ISSUE 29 October 2026

ASPIRNAUT™



Editor: Rachel Baugh

Photo Credit: Erin Smith

Art + Science: Inspiring Rural Educators



Learning to See was the theme of a three-day innovative workshop exploring the powerful connection between art and science. The workshop was held at Wynne Junior High School bringing educators from the rural Arkansas Delta to explore how creativity, observation, and scientific thinking can complement one another.

The workshop focused on developing sharper observation of nature and fine detail, communicating scientific ideas visually, and bridging a deeper emotional connection to the natural world. Providing training for teachers to refine these skills impacts all students.



Internationally recognized portrait artist Maestro Igor Babailov led participants in hands-on activities focused on drawing and the connections among art, science, and nature. The experience included an outdoor learning session at Village Creek State Park. “The academic skills of drawing from life and in direct communication with nature are the root of all sciences in art. It teaches us to see the world and not just look at it.”

Aspirnaut Executive Director, Dr. Julie Hudson, underscored the relationship between science

and art. “Drawing clarifies understanding and reveals what you don’t know—a critical step in STEM fields when one is generating visual models to accurately describe the invisible world.”

2027 Summer Applications are OPEN.

Please check our website for application links.

Click HERE for information about the high school internship

Click HERE for information about the undergraduate internship

Application Deadline: January 13, 2027

We will be accepting applications for high school and undergraduate Aspirnaut™ Summer Research Internships starting in September. We are looking for students who have achieved excellent grades and test scores in math and science and who have demonstrated a commitment to pursuing a career in a STEM field.

DONATE NOW

Summer 2026 was Phenomenal!

We kicked off a fantastic summer with **19 Lu-Springer High School Research Scholars from eight states and 17 undergraduate research interns from nine states, Myanmar, and Senegal.** The Aspirnaut™ experience provided the summer interns with full-time discovery science, professional development skills, and wellness training at Vanderbilt Health. Our holistic approach creates an immersive experience designed to prepare students for success in STEM careers. (Photo gallery below)

