



# HCPA Student Takes Part in Vanderbilt University Internship Program

By Dave Bonko

Last summer, Hmong College Prep Academy student Madanna Vue was selected from over 400 applicants to take part in Vanderbilt University's Summer Research Internship Program.

Vanderbilt University's Aspirnaut Summer Research internships are "hands-on and mentored laboratory experiences for high school students interested in a career in the fields of science, technology, engineering or math. Participants reside on campus for six weeks and conduct biomedical research at the Vanderbilt University Medical Center."

"I felt like I learned a lot," stated Madanna about her experience. "From learning how to apply to colleges, write college essays to developing life skills for the professional world, Aspirnaut taught me many things that I will carry with me throughout my future. I will forever be thankful for this opportunity."

Madanna's internship efforts primarily focused in the sciences area.

"I worked in the Engineering and Science building where I studied the cytotoxic effects of graphene—a carbon nanomaterial—on cells. I collaborated with Ph.D. students and an undergraduate student on this project where my goal was to accumulate enough data to create a poster presentation about my project."



The high school senior used the Aspirnaut Program to further develop her passion for science. She is looking forward to continuing her education after high school.

“In the future, I hope to attend the University of Chicago after high school and major in biomedical engineering or computer science. With that said, I honestly don’t know too much about my future. I have a plan but plans can change. One thing I do see myself doing is taking more chances on different opportunities that come up. Getting in this program showed me that if I work hard enough, I could achieve anything. I would like to thank my counselors for pushing me to take a chance. They all have taught me a lesson that I will keep forever.”

Not all of Madanna’s time was spent in the laboratory or classroom and she had plenty of time to meet people and experience all the Vanderbilt campus had to offer.

“I was living with a very diverse group. It was kind of uncomfortable at first because I haven’t been faced with much diversity before, but everyone made it very easy to adjust. By the end of the first day, I wasn’t as nervous or scared. My peers made my experience a time to remember for sure! We laughed a lot and made a number of great memories together. The resident counselors (aka our parents) were probably the best mentors we had. They were undergrad students who provided us guidance when we needed it and also took care of us. The other mentors were also very wise and gave us insight into how we can become more prepared for the future. When we weren’t in the labs or in ACT prep, we would go out and explore the amazing town of Nashville, TN. We went ice-skating, to the mall, and Centennial Park. It was very fun to explore the area with everyone.

Hmong College Prep Academy is located at 1515 Brewster Street in St. Paul, southeast of the Minnesota State Fairgrounds. For more information about the school,

interested parties can call 651-209-8002 or online at [www.hcpak12.org](http://www.hcpak12.org).



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