

APPLYING FOR (SELECT ONE)

Gold Medal
and
STEM Star



OFFICE USE ONLY

PARTICIPANT RECORD BOOK

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

First Name _____ Last Name _____
Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Date of Birth _____ School - _____
Email _____ Phone _____
Employed? Yes, Part-Time ☒ Yes, Full-Time ☐ No ☒

If Yes, List Employer _____

What I have gained by participating in The Congressional Award:

By participating in the Congressional Award, I have developed the dedication and discipline to not only establish goals, but to record the results, and see them to completion. It has given me confidence and perseverance to serve as a team player through community service and commitment to others.

I have set goals and met the requirements to earn The Congressional Award as outlined in this submission.

Participant Signature _____ Date 04/27/2020

ADVISOR INFORMATION

First Name Valerie Last Name Seefeld
Address 2301 S. University Ave. City Little Rock State AR Zip 72204
Email vseefeld@uaex.edu Phone 501-551-8740

Are you a parent or relative of the participant? Yes ☐ No ☒

Advisor comments regarding the participant's pursuit of The Congressional Award:

Advisor Signature

Valerie Seefeld

Date 5/05/2020

Submit the completed Record Book to The Congressional Award national office.
The Congressional Award | PO Box 77440 | Washington, DC 20013

Only submit your Record Book after you have completed your goals and the required hours/months in all four program areas.

VOLUNTARY PUBLIC SERVICE

(Each goal should have its own Record Book page. Make as many copies as necessary to accommodate your goals.)

Name _____ Did you receive any class credit for this goal? Yes ☐ No ☒

What is your goal?

I will dedicate 400 hours in voluntary public service under the direction of my 4-H County Extension agents.

Describe your activities to achieve your goal:

See Attached Document

What did you learn?

See Attached

How did you serve the greater community at large?

See Attached

TOTAL MONTHS for this goal: 27 TOTAL HOURS for this goal: 413.5

Enter year(s) and check all months where activity was logged for this goal. Only report new hours logged since your last Record Book submission.

YEAR	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
2018		17.5	22.5	25.5	21	14	12	17.5	14	19	28	27
2019	16	13.5	17	15	15.5	28	36	13	11	5	7	12
2020	1.5	2	1.5	1.5								

VALIDATOR INFORMATION

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Are you a parent or relative of the participant? Yes ☐ No ☒

Validator comments regarding the participant's completion of the goal:

I certify that the above goal, hours, and activities were completed by the participant.



Validator Signature _____ Date 05/03/2020

Voluntary Public Service:

Goal:

I will dedicate 400 hours in voluntary public service under the direction of my 4H County Extension agents.

Activities to achieve your goal:

Through my local 4H club and county I have had many opportunities to volunteer. As Club President, I am privileged to plan many activities each month and mentor young 4Hers. Our club volunteers together monthly to maintain the landscaping for the American Legion, and clean the nearby hiking trails. We plan and implement a dinner to honor the Veteran's and the Women's Auxiliary Club, as well as, deliver roses to the local widows. We host a Spring Tea for the older ladies of the community and create tray favors each month at our meetings to disperse to the Veteran's Hospital and to local businesses.

As a county Teen Leader, I plan and organize activities for the banquets, county fair, and county camps. Serving as a camp counselor and leading 4Her's is most rewarding.

In addition, I volunteer at a non-profit food distribution center. I have the ability to serve in multiple ways; pulling and organizing food for pantry pick-ups, unloading and loading trucks, sorting and delivering bread, and just about anything that needs to be accomplished on any given day. One of my most favorite memories is the Christmas delivery. We collect bicycles through the year and deliver new bikes, along with food and necessities to selected families in need. I know how important it is for a child to have a bike and a family to have food and it's rewarding to know that I'm positively impacting their lives.

Describe what you learned:

I have learned through volunteering the importance of being a positive role model for the younger 4Hers and others. As I spend time with them and even train those in the gym, they often desire to mimic my actions, therefore, I take seriously the responsibility to provide a positive example for them to follow. Mentoring the youth and peers is both humbling and rewarding. By volunteering it takes the focus off "me" and places it on others and their needs. I have learned that serving is important to others and usually it's me who is rewarded in the process; when serving the Veteran's, they are most gracious and as I'm showing appreciation for their service to our country, they're encouraging me and searching for ways to inspire and uplift. Being able to volunteer at the distribution center has taught me gratitude and compassion from serving those less fortunate, especially, when I give someone what seems so little and they become so excited and thankful to receive it. Volunteering has given me a greater perspective of the needs beyond my circle of influence and activities.

