By DaQuan Proctor, John Bogasky, and Chanel Davis

On Wednesday December 3, 2014, Acting Secretary Al Horvath visited the interns of Project SEARCH Smithsonian Institution. He came to our classroom at the S. Dillon Ripley Center. All twelve interns shared information about their first internship rotations. The Acting Secretary talked about himself & his work. He shared some stories, even one where he talked about his first job working in a grocery store. He said that, “It may not have been my favorite job, but I gained a lot of experience from working there.” He also answered some of the PSSI interns’ questions. Some of the questions were: “Why did you choose this job?”, “What is your favorite museum?”, & “What are your thoughts on PSSI?” Acting Secretary Horvath sees PSSI as a great opportunity for young adults with disabilities to help their chances of getting a job. Acting Secretary Horvath’s speech was inspirational and helped us think about our futures and what we are capable of doing in the workplace. His visit inspired all of us to do our best at our internships. We had a wonderful meeting with the Acting Secretary. One of the interns even saw him again at OCON. We hope he is able to visit again, despite his very busy schedule!

PSSI is a 10 month internship program that helps young adults with developmental disabilities gain work experience by completing 3 10-week internships at the Smithsonian Institution.

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Lean, Mean, PSSI SHAPE Walking Machine

By Chanel Davis, Tony Scott, and Jay Cromwell, Heather Weiss, and Tania Peterman

On Wednesday, November 5th, Project Search Smithsonian Institution (PSSI) took part in the annual Smithsonian’s S.H.A.P.E. walk at the National Zoological Park (NZP). The SHAPE walk is a two-mile walk through the National Zoological Park for any Smithsonian staff, interns, and volunteers. We had to have our badges in order to participate. We all saw so many cool animals! The weather was partly cloudy, but thankfully it did not rain! They had sign-in sheets and signs with arrows to show you the way. The animals were playing outside and having fun. We split up into groups and met back up at the end of the walk. Everyone was full of energy on that beautiful day. Everyone walked at their own pace. No one was separated from the group. We were very excited to participate in the SHAPE Walk. It helps encourage healthy living and fitness, which we think is good for everyone! It was an excellent way to see the National Zoological Park. We will definitely do it again next year. In conclusion, our lean, mean, PSSI SHAPE walking team felt strong, fit, and ready to face another day.

Past and Present PSSI Interns at the SHAPE Walk

PSSI’s GRRRRReat Panda Baking Adventure

By Sergio Neal, Donnell Banks, Heather Weiss, Ava Thurman, Tania Peterman, Nathan Taylor, and DoVontay Taylor

The National Zoological Park’s fifth annual Gin-GRR-bread Habitat Decorating competition took place in November. This was PSSI’s second year to enter. Donnell, Sergio, DaQuan, Heather, and Tania helped to create the Gin-GRR-bread Panda Habitat. Heather was our team captain. She designed the Habitat, and helped write the one page summary of our project. She also did a lot of research about the panda family and their habitat. DaQuan helped out with the Gin-GRR-Bread Habitat, too. We used gingerbread as the ground, and then we put on the fondant so that the Gingerbread would stay together. We also used pretzel sticks as the trees and the wall structure for the pandas’ sleeping area. Heather created the panda and the cubs figures. They looked so realistic! DaQuan helped build the entire habitat. Sergio and Donnell helped to paint the Gin-GRR-Bread Habitat. Tania volunteered to take the habitat to the zoo with Kristina! Tania, Sergio, Donnell, DaQuan, and Heather worked really hard. We all worked as a team. Kristina, Ashley, and James helped us, too. We couldn’t have done it without them! Our Gin-GRR-Bread Habitat was on display at Zoo Lights. It was a fun experience for everyone that was involved. We liked working together as a team and hope that everyone liked the habitat that we designed. Some of us even saw our habitat on display at Zoo Lights.
PSSI Interns Hard at Work!  By Chanel, Nathan, Dovontay, Tony
Rotation #2 Internships by John Bogasky & Jay Cromwell

Donnell Banks
Office of Facilities, Management & Reliability
National Zoological Park

John Bogasky
Office of Facilities, Management & Reliability
National Museum of American History

Jay Cromwell
Office of Facilities, Management & Reliability Crafts
National Zoological Park

Chanel Davis
Smithsonian Enterprises &
Botany Department, National Museum of Natural History

Sergeo Neal
Office of Finance and Accounting

Tania Peterman
Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center

DaQuan Proctor
Zoology and Vertebrates Collections
National Museum of Natural History & Museum Support Center

Tony Scott
Department of Animal Nutrition
National Zoological Park

Dovontay Taylor
Office of Protection Services

Nathan Taylor
Office of Facilities, Management & Reliability
National Portrait Gallery

Ava Thurman
Office of Facilities, Management & Reliability Quad

Heather Weiss
Visitor Services, Exhibition Maintenance, and Collections
Information, National Portrait Gallery