During my internship, I followed the progress of several Alzheimer's hospice patients. Every Wednesday I attended care-plan conferences for those particular patients in which various hospice disciplines (nursing, MD, bereavement, music therapy and pastoral workers) update the team members on the patient's progress. I usually had one hospice discipline per day that I followed to observe how their work related to hospice/Alzheimer's patient care. It was my responsibility to use this information in the hospice educational system by conducting an educational meeting on Alzheimer's disease for hospice workers.

In what ways is your internship helping you to achieve your learning objectives, and how (if at all) does it relate to your major?

I learned how the majority of different hospice disciplines work together to provide comfort care to patients and their family members. My objectives were met for this internship, in that I learned a great deal about the pathophysiology of Alzheimer's disease and how a facility may cater to the needs of the victims and families stricken by the disease. I was able to learn about many aspects of cognitive decline in dementia, including the biological process, how it's treated in a clinical setting, and how emotional and psychological issues within the patients and family members are handled by trained hospice staff.

Do you think that your internship will help you further your career? What kind of formal training did it provide you?

This internship helped me understand that I really want a career in gerontology. I want to work with elderly individuals and learn more about this devastating disease. In addition, I was surprised with how compassionate the employees are in the face of such a seemingly overwhelming task as well as how many services hospice offers the terminally ill and their families. I think this experience will be a wonderful addition to my resume; I shadowed many different hospice workers and learned about each section before moving on to the next. I also learned a great deal about patient and family interactions from the numerous hospice disciplines.

"This internship has given me the opportunity to get my foot in the door to begin my career."