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The Start of a Journey
Weekly Report 08/21/17 to 08/28/17

This week marked the beginning of my junior year at Reedy High School. Of all of the new courses that I am taking, one class really stood out. The Independent Study and Mentorship program, ISM, is a course designed to allow students to pursue their dreams by studying under a professional in a field of their choice. This is a really incredible opportunity for high school students, and I could not be more excited to begin this journey.

Even though we have only had two class periods, we have already learned and accomplished a lot. On the first day of class, the class was instructed to write mission statements and find quotes that would represent their ISM journey. This was very impactful, as mission statements allow one to think about and and choose a direction for their work. The quote provides motivation for students during hardship and gives them a sort of motto that will guide them throughout the year.

In addition to the mission statement and quote work, a guest speaker was able to come to Reedy High School and share some advice she had for ISM students. Ms. Julie Martin Leslie
gave an inspiring talk about the importance of finding one’s passion in life and helped the students to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses.

This talk really made me think about why I am here in ISM. It helped me to realize that ISM is much more than a high school class and an asset on a college application. It is a chance for students to venture out into the professional world and get an idea as to what career path is best suited to their strengths and interests. I am here because I have a desire and a determination to gain real-world experience that I would not receive in a classroom setting. Prior to this lecture, I had been stuck on the fence between two topics: medical microbiology and psychiatry. However, the lecture about the importance of pursuing one’s true passion really helped me to see that my passion lies in helping others directly rather than indirectly making a difference in the lives of others. As a result, I finalized psychiatry as my topic for this year in ISM. I have chosen psychiatry because I have a passion for both psychology and helping others. As a child, I wanted to become a doctor, however, I have always had a hard time working with blood. As a psychiatrist, I would be able to help others in a medical setting in a field that I find fascinating. I strongly believe that helping patients face-to-face will be more rewarding to me than working in a laboratory. I am confident in my selection and I know that I will be willing to overcome any obstacles that will inevitably appear in the future.

In preparation for an upcoming research assessment, students were asked to begin some background research about their topics. As I started my research, I came up with some questions about psychiatry. While I continue my research, I would love to learn more about how one can be better prepared for the extensive education required to become a psychiatrist. Are there any
specific courses that one should take while in high school? I also started to wonder about the different branches of psychiatry. Perhaps there is a specific branch that will pique my interest.

This week was successful in that I learned a lot about the importance of passion in the workplace. It is common for many adults to feel burnt out and resentful of their jobs. It is my goal in life to pursue a career that I will look forward to each day. I believe that ISM is the first step in fulfilling that goal, and I am eager to begin this long and rewarding journey.