

When first introduced to the LIFE STEM program and summer bridge, I was very hesitant and scared to experience something so foreign to me. It took a lot of contemplation before I eventually decided to take the chance and jump out of my comfort zone, something I often struggle with. After attending the Summer Bridge and being on the Longwood campus for a few weeks, I can happily say that attending the Summer Bridge and being a part of the LIFE STEM program was one of the best decisions I have ever made. I have made numerous friends through the program and am able to feel like I'm never alone on campus. Being surrounded by people who share similar interests with me has been extremely rewarding. In addition, I gained a tremendous amount of knowledge from the summer bridge trip itself.

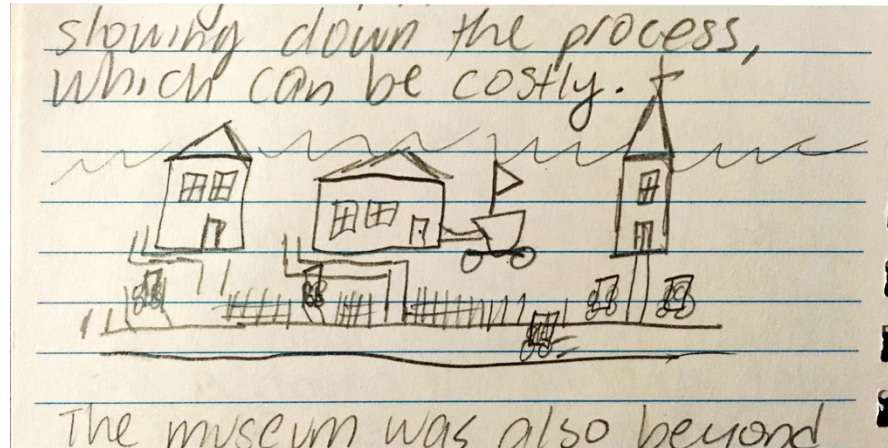
The aspect of the trip that stood out to me the most was learning about Tangier Island, in addition to visiting it. This topic isn't something that I would have normally learned about in a classroom setting, let alone visit the island itself. I think the environmental problems affecting Tangier Island are extremely important and the awareness should be raised about these issues. Seeing the island itself in person after learning about it was such a unique experience that I would've never been able to experience if it wasn't for the Summer Bridge. I would have never



known how serious the effects on small islands like Tangier are without this experience.

Physically going to Tangier gave me an inside look at how truly different the culture and way of life is there, something I would not have known from just learning about environmental impacts in a classroom. From the numerous golf carts to the single K-12 school on the island, these islanders live a completely different life from those on the mainland. The structure of the island was also completely

different. The buildings had a different look, the houses were arranged differently, roads were smaller, and so much



more. The two images I inserted throughout this paragraph reflect on how different the structure of the island is. It was incredible to witness this firsthand.

A unique aspect of this trip itself was that we were challenged to engage with the locals and get their take on the current state of the island. This is not something most of us would have done without the challenge, but the conversations we had with the locals were priceless. I

Tangier Island	Shoreline along the west side of the island, yet to be confirmed along NSE.
How do you feel about the current state of the island?	
What do you think should be done to help the situation?	Dry Island, children are given a lot more freedom.
Is there anything people on the mainland can do to help this situation?	Most men are working on the water, Not many jobs for women.
What do you enjoy about living on the island? What do you dislike?	Lots of cemeteries and graveyard - Most people share a last name with lots of others on the island. → Pruitt, Crockett, Eskridge
Everyone seems to enjoy island life and worry about future generations.	USO? Around 420 people
Lots of golf carts and cute, small houses; houses obviously affected by a lot of weather.	Lots of Trump supporting - possibly because he made a statement that the island would be there for hundreds of years, oblivious to obvious science and global warming.
There are occasional meetings to discuss solving issue, but not much is ever done.	Lots of people were in WWII and WWII
-Jelly was supposed to be put in Jan 2019	

remember writing questions down in my notebook and thinking about the unimaginable responses. Learning about these terrible impacts is one thing, but listening, in person, to various people affected by this talk about how they feel hopeless and broken is a completely

different experience and I am so glad we were encouraged to interact like we did. The responses to our inquiries were both eye-opening and educational.

As I begin the start of my career in the science field, I am grateful to be able to reflect on this experience and what it has taught me. I learned countless facts about the changing of the environment that will be useful in whatever field of science I pursue. In addition, this program allowed me to witness firsthand how the environment is changing due to human impact, and I will bring that knowledge with me as I continue through life in the science field. I hope countless numbers of students in the future will have the privilege of experiencing what our LIFE STEM cohort and those before us were able to in summers to come.