



Florida Museum of Natural History
Exhibits and Public Programs

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August 17, 2009

Dimple Malik Flesner Ph.D.
UF Teach Associate Director
College of Education
University of Florida

Dear Dimple,

I wanted to take this opportunity to say how pleased we are about the partnership between our Museum and the UF Teach program. As I've mentioned countless times over the summer, my staff and I LOVE having Robert, Michael and Ismail working alongside us and directly with our visitors. They are wonderful, hard-working individuals and great educators. My staff and I were really impressed with the amount of responsibility they took on and what a great job they did. They became an integral part of the team and we're super excited that they will be returning this fall!!!

All three of the interns chose to work on two separate projects over the 10-week period. All three of them developed and taught a full week session of summer camp – a huge responsibility and undertaking. Along with that, Michael worked directly with our Junior Volunteers and helped develop the JV Summer Olympic activity for the end of the year reception. Ismail work in our Discovery Room, facilitating programming and interactions with the exhibits. Robert worked with my Public Programs staff on the ongoing development of our curriculum guides for camp teachers.

Included below are a few comments made by my staff about the interns and their accomplishments this summer. I can't say enough about Michael, Robert and Ismail. I hope they choose to become educators, formal or informal. They work so well with kids and really seem to enjoy that role. I know the kids love them and would benefit greatly from having them as role models!

Robert, Ismail and Michael did a great job with their weeks of summer camps. Michael had 3/4 graders last week, which has probably been our hardest group this summer and he seemed to manage the group well and have a lot of fun with the kids. Robert and Ismail have been doing great this week. Robert is a natural with the 5/6 graders. They all look up to him and have responded to his direction very well. Ismail's 1/2 graders love him. One of the parents came in this morning telling us that his son can't stop talking about Mr. Ali (Ismail) and everything he has been learning about tsunamis.

Ismail worked in the Discovery Room. He interacted with the public and mentored for the volunteers very well. I could tell he really enjoyed the room, which made a huge difference in the visitors experience here.

Robert worked on the curriculum guides, and was great! He was very quick to pick it up, condensed pertinent information well, and needed little training.


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The FLMNH volunteer program benefited tremendously from Michael Calkins' internship this summer. First and most obviously, the junior volunteer program was enhanced by his great rapport with the volunteers, all age 12 to 17. He spent so much time directly involved with them out on the museum floor that I felt compelled to remind him that it was okay to take a break once in awhile in the office! He replied that he preferred being out with the kids, and that was proven by the big smiles they had when talking to him, and by the number of inquiries I received from them on the 2 days/week he was not working in the program. He is a good role model for young people. Michael spent a lot of time with the kids discussing ideas for our first Junior Volunteer Olympics and he was a lot of help in pulling the ideas together and developing this addition to our program. I was also impressed with his conscientious written volunteer performance evaluations and lengthy discussions with me about individual volunteer strengths and weaknesses – this indicated to me that he took his job and theirs seriously, something I greatly appreciated. Finally, the overall volunteer program benefited from the assistance Michael provided because I was freed up more often than previous summers, enabling me to work on many projects that would normally have been delayed until I could get to them. My confidence in his supervision of the kids allowed me to be more productive with other tasks at hand.

Again, thanks for the opportunity to partner with you and the UFTeach program. We look forward to working with the student interns and helping to give them the real world experiences that will help them become better educators and community advocates.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jamie C. Creola". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid and legible.

Jamie C. Creola
Director of Education and Visitor Services