Serve the Greater Community at Large:

I have served all ages in my community from delivering bikes to the young children, mentoring youth, training high school athletes in strength training, providing food and necessities for families of all ages and sizes, as well as, handling lawn maintenance for elderly people. By volunteering at the food distribution center, I have also served those in much greater need than I had ever imagined. I am so grateful for my various community service experiences that have given compassion and gratefulness a new meaning in my life.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

(Each goal should have its own Record Book page. Make as many copies as necessary to accommodate your goals.)

Name Jess Did you receive any class credit for this goal? Yes ☐ No ☒

What is your goal?

I will develop my interest in engineering by undergoing various projects with computer software and hardware. I will explore different mechanical operations and build my own flame thrower.

Describe your activities to achieve your goal:

See Attached

What did you learn?

See Attached

TOTAL MONTHS for this goal: 27 TOTAL HOURS for this goal: 351

Enter year(s) and check all months where activity was logged for this goal. Only report new hours logged since your last Record Book submission.

YEAR	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
2018		15	28	34	17.5	23	16	8	15	12	19	21.5
2019	18	7	9	11	12	19.5	12	7	5.5	11	8	10
2020	4	3.5	3	1.5								

VALIDATOR INFORMATION

First Name Jess Last Name Email
Phone

Are you a parent or relative of the participant? Yes ☐ No ☒

Validator comments regarding the participant's completion of the goal:

I certify that the above goal, hours, and activities were completed by the participant.

Validator Signature Date 05/03/2020

Remember, you may have up to two goals for Personal Development.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT:

GOAL:

I will develop my interest in engineering by undergoing various projects with computer software and hardware. I will explore different mechanical operations and build my own flame thrower.

Describe Activities:

I built a computer lab inside of our home that holds all my electronics and devices. I have spent hours researching cyber security, as well as, designing and building two-dimensional top down games. Some of the projects I have undertaken include, repairing multiple phones, rebuilding computers including a 1982 Apple Macintosh, and creating programs using the coding language Python. I have repaired many phone components such as; screens, microphones, cameras and replaced batteries. Another project I worked on was disassembling a broken laptop and repurposing it into a monitor. I simply detached the screen without damaging it and ordered a connecting ribbon cable that would allow me to have an HDMI port. I also was able to take a glove and mount a mini flamethrower on it. I decided to use cigarette lighters as my fuel cartridges. I filled the cartridges with butane for a greater flame reach and disassembled another type of lighter to savage the striker which allowed me to create a spark without having to use electricity. The research hours during the twenty-seven months of this program has significantly affected the direction of my future.

What did you learn?

I was able to learn the basics of computer programming from writing variables and strings to writing scripts for my games. I learned what different cyber-attacks there are like Distributed Denial of Service to Phishing. And, ways to defend my computer from attacks by making choices to not use public wireless access points and avoid opening emails from unknown senders. I learned to be extremely careful with electronic components, such as, when I was rebuilding the 1982 Apple Macintosh. The Macintosh contains a CRT display and if touched with a metal surface, such as a screwdriver, it can discharge an electric charge that is able to paralyze or cause death. I learned how to assemble computers and mix and match different components to build one superior device. One of the many skills I acquired was the ability to solder and this is extremely beneficial when trying to repair hardware. Besides practical skills, I have learned patience from my experiences and perseverance. When not achieving success on the first attempt, I would have to keep pressing on, addressing new ideas, and critically thinking through various solutions. Patience is pinnacle when working with software; a simple mistake, such as, neglecting to place a coma in a certain place could not allow your program to run properly. My personal developments in computer hardware and software have further driven my passion and I will be pursuing a computer engineering degree at the University of Central Arkansas in the Fall of 2020.

PHYSICAL FITNESS

(Each goal should have its own Record Book page. Make as many copies as necessary to accommodate your goals.)

Name _____ Did you receive any class credit for this goal? Yes ☐ No ☒

What is your goal?

My goal is to prepare for collegiate football by obtaining a 1,000-pound total in weightlifting including squat, bench, and deadlift; while also being able to run the 40-yard dash in under 5.0 seconds.

