

Stewart studies stem cells in Hawaii

Written by Becca Brandt

A trip to Hawaii is usually characterized by relaxing on the beach, soaking up the sun and surfing on the Pacific. Rarely does the description include adipose-derived stem cell research, but for 2011 Holyoke High School graduate Ella Stewart, stem cell research is the basis for her Hawaiian adventure.

Through the Ronald W. Reagan Leadership Fellowship, named for the 40th President and 1932 graduate of Eureka College, Stewart is able to study with Tissue Genesis, Inc. in Honolulu, Hawaii June 4-Aug. 7.

In order to be considered for the internship, Stewart was required to submit a resumé and cover letter detailing the type of work she wanted to do.

Working under the head scientist, Stewart is the sole intern in her department. Three other interns are working in the NASA department at Tissue Genesis, developing a payload chamber that NASA will send into space and use to conduct experiments.

One of Stewart's projects allows her to get a closer look at the NASA payload chamber as she is writing and formatting the schematics and informational document for the NASA team.

Much of the work Stewart is doing is background research, because the company is in the process of setting up their labs after a move. She has just learned about all of the equipment and hopes to be doing lab work by the end of her mentorship.

Stewart's biggest assignment with Tissue Genesis is to write a review on adipose tissue-derived extracellular matrices and biological scaffolding and their potential. A large amount of research is required to create her synopsis and Stewart plans to be working on it through mid-July. Her paper will be utilized to implement an action plan at Tissue Genesis while benefitting her own research.

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