



**Media Inquiries:** Scott Rohan, Department of Communications  
212-769-5973; [srohan@amnh.org](mailto:srohan@amnh.org)  
[www.amnh.org](http://www.amnh.org)

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## **AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM CELEBRATES 20th ANNIVERSARY**

**FOR TWO DECADES, THE MUSEUM EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (MEEP) HAS INSPIRED  
NYC STUDENTS TO PURSUE CAREERS IN EDUCATION, SCIENCE, AND RELATED FIELDS**

This summer, while many of their peers are starting traditional, office-based internships, more than 30 local young adults will be guiding visitors through the halls of the American Museum of Natural History as part of the 20th class of the Museum Education and Employment Program (MEEP). Since 1996, MEEP has employed over 600 college-aged students who have engaged with hundreds of thousands of Museum visitors through imaginative tours and exhibit-related touch carts.

After weeks of intense training with Museum educators and scientists, MEEP participants design and conduct creative tours for the more than 500 camp groups that visit each summer. The themed tours range across the Museum's vast collections and cover exciting topics like the intersection of disease and culture, the evolution of fins into wings, and the surprisingly human habits of our primate relatives. When not giving tours, the guides are stationed at 11 rolling carts with artifacts that visitors can touch and ask questions about. New this year, MEEP guides are also facilitating [MicroRangers](#) and [CSN: Crime Scene Neanderthal](#), two augmented-reality adventures that combine the Museum's iconic dioramas with mobile gaming to create a 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning experience.

"Since its creation, MEEP has offered hundreds of New York City young adults an unparalleled opportunity to transform their natural enthusiasm into engaging educational experiences for thousands of Museum visitors," said Ruth Cohen, Senior Director of Education Strategic Initiatives and Director of the Center for Lifelong Learning at the Museum. "Time and time again we hear from MEEP alumni about the profound impact the program has made on their development, with many continuing to inspire others by pursuing successful careers in science education."

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Counted among MEEP alumni are Joe Handy, executive vice president and chief operating officer at the Georgia Aquarium and Franny Kent, director at the Frederick A.O. Schwarz Children's Center at the Museum of the City of New York.

**For information on some of this year's outstanding members of MEEP, please see below:**

- **Ariel Bishop**, 21, a first-generation college senior, from Harlem, is studying history and African-American studies at Syracuse University. Her tour invites campers to peer into the Museum's past through the eyes of conservation icon Theodore Roosevelt and adventurer Carl Akeley. Ariel regularly volunteers at Democracy Prep Charter High School, where she was a member of their first graduating class, and is pursuing a career in museum education.
- **Christian Mercado**, 20, lives in Fresh Meadows and is studying history and women's Studies at Saint John's University as a senior. Drawing inspiration from his Peruvian and El Salvadoran background, Christian introduces campers to the creation myths of pre-Colombian civilizations and emphasizes the importance of cultural relativism in considering their customs. He is an aspiring attorney and has completed several internships in that field.
- **Samantha Wong**, 19, from Elmhurst, Queens, is a junior majoring in biology at Hunter College. On her tour, she asks campers to open their ears to nature's soundscapes as they visit singing whales in the Milstein Family Hall of Ocean Life and dueling moose in the Bernard Family Hall of North American Mammals. Samantha believes science should be a fun, interactive experience and is considering teaching or museum education as a career.
- **Janet Ramirez**, 20, a first-generation college senior studying public health, anthropology and education at the University of Albany, is a Bronx native. Those participating in her tour learn about diseases like malaria and Zika. Among the information she highlights: only female mosquitos are capable of biting, as they require blood to produce eggs. After graduating, Ariel hopes to continue her studies in public health in graduate school.
- **Bryan Lopez**, 20, of Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, utilizes his sophomore studies in biology at Hunter College to educate campers about the evolutionary transition from fins to flight. His tour ranges through the halls of Vertebrate Origins and Saurischian Dinosaurs, stopping at cornerstone fossils that illustrate key steps in the history of vertebrate life on our planet. An

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evolution buff from a young age, Bryan plans to continue his biology studies after graduation.

- **Jacob Sullivan**, 21, who resides in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, is using his senior studies in anthropology and psychology at New York University to explain the fascinating habits of primates. While visiting the Hall of Primates and Akeley Hall of African Mammals, Jacob teaches campers about animals like gossiping monkeys and the only known poisonous member of the primate family. Unsurprisingly, Jacob plans on pursuing a Ph.D. degree in primatology.

The Museum's Youth Initiatives are generously supported by the leadership contribution of the **New York Life Foundation**.

Additional support is provided by The Peter and Carmen Lucia Buck Foundation.

### **American Museum of Natural History**

The American Museum of Natural History, founded in 1869, is one of the world's preeminent scientific, educational, and cultural institutions. The Museum encompasses 45 permanent exhibition halls, including the Rose Center for Earth and Space and the Hayden Planetarium, as well as galleries for temporary exhibitions. It is home to the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial, New York State's official memorial to its 33rd governor and the nation's 26th president, and a tribute to Roosevelt's enduring legacy of conservation. The Museum's five active research divisions and three cross-disciplinary centers support approximately 200 scientists, whose work draws on a world-class permanent collection of more than 33 million specimens and artifacts, as well as specialized collections for frozen tissue and genomic and astrophysical data, and one of the largest natural history libraries in the world. Through its Richard Gilder Graduate School, it is the only American museum authorized to grant the Ph.D. degree and the Master of Arts in Teaching degree. Annual attendance has grown to approximately 5 million, and the Museum's exhibitions and Space Shows can be seen in venues on five continents. The Museum's website and collection of apps for mobile devices extend its collections, exhibitions, and educational programs to millions more beyond its walls. Visit [amnh.org](http://amnh.org) for more information.

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**The New York Life Foundation**

Inspired by New York Life's tradition of service and humanity, the New York Life Foundation has, since its founding in 1979, provided \$220 million in charitable contributions to national and local nonprofit organizations. The Foundation supports programs that benefit young people, particularly in the areas of educational enhancement and childhood bereavement. The Foundation also encourages and facilitates the community involvement of employees and agents of New York Life through its Volunteers for Good program. To learn more, please visit [www.newyorklifefoundation.org](http://www.newyorklifefoundation.org).

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