Describe your activities to achieve your goal:

Outside of the activities directed by our high school football program; I train additionally at least 4 times a week to achieve my goals. Monday and Friday are my leg days where I train squats, deadlift, and power cleans. Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday I train chest and add bench, shoulder press and extra back exercises. Individually, I add two extra cardio sessions in during the week. +

How did your skill level change / advance?

See Attached

TOTAL MONTHS for this goal: 27 TOTAL HOURS for this goal: 462

Enter year(s) and check all months where activity was logged for this goal. Only report new hours logged since your last Record Book submission.

YEAR	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
2018		21	19	18	16	21	20	22	19	17	19	21
2019	22	20	18	17	15	19	21	20	18	16	15	15
2020	4	5	9	15								

VALIDATOR INFORMATION

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Are you a parent or relative of the participant? Yes ☐ No ☒

Validator comments regarding the participant's completion of the goal:

I certify that the above goal, hours, and activities were completed by the participant.

Validator Signature _____ Date 05/03/2020

Physical Fitness: Congressional Award

Describe your goal

My goal is to prepare for collegiate football by obtaining a 1,000-pound total in weightlifting including squat, bench, and deadlift; while also being able to run the 40-yard dash in under 5.0 seconds.

Describe your activities to achieve your goal

Outside of the activities directed by our high school football program; I train additionally at least 4 times a week to achieve my goals. Monday and Friday are my leg days where I train squats, deadlift, and power cleans. Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday I train chest and add bench, shoulder press and extra back exercises. Individually, I add two extra cardio sessions in during the week. During these cardio periods, I focus on route running and sprinting. I also add ladder and cone drills for my footwork. These training hours and sessions are completed on my own time outside of organized activities to help me reach my fullest potential.

Describe how your skill level changed

My skill level has drastically changed in the last two years of high school; I weighed 180 pounds going into my junior year and I am now graduating at 220 pounds. In the process of gaining weight, I was able to lower my 40-yard dash time to 4.8 seconds; my 40-yard dash was clocked at the University of Central Arkansas during their summer combine. I have achieved my goal of 1,000-pound total with just my squat and deadlift; each of these lifts are over 500 pounds each and my bench currently is over 300 pounds. The emphasis placed on my strength and speed was advantageous as I started both offense and defense during my senior year of football. I led the state in rushing yards at fullback and led our team in tackles. I have committed to play division 1 football at the University of Central Arkansas and vouch for how setting goals, discipline, and diligence combined are a recipe for success. I have traveled from an average high school athlete to being in the top 2 percent of athletes nationwide.

EXPEDITION / EXPLORATION

(Each goal should have its own Record Book page. Make as many copies as necessary to accommodate your goals.)

Name _____ Did you receive any class credit for this goal? Yes ☐ No ☒

What is your goal?

My goal is to plan a trip to Millville, Delaware to visit Bethany Beach and experience activities and foods accustomed to beach life. I will learn the responsibility of researching, planning, and executing the travel, meals, and the daily activities.

Provide a brief overview of your planned activities to achieve your goal:

I will research options of travel to reach Bethany Beach, Delaware and plan activities; making decisions that will best fit with my goals.

SEE ATTACHED for Planned Activities

TRIP DETAILS

Location of Expedition/Exploration: Millville Delaware

Trip Duration: 8 Days, 7 Nights *Must show at least 6-8 hours of activity to earn a day

Trip Dates: 6/25/2019 to 7/2/2019

In addition to the information above, please provide a detailed write-up of your Expedition or Exploration by using the prompts on the next page.

VALIDATOR INFORMATION

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Are you a parent or relative of the participant? Yes ☐ No ☒

Validator comments regarding the participant's completion of the goal:

I certify that the above goal, hours, and activities were completed by the participant.

Validator Signature _____ Date 05/03/2020

How did you plan or prepare for this activity?

Beginning of June 2019, I thought it would be great to plan a trip to visit somewhere different than Arkansas, somewhere with different scenery, foods, and activities; a new cultural experience. With my lawn business and saving for college, I have limited funds so, I contacted my uncle to see if I could visit him as he lives in Millville, DE and it's certainly unique compared to Arkansas, as well as, near Bethany Beach.

At first, I thought about flying out, but the airport is two hours away and it's my uncle's busy season of landscaping, so to ask him to get me from the airport and back was not an option. Plus, the airfare on the tickets was almost \$700 and I thought that was high! Knowing from my older siblings, that I needed to be older to rent a vehicle on my own, I went to mom and asked if I could drive it. She said no way and our vehicle would not even make it. I told her if we rented one, would she go; she agreed to travel and oversee.

