Cancer-A-GoGo, we decided to host a fundraising night at a local restaurant that agreed to donate 15% of their profits to our cause. We also partnered with a Vineyard Vines apparel store which agreed to the same donation as the restaurant. Finally, we went around to local stores and installed donation jars, and distributed Cancer-A-GoGo business cards to spread awareness. Connecting with Cancer-A-GoGo was a privilege, as we corresponded with Errol's grateful father. The feeling of helping his son, others like him, and his foundation was priceless.

What I gained from this experience was an introduction to the world of medical research and a passion for cancer research. I also learned that everyone has the power to make positive changes in their community. Many young people are discouraged by their age and view it as a limitation on their ability to make a difference. However, it's projects like these that spark inspiration within and make you realize what's possible.

Junior year I took an environmental approach to broaden my science background, and thoroughly enjoyed classes such as AP Environmental Science and Sustainable Agriculture. High school has helped me discover which subjects interest me and which don't. Unsurprisingly, science is where I want to make my mark. Next year I plan on taking classes that are more focused on the medical side of science, such as AP Biology. I'm looking forward to continuing my learning and expanding my scientific horizons.

It would be an extreme privilege to be a part of this internship and gain experience and

knowledge about the cancer research field. I'm interested in learning how to conduct clinical trials, study the effects of drugs, and collaborate with like-minded driven students on research. I have a strong passion for medical research and would love the opportunity to further my learning with educated experts. I would be honored to be chosen for the Ellison Institute Junior Fellows Program.