Summer Photo Gallery

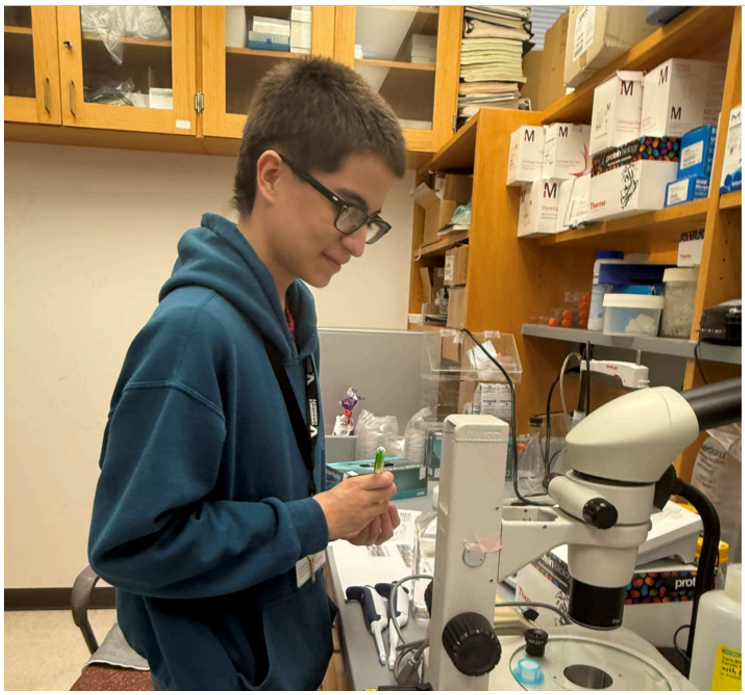
White Coat Ceremony

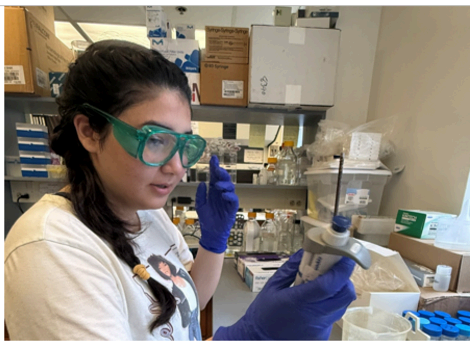


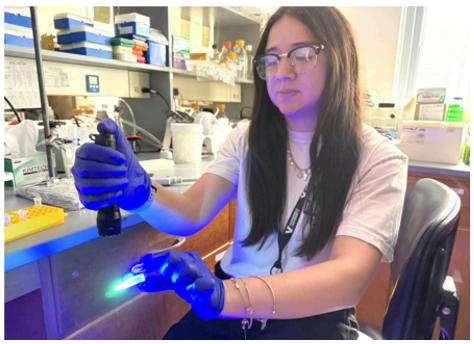




Lab Skills Course (Elena Pokidysheva, Ph.D., and Team)







Science Communication (Susan Allison, Ph.D., Bradley Clarke, Ph.D., Billy Hudson, Ph.D.)