I had never done anything like this before, but I googled the distance and it was 1,062 miles from Fayetteville, AR to Millville, DE. There was a local Enterprise rental and we were able to rent the vehicle for under \$500. Because age didn't allow me to rent it, mom leased it. She agreed, although slightly reluctant, we could drive 12 hours a day, sharing the wheel. The total trip one way would be over 25 hours long with the time change from central to east coast.

During the process of planning the trip from Fayetteville, Arkansas to Millville Delaware, I decided the best route would be going through St. Louis, Indianapolis, and Frederick Maryland before reaching our destination in Delaware. Louisville, KY is where I chose to stop as a half way point to spend the first night. My parents offered hotel points I could use. I planned we would have to stop for gas and restroom breaks and at least one fast food meal a day because I would pack sandwiches & snacks for the road.

The only person I coordinated the event with was my uncle who lives in Millville, DE because it was there that we would be staying during our time and the members that would accompany me; my mom, my older sister, and my younger brother. My siblings were thrilled I didn't fly and that I was selecting all the music to be played across country!

2. How was this activity unique and unlike anything YOU have ever done before? How were YOU immersed in a different culture or environment?

In a family of six siblings, being the fifth, I've never had the opportunity to organize and plan an event, let alone an entire exploration. To have control over the travel decisions and activities of the day and especially choosing the food were without a doubt unique for me.

The area we traveled to I have passed through before, however, it was many years ago and I was much younger and now I was able to plan activities and find restaurants that I wanted to experience. Millville, Delaware is a small town near a vacation beach resort, so the environment is extremely different than Arkansas. Arkansas is landlocked and the nearest to beaches in Northwest Arkansas are the rocky shores on Beaver Lake. The landscape of Delaware is

completely different; Delaware is flat and lacking dense foliage where Arkansas is full of rolling hills and deep forest.

One of my favorite experiences is being by the water and reaping the benefits of the seafood. Local crabs, fresh caught fish, scallops, mussels are all readily available for dinner meals. Walking down the streets to the smell of Old Bay and steaming fresh seafood made me hungry most of the trip.

3. How were YOU challenged? Include examples of YOU thinking on YOUR feet.

I feel within the time period we traveled we were faced with multiple challenges. The first being only two drivers; my mom and myself. Even though my sister had her license she was uncomfortable driving next to the many semi-trucks on our route so that eliminated her from driver status.

Next, as I was driving through Indianapolis my uncle called to check on our status and estimated time of arrival. He informed us that he had just gotten word my grandmother and aunt were heading that way also and he chose not to inform them we were on our way. He challenged us to cannonball it and get in a day earlier! By this time, we were still pumped up and not the least bit tired; therefore, I decided no hotel stop in Kentucky and although mom rolled her eyes, she went with it! So, we rotated driving; stopping only for gas and bathroom breaks and ate out of the cooler through the night.

The first twelve hours were a breeze mostly driven by mom, however, another challenge presented itself as we hit the 16th hour mark. I knew I needed to take control of the driving as we were traveling through the mountains and it was at the night's darkest and getting windy on the roads. I told my mom to pull off the next exit, where we traded positions and I drove while she rested. The original plan was for my mom to take the night shift driving, however, after noticing a change in reaction and perception I made the call to take over and drive through the night.

Another challenge we experienced was on day 4 while preparing for time at the beach. My grandmother had arrived by now and she was sitting at the kitchen table when her nose began to bleed profusely. I quickly delayed our beach plans because the decision was necessary to contact an ambulance and I needed to be there to wave them to the correct location while my mom calmed her nerves. My grandmother told me to just go on, but I decided that was not the move. The paramedics were able to control it and after a slight delay and encouragement that all was well, I loaded everyone up and we headed to resume our plans for the day.

Unfortunately, the next challenge came sooner than I hoped. We parked and unloaded and began to resume our activities when my uncle texted that they were on the way to the hospital because they couldn't control the nose bleed yet, he assured us all was well. The decision to go or stay was made for me because he flat out told me that I could not go to the hospital and he had it under control. Even though I didn't have to decide to stay or go; it was conflicting because it was hard to enjoy myself knowing she was in the hospital.

