

This past summer marked the fourth summer of the diocese's Sewanee Internship Program, a partnership with the University of the South - Sewanee. The internship program serves two purposes: for Sewanee students to have an opportunity to use the knowledge and skills that they learn in the classroom in a hands-on, real-world setting and for additional summer staff at Mustang Island Conference Center and environmental education programs at diocesan summer camps.

This past summer, we welcomed Ben Haggerty, Andrew Walters, Brelyn Yuratch, and Davis Brown. Ben and Andrew spent their time working with the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA), an organization that helps protect, conserve, and monitor the resource of livelihood in Texas: water. Brelyn and Davis served on staff for Mustang Island Family Camp, developing and implementing environmental education activities for the families in addition to working with professors at Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi.

Enthusiastically, Davis and Brelyn, through hands-on activities, taught the families at family camp all about the Gulf Coast. They lead families in sandbar diving for sand dollars and hermit crabs, searching through piles of Sargassum seaweed for different organisms that call the floating mats home, using an interactive demonstration on food webs to show how everything is connected, and educating on the importance of disposing of trash properly to keep our beaches (and our planet) clean. They continued to display the awe-inspiring wonder of the Gulf Coast environment while stressing the importance of conservation almost effortlessly.

All four of these students, not only went above and beyond in accomplishing the tasks given to them, they set a foundation for the future of the internship program. In a time when it is crucial to realize the importance of our natural surroundings, and even more important to realize the need to protect and conserve the environment, these students set the stage for continued education and understanding in our diocese about our natural resources. Our families at Mustang Island Family Camp this summer learned how to be advocates for those which do not have a voice: the beaches, the waterways, the flora and fauna, all that the Earth has to offer, God's creation.