Distinguished Speaker Luncheon Series

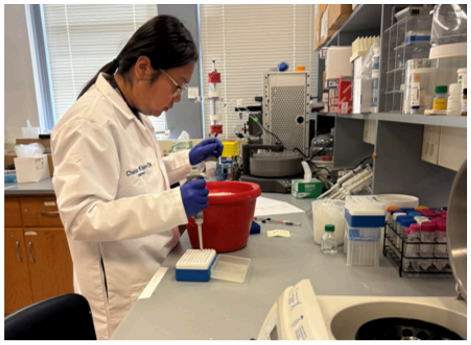


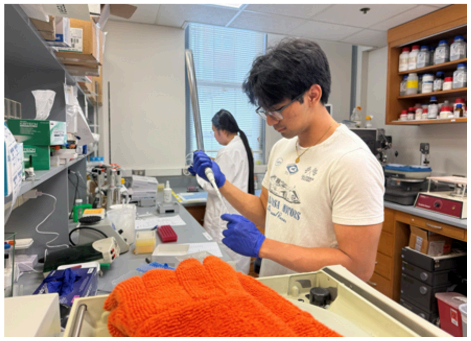




In the Lab







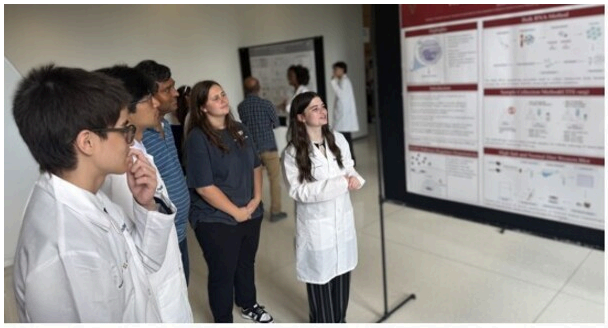
Wellness & Fitness Training

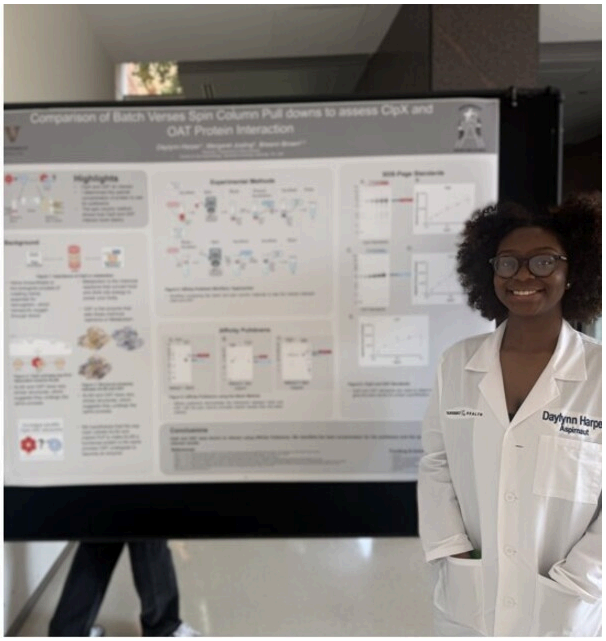




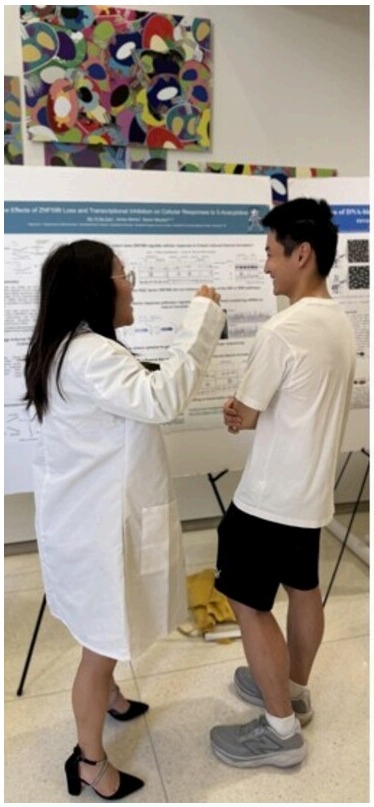


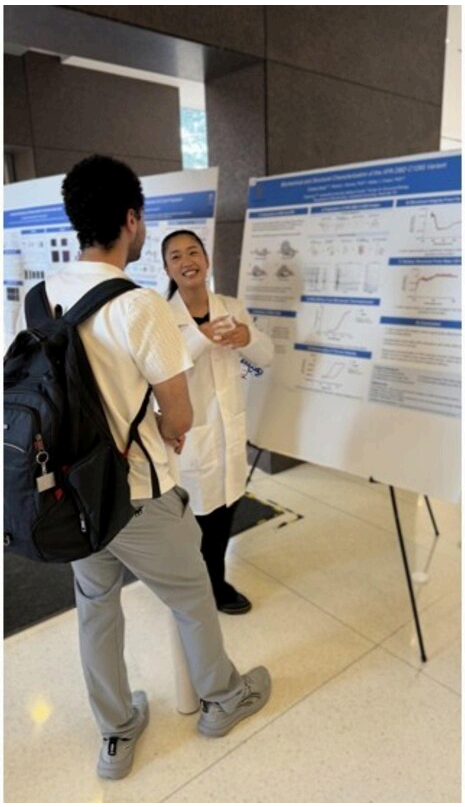
Poster Presentations













Oral Presentations









Nephrology Division Picnic



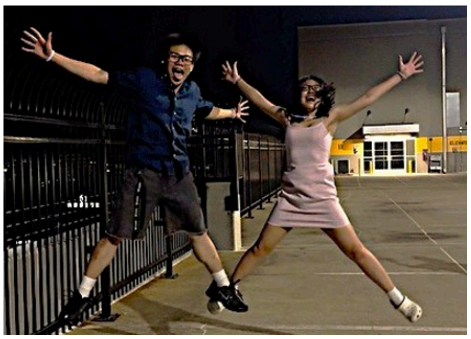




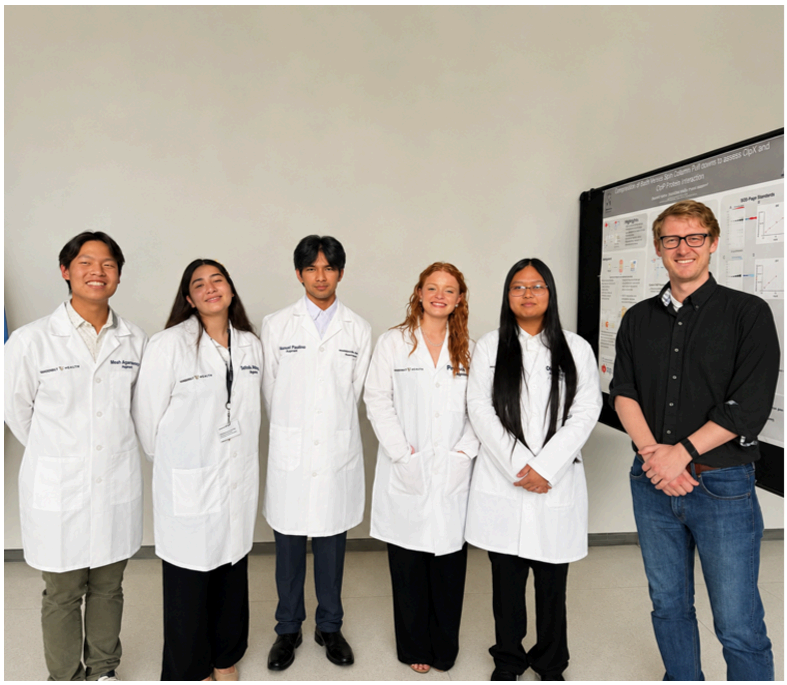

4th of July Picnic

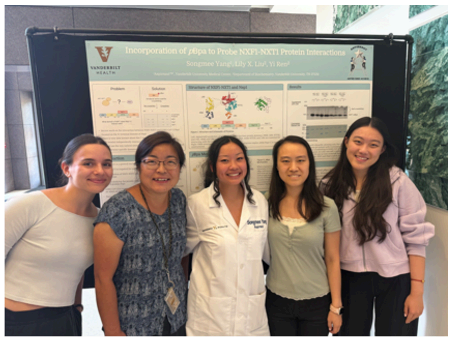


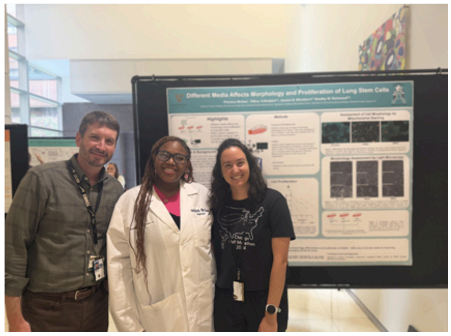




Amazing Mentors







Celebration of Summer Success







Friends for Life













Their Summer | Their Experience | Their Words

- **"Aspirnaut has given me the hope and confidence that I can accomplish my lofty professional goals in science."**
- **"I grew in ways I never knew I could during the program, becoming a more independent, disciplined, and confident person overall. I made deeper connections here than I have ever made in my life, and it feels good to know that even though I've lived my life feeling different, there is a place for me after all."**
- **"Aspirnaut has pushed me to want more. It has made me realize how much I can achieve."**
- **"It was great! This program definitely changed my life and opened my eyes to what is possible."**
- **"Aspirnaut enabled me to conduct research in an incredibly supportive and engaging environment, deepening my scientific understanding of complex biological concepts."**
- **"My participation in the Aspirnaut Summer Research Internship has been nothing short of incredible. From changing career paths to meeting new people and learning new lab skills, this experience has encouraged and pushed me to grow in ways I can't imagine any other program could."**
- **"Through the support and encouragement of my mentors and the Aspirnaut staff, I learned what true mentorship looks like. Finally, I learned to believe in myself and in my ability to pursue a career where I can make a positive impact on the lives of others."**
- **"The best thing about this program was the people. From the members in my lab, my fellow Aspirnaut peers, and the Aspirnaut staff, I felt extremely welcomed and supported."**

DONATE NOW

If you are interested in getting involved or sponsoring an Aspirnaut™ experience, please contact Rachel Baugh at rachel.baugh@aspirnaut.org.

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