Our next challenge occurred the day we were leaving for home. We loaded up and began heading out of Delaware when our rental vehicles tire gauge light began to go off showing low air pressure. Mom was driving and pulling off the exit while I had begun to google the nearest vehicle rental places where we could exchange for another. Once we were off the exit, I checked each tire at the gas station and filled the low one. In the process of filling the tire, I determined we could make the 30-mile radius to the nearest rental location. In the process we would find out that the tire was not leaking, but simply low.

4. Include a detailed itinerary of what YOU plan to do.

Day 1: Tuesday, June 25

6:00 am	Wake up & eat breakfast
7:00 am	Review all items to pack
7:30 am	Pack everything -grab waters/coffee and cooler
8:00 am	Prepare to leave
8:15 am	Leave for Louisville, KY – be sure address in GPS maps
11:30 am	Break for restroom/gas
12:30 pm	Grab sandwiches & snacks from cooler
3:30 pm	Stop – gas / restroom/snack
6:00 pm	Estimated arrival Louisville, KY – check in hotel
6:30 pm	Dinner in Louisville, KY

Day 2: Wednesday, June 26

6:00 am	Wake up & eat breakfast
7:00 am	Back on road – heading to Delaware
11:00 am	Gas / snack /coffee
2:00 pm	Lunch from cooler
5:30 pm	Break /gas
7:30 pm	Dinner – Millville, DE
8:00pm	Unload & settle in

Day 3: Thursday, June 27

8:00 am	Wake & eat breakfast
9:00 am	Ocean City Beach, MD
12:30 pm	Lunch on Beach
3:30 pm	Visit Sand Dunes-Bethany
6:00pm	Dinner out - Bethany, DE

Day 4: Friday, June 28

8:00 am	Wake & eat breakfast
9:00 am	Bethany Beach, DE
12:30 pm	Lunch on Beach
3:30 pm	Return to shower for dinner
5:30pm	Dinner out – Seafood
8:00pm	Games

Day 5: Saturday, June 29

5:30am	Wake – head to beach
6:00am	Sunrise on Beach
9:00 am	Bethany Beach
12:30 pm	Lunch at Beach
3:30 pm	Return to shower for dinner
5:30pm	Dinner – out
8:00pm	Dessert on boardwalk

Day 6: Sunday, June 30

7:00am	Wake
7:30 am	Breakfast -out
9:00 am	Shopping on Boardwalk
11:30 pm	Beach Time
6:00pm	Dinner
7:30 pm	Pack and prepare coolers

Day 7: Monday, July 1

7:00 am	Wake & eat breakfast
7:30 am	Leave for Cookeville, TN
12:00 pm	Lunch – drive thru / gas
5:30 pm	Stop gas/break – Dinner (drive thru)
7:30 pm	Arrive & check in hotel Cookeville (Holiday Inn & Suites)

Day 8: Tuesday, July 2

7:30 am	Wake & eat breakfast
8:00 am	Leave for Fayetteville, AR
12:00 pm	Lunch – drive thru
4:00 pm	Gas/Snack stop
6:00 pm	Arrive Fayetteville

5. Include a detailed write up of YOUR actual trip (a day-to-day account).**Day 1: Tuesday, June 25**

We woke early Tuesday morning and everyone was excited to get on the road; especially me. I made sure I brought extra chargers for the electronics and I had downloaded a playlist of music to keep the trip upbeat. I had decided mom would begin driving and I would take over when she needed rest. I had the address of our stop in Louisville, KY programmed into my phone and we were ready. I wanted to be on the road by 8:15am but as it would be when traveling with others, I learned immediately times need to be flexible because it was 9am before we were driving out of our driveway. I had already gotten cozy and snuggled in with a blanket because it would be a long one. I had packed with my brother all the snacks and cooler foods that would cut costs traveling. We threw in a case of water bottles and Gatorade to keep us hydrated.

For the most part, it was uneventful until I was driving through Indianapolis when my uncle called to ask our estimated time of arrival and informed me that my grandmother and aunt would be heading into my adventure. He challenged us to cannonball it across country to gain a day. I was feeling confident and ready, so decided we'd abandon the stay in KY and keep going straight through. The backup plan was that we'd just pull into a hotel wherever we were on the trip and stay overnight if we got too tired.

We stopped in Kentucky and got some Chick-fil-a sandwiches for dinner, but other than gas, we kept pressing on.

Day 2: Wednesday, June 26

We continued driving through the night only stopping for gas and restroom breaks. The terrain was definitely changing and the flat land with it as we traveled into West Virginia. It was windy and dark and very few places to get gas or stop. The plan was for mom to drive during this time but I observed she was struggling so I had her pull over and we switched places. We came across Western Maryland and finally arrived in Millville, Delaware about 9:40am. Exhausted I unloaded the vehicle with everyone and decided a nap was in order.

We slept until 12:30pm and left to set eyes on the ocean and beach. It was incredibly bright and the sun was beating on the beach at intense temperatures. We could hear the waves before we laid eyes on them. Because it was later in the day by the time we got to Bethany Beach, it was crowded and although we had brought beach towels, I realized we would need an umbrella and sand chairs for additional protection and comfort, so I planned to bring money to the beach the next day to rent them. I headed right for the water. I had waited a long time to swim in the ocean and ready for it! I spent most of my time the first day swimming and just enjoying the fresh air, and intense heat burning down. I didn't realize until later that evening when showering just how hot the sun is at the beach, in only hours, I fried! I would definitely need sunscreen for day 2 at the beach!

For dinner, about 6:30pm we headed to the local crab shack and experienced the atmosphere of eating on the bay (Indian Bay) and enjoying fresh seafood. I ordered the Bay Bomber consisting of multiple crab cakes with fresh blue crab back fin meat, locally caught. It was absolutely delicious! The restaurant was set on the edge of the bay and there was a cool breeze where I actually needed a sweatshirt which was amazing because it was in the 90's earlier in the day.

After eating, we went to Bonkey's Famous ice cream and enjoyed homemade waffle cones and ice cream outside. We visited with my uncle and headed to bed about 11pm and I was out.

Day 3: Thursday, June 27

We awoke around 8:00am and had scrambled eggs, bacon, and toast for breakfast and then prepared for the beach. I decided since it was earlier to take the cooler with peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, so we didn't have to get off the beach to eat. We left for the beach about 9am heading from Millville, DE to Ocean City Maryland; south about 10 miles.

Ocean City is much larger; miles of beach, but we parked and entered on 138th street. We had to park on the side streets and walk up a large ramp to enter and found the beach area much larger and crowded. They have more lifeguards and although Bethany Beach was only 10 miles north, Ocean City's beach had much larger waves. I rented an umbrella and sand chairs for the day. While at the beach some locals instructed my brother and I on the art of body surfing and riding the waves in without using a boogie board. We stayed body surfing and enjoying the beach for hours; except for the large jellyfish that made its way toward us. We did get out of the water until it passed! We ate the sandwiches as we were hungry but most of the ice melted and they were soggy. The snacks of jerky and chips handled the heat much better. Ocean City had advertising planes flying above the water and speed boats filled with tourists. There were people everywhere of all ages and from I'm sure plenty of differing areas. Some were sitting with chairs in the water, others chasing children and sand toys scattered, while others were walking up and down the beach. People all ages everywhere and lifeguards every block.

We were supposed to head to the Sand Dunes on our way back to Millville from the beach, but decided to surprise my grandmother and aunt because they were traveling in about 5pm and didn't know that we were at my Uncle John's. We hid upstairs in the guest bedroom because we wanted to share with my aunt that we were there and not shock my grandmother, as she's battling cancer and her heart is weakened. They ended up surprising us because we had no idea two of my cousins from Pennsylvania also traveled down with them.

So, instead of going out to eat, my Uncle John treated everyone to Grotto's Pizza in Bethany and we spent the rest of the evening catching up because I haven't seen my cousins for over eight years. The pepperoni pizza was great and we played games of baseball in the cul-de-sac of the neighborhood. And rearranged sleeping because of so many of us. All of our cousins, my brother and I would sleep in the recliners my uncle had in his living room. We would have to lay down sheets before we were allowed to sleep on them as he had just purchased them and wanted to protect them from us. I have no idea what time we went to bed, but it was late.

Day 4: Friday, June 28

Apparently when my oldest cousin found out that his two brothers were with us at Uncle John's he drove the four hours from Pennsylvania and was ringing the doorbell at 7:30am! I couldn't believe it. I was thrilled to reconnect with my cousins but told them I was heading to the beach. I wasn't sure if they would want to go because they've spent a great deal of their lives at the

beach, but they wanted to hang with us, so they got ready also. It was somewhat chaotic getting trying to get out the door by 9:30am. Because it was the weekend, Uncle John told us that if we wanted a good spot; and I did, we had to get up there early. By now my sunburn from my first day was tanning nicely and I couldn't wait to bronze it up!

We ate quick cereal that we had brought and began getting the beach gear ready. We packed the cooler full of drinks and decided to snack our way through the day. My Uncle John handed me a can full of quarters to help with the parking because being a Friday we'd have to pay through the weekend.

We were just about to head out to the beach when my grandmother's nose started bleeding profusely. My Aunt Sharron; married to Uncle John, was a part of the dive and rescue team in Arkansas before moving to Delaware and she attempted to stop the bleeding. When she was unable to stop the bleeding, we decided to call an ambulance. My grandmother was against calling an ambulance as she was just released from the hospital and did not want to be readmitted. She told us to go on with our plans, but I just couldn't so we waited and waved the ambulance to the location. The paramedics were able to stop the bleeding and my aunt and uncle assured us they would take care of her and I decided we would go to the beach.

It was crowded when we arrived but I got an umbrella and chairs and we had to walk further down the beach, but found a spot, not too close to the water and back some so we could spread out. During our time at the beach my brother and our two older cousins; Bailey and Brodey decided to bury our younger cousin, Brevin in the sand with only his head sticking out. We spent a great deal of effort digging deep with the sand toys we borrowed from Uncle John's shed. We had him in deep and he wasn't able to break loose.

Finally, he did and we ran for the waves and I loved body surfing and doing flips. I even dug for sand crabs in a contest for who would get the most. I learned that if you dig in the sand by the water's edge these little sand crabs can be found and if they get away, they bury themselves quickly backward in the sand.

My mom received a text that my uncle was taking my grandmother to the hospital. The nose bleeds were not stopping and they insisted we stay and basically told us not to come off the beach; I still felt awkward not being able to do anything to help and for enjoying the beach while she had to go to the hospital. But I stayed and she eventually was released and home before dinner time.

After the beach, we went back and had crabs at our uncle's house around 6:00 pm. We got the crabs from Steamers Restaurant and although we were going to head out after all the events of the day; I went with my aunt and we brought it back. There is something about being around a picnic table with hot steamed blue crabs and mallets. I had to be taught how to break open a crab correctly and get the most meat out of it; work for the meal, but it was worth it. The backfin was the best!

Later that night we played man hunt; man hunt, is where you have two team where one hides and the other attempts to find and capture each teammate. I had a blast running and hiding, but missed the dense foliage of Arkansas to hide in! I fell asleep quickly on the couches after midnight.

Day 5: Saturday, June 29

Mom, Bethany, David and I woke up at 5:30am to head to the beach and watch the sunrise. I am so thankful I did. I've watched a few sunrises but this was incredible. We got to the beach and it was still dark out. I brought towels for us to sit on and I was surprised by how many people were there with cameras with huge lenses. And there were people with metal detectors trying to find treasures in the sand. The tide was so far out and there were a few surfers paddling about. We waited and as I watched it was like the largest brightest ball ever coming right off the water. It was a really cool sight and one I'm grateful I got up for. I even took pictures with the sun rising and the seagulls flying across the risen sun. It was pretty amazing and we stayed almost two hours.

On the way back, we drove south about 5 miles to Fenwick Island to see some of the Sand Dunes. They are huge mounds of sand with weeds and grass growing out. I thought we could climb on them but was disappointed with the signs of not to. They are places to drive your vehicle up with a permit, but since mom leased the car that was a no.

On our way back to Millville, we stopped at the local donut shop and I picked out quite a selection of homemade donuts. We found everyone still asleep when we entered back about 10am.

We relaxed and napped until 12:00pm than ate ham and cheese sandwiches for lunch.

Afterwards we drove across Millville to a friend of my uncle's pool with a lazy river and played and spent time with our cousins. We were talking about life in PA compared to AR and how differently we're taught and different sports; they play ice hockey because of all the ice rings and have grown up on the ice. They play lacrosse. I shared my football and strength training and Brodey asked me to help him with his lifting. We spent the afternoon playing different games returned back to our uncles around 4:30pm. We would play outside games such as cornhole, basketball, and toss around the football until all of us showered.

We had dinner at the Boardwalk; we just walked around and everyone got whatever they wanted; David, my brother ate popcorn and ice cream; personally, I needed more substance; I got a burger and fries at DB's, and a custard at Dickey's Famous Custards. We went to bed at around 11:00pm that night.

Day 6: Sunday, June 30

I woke up at 8:00am and had eggs and scrapple. Scrapple can't be found in Arkansas. It's kind of like sausage. I'm sure I don't want to know what's really in it, but it's delicious and we found it at the local Hocker's Super Center in Millville.

Today the cousins had to leave so I helped load up their vehicle and say goodbyes. I wasn't planning on their coming to Millville yet, grateful they did and we could connect and follow each other on social media and continue our friendships.

Uncle John wanted to show me around some of the local shops so we went to the Boardwalk and went in and out of all the boutiques; I'm not a shopper, but I found glasses in Shades at the Beach and I got a tank with an American Flag and Bethany Beach on it.

Then we headed to the Bethany Diner and I got a huge burger that was delicious with steak cut French fries and their homemade coleslaw for lunch.

We headed back to the beach from 2-5pm which I loved because it wasn't as crowded and it seemed so relaxing. I walked about 3 blocks or more down the beach, just watching the people but then chose to spend the majority of my last day enjoying the saltwater and riding the waves. By today I had no signs of burning and I was very tan.

After we left the beach area and heading back to the boardwalk, I stopped at the Candy Kitchen and got boxes of saltwater taffy to bring home. And Fisher's Popcorn; I got one sealed so it would make it home and one to get into. It's incredible when it's fresh and hot.

I got back, showered, and began to pack up.

For dinner we got a variety of seafood from Steamers. I had already experienced the hard-shell blue crabs but I never ate a soft crab and they're cooked totally different and you eat the whole thing. All the legs and everything. I wasn't sure at first, but I did it and it was really good. I also tried mussels and oysters but did not like the oysters, way too slimy for me. I enjoyed the scallops. My favorite seafood meal was definitely the crab cakes with the fresh blue crab meat. After dinner, we began packing as we needed to leave in the morning. I spent time visiting with Uncle John and Aunt Sharron because they were working most of the time we were there. I headed to bed by 11am because I'll be driving tomorrow.

Day 7: Monday, July 1

We tried to leave at 7:30am to beat the traffic, but once again we were later pulling out of the driveway. We finally got on the road by 8:30 after finishing off some cereal. We picked up water and some snacks from Hocker's Super Center, but didn't fill a cooler with sandwiches. We decided to drive-thru when we're hungry and stop to dine for dinner on the return trip.

We said our goodbyes to Uncle John and Aunt Sharron and thanked them. Mom started out driving and we headed toward the Chesapeake Bay Bridge to take the southern route back to Arkansas. We were traveling less than an hour and experienced a tire issue. The tire monitor showed our front right tire was low. We pulled off the nearest exit and I checked the tires at a Walmart center; David and I filled the low tire to match the others. Before we had pulled off the exit, I had already located the nearest rental place on our route, we made the decision to continue as if it was only low.

We proceeded along and traveled over the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and I thought that was great. It's over 4 miles long and stands over 186 feet over the water. I have never been over a bridge like that before. The rest of our time was smooth and although I and everyone was ready to be home, no one desired to cannonball across. We were going to stop for dinner and hotel for sure tonight and we did. We only stopped for gas as necessary and went through McDonalds for burgers and kept going.

We ate dinner at a Chick-fil-a because everyone just wanted to get a hot shower and bed. And we checked in around 7pm and in bed by 10pm.

Day 8: Tuesday, July 2

We slept a little longer because we were exhausted and only had nine hours to go.

We woke about 9am and I got breakfast in the hotel. I love the cinnamon rolls and had two of them. I topped the gas off and got coffee and we got on the road about 11am. We hit more traffic traveling through Memphis, TN than we expected but we continued with no issues. Only stopped for burgers on the dollar menu at McDonald's for lunch and to get gas and use the restroom.

When we reached Conway area, we stopped at David's Burgers to eat and take a break and then we headed over the Ozarks to Northwest Arkansas. We arrived in Fayetteville a few moments before 10pm and my dad and sister were there to welcome us in and help us unload.

6. Highlight about accomplishments

I am so excited I was able to plan and execute this trip even though it didn't go exactly as I had planned and I had some surprises and challenges along the way. I enjoy the coastline culture immensely! One of my favorite parts of the trip was being around the beach and the atmosphere of water and crashing waves. Learning to body surf and ride the waves onto the shore without tearing my body apart was awesome. The food is my most favorite! The crab cakes are for sure, along with the hard-shell blue crabs. And I would definitely eat the soft-shell crab again, it was delicious. Even though the exploration did not go exactly as I planned, I believe planning is essential and flexibility is the winning ingredient.